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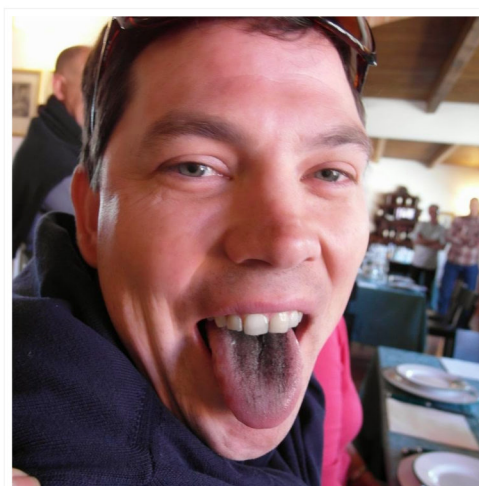
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Vinality International Award

Thursday, May 01, 2014

White Wine for Red Wine Lovers

and a couple for white wine lovers too



This past trip to Italy, some of my favorite red wine makers showed me their white wines. Italians aren't as regimented in their allegiance to red wine as we seem to be in America. In America the sign of having arrived as real wine aficionados is to embrace all that is red. Medical news stories hawk the health benefits of resveratrol, never mind that if you drank enough red wine to take advantage of the benefits of resveratrol, you'd probably first die of liver poisoning.

The British wine experts also made red wine a priority. Harry Waugh was reported to have said "The first duty of wine is to be red." For anyone who wanted to be considered a serious wine person, one had to know their red wine.

Over time, I've come to think, like my Italian cousins, that red wine isn't always the best choice for a meal. Many of the dishes we have require something more delicate. Weather conditions also taken into account, sometimes a beefy Super Tuscan or a high acid, tannic Nebbiolo is just too much for summers in Texas. Or many places in the Northern Hemisphere these days.

The reality is, I love white wine. And many of my wine expert friends do too. It's not that we don't love red wine; we just don't love it exclusively. But walking the aisles of a wine store and asking people what they are looking for, by and large, most of them think they need a red wine. And so it goes.

The following wines are selections I tasted from the last trip. These are wines that red wine lovers can learn to love. And there are a couple of wines just for the white wine fanatics that I call my friends. Here they are.

About Me



Alfonso Cevola

Writing about Italian wine and culture. Moving between Italy and America. Passionate about both of my countries. Fed by the energy of Italy, California and Texas. Drawn to the open spaces of America and the small vineyards of Italy.

@italianwineguy

ItalianWineTrail@yahoo[dot]com

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2013 Vinality International Awardee



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Felsina I Sistri 2011 – I tried this at the winery last month. Well balanced, even-tempered, not buttery. A mineral component, attractive, very nice white wine with a full flavored but not overblown character. Sometimes it is hard to take white wines from Tuscany seriously, especially Chardonnay. But the standards for winemaking at Felsina are so high, even the Chardonnay stands out. And I am not predisposed to liking just any Chardonnay. This one, though, is exemplary.



Casanova di Neri "Ibbianco" 2013 – 50% Vermentino and 50% Grechetto with tempered alcohol levels of 12%. Native yeast fermentation in conical open vats, the wine could be mistaken for a red wine if tasted blind. I loved how the two grapes complemented each other. The Vermentino was floral and blousy and the Grechetto was restrained and minerally. An unusual wine from a winery often considered of the modern school. This wine is delicious and full of life.



Castello di Sonnino "Virginio" Bianco Toscana 2013 – the Baron apologized when he first poured me his wine. "This is an uninteresting little wine but a necessary one," he muttered, half-heartedly apologizing for producing a white wine. "We needed a white to start off the evenings, with all the little appetizers we find thrust at us when we are entertaining people at the castle." Tough life indeed. I liked this wine, made from Chardonnay and Trebbiano. Is it as serious as his red wines? Heavens no. But believe me there is enough seriousness at the castle. The beauty of the white wine, "Virginio", is

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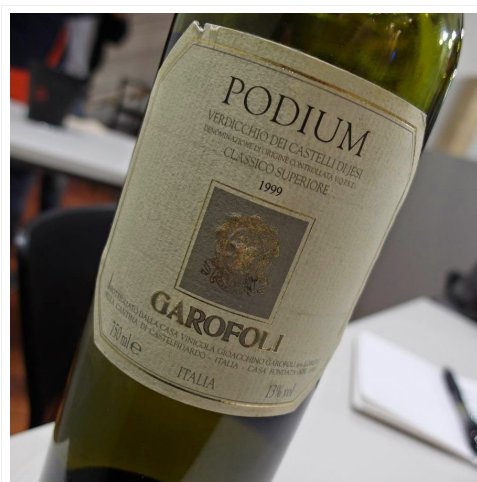
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Accolades

that is doesn't take itself seriously, but it none the less is a sumptuous wine without being presupposing. Just like the Baron.



Vietti Perbacco Bianco 2013 – We probably won't be seeing this right away in the USA. It's in testing mode right now. Fueled by the success of Vietti's Perbacco Nebbiolo, Luca Currado wanted to make a white version of this. The grapes used are Arneis, Nascetta, Favorita and Chardonnay. Vietti pioneered and popularized white wine in the Langhe/Roero with their Arneis. Perbacco Bianco looks to be another step towards white wine, this time perhaps a white in step with the red brother Perbacco Nebbiolo. For now you'll have to try it at the winery.



Garofoli "Podium" Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi 1999 – I have bottle of Verdicchio going back to the early 1980's in my wine closet, showing no signs of ageing. Daria Garofoli poured me her 1999 Podium at Vinality in April. The color didn't seem to be 15 years old; the flavors were rich with secondary markers, but no signs of tawny or maderization. People don't pay enough attention (or respect) to Verdicchio. More for us and really great values for long term keeping, if that is your thing. Or you can by a bottle of 15 year old white Burgundy for more than the price of a case of Podium. Your choice.



Vignalta "Sirio" dry Moscato 2013 – If I were a betting man, I'd venture to guess a possible next trendy white wine would be a dry Moscato. From the Colli Euganei, Sirio has been a staple of Lucio Gomiero's production of wines for many years. This one is floral and delicate, yet finishing dry, or as the Germans say, "trocken."



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Donnafugata "Sur Sur" Grillo 2013 – crisp and bone dry. Very popular in Italy, especially with seafood fried in only the way they can in Italy. Grillo will probably never make it big in America. Not that we haven't tried. It's just too austere for most wine drinkers. But for serious white wine fans, Grillo is exactly what it should be – direct, dry and clean. Not a wine to write poems about, but a bottle of this at lunch and hammock in the shade and a light breeze and sweet dreams indeed.



Garofoli "Guelfo Verde" Frizzante 2013 – The weather soon will turn here in North Texas. When it does, I will have a case of this wine in the back fridge, chilling. A great picnic wine, the wine is 30% Verdicchio and 70% Trebbiano. Lively, good acidity, delicate fruit, all in balance and in a not so serious wine. But when the thermometer gets serious on you, this wine will be a welcome antidote to the interminable (and inevitable) heat of summer. Easy to pack for an outdoor evening picnic at the lake, crown cap, no corkscrew needed. Wine snobs need not apply.



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Posted by Alfonso Cevola at 6:30 AM 

7 comments:

Jesse said...

Great post. I've not had any of these, but will have to find them for sure. A good list of good whites is a great thing to have in you pocket! Thanks

May 1, 2014 at 9:56 AM



Denise in Austin said...

Thanks for this -- I'm a white wine girl headed to Piedmont this summer. This will come in handy. Cheers!

May 1, 2014 at 10:24 AM

Wine Curmudgeon said...

Grillo! Grillo! Grillo!

May 1, 2014 at 12:56 PM

michelecolline said...

Nothing like tasting them fresh, just out of the gate, in Italy!!

May 1, 2014 at 1:01 PM



Do Bianchi said...

there's the white I was looking for... The Podium is awesome...

May 2, 2014 at 7:12 AM



Mark Scudery said...

Great post Alfonso. I love Italian whites and I am not familiar with any of these. I have some work to do!

May 2, 2014 at 3:07 PM



Jack Everitt said...

Ha, I thought you were going to suggest Orange wines.

May 3, 2014 at 9:19 PM

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