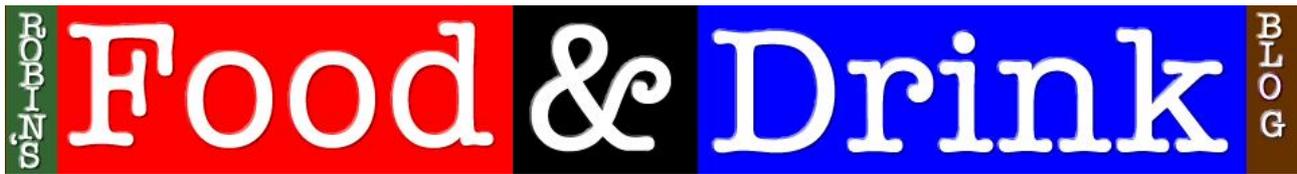


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[The Definitive Italian Wine Tasting 2012](#)

Posted on June 20th, 2012 by Robin Goldsmith in [Drink](#), [Wine](#)



The "Definitive Italian Wine Tasting" event at Lords Cricket Ground on 18th June was a great showcase for wine diversity. Few countries exhibit such a range of styles and grape varieties as Italy. Given the size and shape of the country, it is not surprising that the climate varies hugely from the Alpine glacial moraines in the north to the volcanic Sicilian slopes in the south. Many grape varieties planted there are well known, but there are others virtually unknown outside Italy which are capable of making some fantastic wine. I went in search of surprises and returned happy with my discoveries, some of which I will now share with you.

Prosecco from the Veneto region in northern Italy is quickly becoming a fashionable drink of choice for anyone wanting an alternative to Champagne. Made from the glera grape, generally inexpensive and at 11% ABV, this is a light and refreshing summer tippie. Out of the few I sampled, the best was Giavi's "Prosecco Superiore Conegliano Valdobbiadene Millesimato DOCG Dry 2011" (<http://www.giavi.it>). A mouthful to say and a mouthful to taste, this beautiful example of a top class Prosecco has a beautifully clean and fresh nose with blood orange notes on the palate and a long satisfying finish. However, this is not the cheapest example and retails at around £17 a bottle.

Arneis is an interesting grape variety from Piedmont, again in the North of Italy, which makes dry and full-bodied wines that go particularly well with white meats, fish and appetizers. Tenuta Carretta's "Roero Arneis Cayega DOCG 2011" (<http://www.tenutacarretta.it/page/eng/cantina.asp>) has extra complexity as the wine remains in contact with its lees for a short time, giving citrus and pineapple notes on the palate. It would be good to see more wines made from arneis on the wine menu of Italian restaurants in the UK.

Moreno Wines Ltd (<http://www.morenowinesuk.co.uk>) are well-known importers of Spanish wines in London, but for the last six years have stocked an interesting range of Italian wines as well. If you like a good Chianti, they have a couple of beautifully complex examples. The "Chianti Classico Riserva di Fizzano DOCG 2008" from Rocca Delle Macie (<http://www.roccadellemacie.com/en/index.php>) in Tuscany will continue to develop over the next few years and packs a full flavour punch. The same winery's other Chianti Classico Riserva DOCG "Zingarelli 2008" has plenty of fruit on the palate, softened by a creamy chocolate and coffee aftertaste. Both of these Chiantis are beautifully smooth.

Vinexus Ltd. (<http://www.vinexus.co.uk>) similarly have some really elegant Chiantis, but they also stock an Etna Rosso 2010, completely different from my first experience of Etna wines many years ago. This is a wine area to watch, producing Burgundian style wines. However, I really liked their "Motto Piane 2011" from Fattori wines (<http://www.fattoriwines.com/en/>) in the Veneto. Although a Soave, made from 100% Garganega, this is as far removed from a typical supermarket Soave as you can get. The grapes have been dried on straw mats for about one month, concentrating the sugar and aromas. Sweet and elegant with honey and tropical fruit notes on the palate, this award-winning wine would go really well with cheese and biscuits. A great find and well worth tasting.

Last and definitely not least, I tasted wines showcased by Casa Vinicola Zonin (<http://www.zonin.co.uk>). Two wines stood out for me – first their delightful Calasole Vermentino Maremma IGT 2011 from the estate of Rocca di Montemassi in Tuscany. Vermentino, like Arneis, is another grape variety completely different from the well-known white grapes like Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc. With hints of spice on the nose and a degree of minerality balanced by honey, almonds and citrus on the palate, this very interesting wine would make a great accompaniment to fish-based pasta dishes. Thanks for the bottle, Laura – I will enjoy it! Their second wine I really liked was the Sasseo Primitivo Salento IGT 2009 from the estate of Masseria Altemura in Puglia. Fruity with a long-lasting cream and chocolate finish on the palate – delicious!

So that's it – some fine examples of what Italy has to offer... and I haven't even mentioned Brunello, Barolo, Valpolicella... If you decide to try any of these wines, do let me know what you think. Salute!

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