

## WINE

### WHICH WINE WITH WHAT FOOD?

**Light dry white wines** are ideal with raw and cooked oysters, clams, *lobsters* and other shellfish. Such wines also go well with grilled fish, cold meats and egg dishes. The best Italian wines in this category are made from Chardonnay, Gargenega, Sylvaner and Trebbiano grapes.

**Full-bodied Italian whites**, the best of which are made from Moscato, Pino Bianco, Riesling Renano and Sauvignon Blanc grapes. These wines go well with fish, poultry, and veal in cream sauce.

**Rosè wine** can be served with anything but is best reserved for cold dishes, pates, eggs and pork. Because Italian rosè wines are rarely adventurous, they also make excellent companions to light meals.

**Light-bodied red wines** go well with roast chicken, turkey, veal or lamb, fillet of beef, liver, quail, pheasant, goose liver and soft fermented cheeses. They are also good accompaniments to beef and lamb stews, heavy soups, hamburgers and steaks. The best Italian wines in this category are made from Barbera, Dolcetto, Montepulciano, and Shiava grapes.

**Full-bodied Italian red wines**, including those made from Bonarda, Cabernet Sauvignon, Lagrein, Merlot, Nebbiolo, and Sangiovese grapes, go nicely with duck, goose, kidneys, roast beef and other heavy beef dishes. They also go well with nearly all beef dishes made with mushrooms or truffles. These wines also complement chicken stews cooked with red wine.

**Sparkling Wines:** Do not call Italian sparkling wines "Champagne" as the only wines entitled to that designation come from the French region of the same name. Italians do make *sparkling* wines, often using the traditional method devised several hundred years ago in France. Sparkling wines, of which the most famous in Italy is Asti Spumante, are traditionally served as an aperitif or at the end of the meal. Some people, however, feel that sparkling wines that are described on the label as "extra dry," can be served throughout the meal. The truth is that extra-dry sparkling wines go well with any dish except those served with a vinaigrette sauce. Those described as "dry" are good accompaniments to shellfish, goose liver dishes, and desserts. Sparkling wines labeled "semi-dry" are ideal with desserts.

### TWO OR MORE WINES WITH A MEAL

There is nothing ostentatious about serving *two or more wines* at the same meal. In fact, this is a simple way of adding an extra note of elegance to an already pleasant meal. In deciding on the order of wines to serve, there are certain traditional guidelines: serve white before red, dry before sweet, light before full, and young before old.

### TEMPERATURES AT WHICH TO SERVE WINE

The ideal temperature for serving red wines is between 18°-20° C/ 70° F. Warm red wines simply don't taste good and, if well chilled, they lose some of their qualities. You may place a bottle of red wine in the refrigerator for half an hour to bring its temperature down, if needed, but if the wine is too cold, never warm it artificially; this will invariably destroy the flavor. It is better to pour it out cold and let the wine warm in the glass. There are, however, a few red wines which require chilling. Young, light red wines can be served as well chilled as white wines.

White wines, champagnes and rosè wines should always be served *chilled*. As a rule, the

sweeter the wine, the colder it should be. If a white wine has a light sparkle when poured, it means that it has been overly chilled.

### UNCORKING AND DECANTING

There are several rules that should be followed when removing the cork from a bottle of wine. To prevent the cork from breaking while extracting it, be sure to insert the corkscrew so that the point just pierces the end of the cork next to the wine. Take care to insert the corkscrew into the center of the cork, so that it does not touch the neck of the bottle.

Many red wines, especially those more than 5 years old, after being opened need to "breathe" before they are served. This means that they should be uncorked anywhere from one to three hours before serving to allow a bit of air to enter the bottle and mingle with the wine. The older and heavier the wine, the more it needs to breathe.

Most wines can be *served* directly from the bottle. With older red wines that have a sediment at the bottom of the bottle, it is wise to pour the wine into a decanter, leaving the deposit behind or to serve it from a wine basket where the bottle will remain in a prone position. If serving from a basket, pour the wine very evenly so the wine does not slop back into the bottle and agitate the sediment.

*Champagne* and other sparkling wines require special handling as their corks are under a great deal of pressure. Although popping Champagne corks creates a festive atmosphere, it is the wrong way to open a sparkling wine; not only is it dangerous, it harms the wine. One reason why Champagne is special is because of the bubbles, and popping the cork reduces them. To avoid this, peel off the foil surrounding the cork and neck of the bottle. While applying pressure to hold the cork in, carefully loosen the metal straps holding it in place. After the straps are removed, continue to press down on the cork and gently twist the bottle, not the cork. When you hear the gas begin escaping around the edges of the cork, do not let the cork evade your grip. The gentle hissing sound will be followed by a barely audible pop, indicating that you have done the job properly. This way the wine will not form a foam that will suddenly gush out of the bottle and the bubbles will be preserved.

### ITALIAN WINE GLOSSARY

ABBOCCATO	slightly sweet
AMABILE	slightly sweeter than abboccato
AMARO	bitter
ANNATA	the year of the vintage
ASCIUTTO	totally dry
BIANCO	white
BOTTIGLIA	bottle
CANTINA	wine cellar

CASA VINICOLA	a wine company
CHIARETTO	very light red or rosè
CLASSICO	the classic heart of a wine-growing region, by implication, the best part.
CONSORZIO	a consortium of producers of certain wines
DOLCE	full and sweet
ETICHETTA	label
FIASCO (PLURAL: FIASCHI)	the traditional straw-cased chianti bottle
LIQUOROSO	strong, generally fortified, wine
METODO CHAMPENOIS	in the champagne method
NERO	black or very dark red
PASTOSO	medium but not very dry wine
RISERVA, RISERVA SPECIALE	wines that have been matured for a statutory number of years
ROSATO	rosè
ROSSO	red
SECCO	dry
SEMI-SECCO	semi-dry or semi-sweet
SPUMANTE	sparkling
STRAVECCHIO	very old
UVA	grape
VECCHIO	old
VENDEMMIA	the vintage
VIGNA	vineyard
VINO NOVELLO	the wine of the current year, often used in the same sense as beaujolais nouveau
VINO DA PASTO	everyday wine
VINO DA TAVOLA	simple wines, the equivalent of the French "vin de table"

## WINE PRODUCTION

#### General Information:

Although Italians have been making wine since ancient times, some aspects of traditional wine-making have given way to new technologies, and some wineries are introducing yet more innovations. For example, Ca' del Bosco (house in the woods), *located* in the foothills of Lombardy, produces a world-class spumante as well as a Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, and Bourdeaux-style claret.

#### Production Stages:

1. When the grapes are judged ready, they are *picked*, sorted, and then quickly *transported* to the winery. The size, thickness of skin, and amount of sugar in a grape are all considered when making wine. The grapes must be taken to the winery as fast as possible since heat and air can damage them.

2. How the grapes are crushed and strained, depends on whether a white wine or a red wine is being made. For example, for a fruity white wine, the grapes are gently crushed so that the skin is barely broken.

3. The juice is then pressed into vats or *oak barrels* to ferment. These allow the wine to breathe. If barrels are used, the length of time the wine ferments determines the kind and size of barrel. Sulfur is used to destroy any harmful bacteria and sugar may be added, if the grape sugar content of the juice is too low. If the acidity is too low, citric or tartaric acid is added. If too high, chalk or sweet grape juice is added.

4. After fermentation, the wine is transferred to another vat and "fined." This means that any solid residues will sink to the bottom. The best wines are fined with egg whites but clay can also be used.

5. At this point, some wines are chilled or left to sit and develop a yeast-like taste.

6. When the wines are ready for *bottling* more sulfur is added but it must be used judiciously: too much can adversely affect the aroma of the wine.

#### WINE LABELS

##### Franciacorta Rosso

1. Alcohol - The alcohol content 12.5% by volume
2. 0,751 - The number of bottles made in this cuvée or particular blend.
3. Denominazione di Origine Controllata - (DOC) Regulations that stipulate the types of vines that may be used in wine production as well as where they may be grown, their yields, minimum alcohol content, and acidity. They also state if blending is permitted and give an indication of a wine's particular taste.  
It is Italy's highest quality designation for wines.
4. 1992 - vintage
5. Franciacorta Rosso - A garnet ruby-colored wine which carries notes of cherry, blackberry, gooseberry and fruit jams. It has a herbaceous aroma which later carries the bouquet of sweet wood and vanilla. It has the potential for aging well.
6. This wine is made up of 45% barbera grapes, 25% merlot, 15% nebbiolo, and 15% of grapes from the vines at the Comuni di Adro. The wine was bottled at the Ca'del Bosco.

7. Ca'del Bosco - A winery established in 1965 in the hills of Erbusco. It has already established a reputation for producing excellent wines.
8. V.Q.P.R.D - "Vino di Qualit  Prodotto in Regioni Determinate". This can be translated as "high quality wine produced in identified regions!" This is a denomination used in the European Community but in this case, it identifies Italian D.O.C. still wines.

#### Maurizio Zanella

1. Maurizio Zanella - Named after the owner of the Ca'del Bosco, this red wine is intense, full, and persistent. It is flavored with red berries -- particularly cherries, and especially sour black cherries. There are subtle hints of plum, violet, vanilla, cacao, and it has beautiful herbaceous notes. This wine is aged 14 months before sale.
2. Vino da tavola di Lombardia - A (red) table wine from Lombardy.
3. 1991 - vintage
4. 13% - The alcohol content by volume.
5. Imbottigliato - This wine was bottled at the Ca'del Bosco.

#### Franciacorta Ros 

1. Ca'del Bosco - A winery established in 1965 in the hills of Erbusco. It has already established a reputation for producing excellent wines.
2. Italian sparkling wine - This wine is well-balanced with soft long-lasting bubbles. It's aroma tends toward cassis and it's light red color is derived from pinot nero grape skins. It is a dry wine which is best served at 50 F ( 10  C).
3. Denominazione di Origine Controllata - (DOC) Regulations that stipulate the types of vines that may be used in wine production as well as where they may be grown, their yields, minimum alcohol content, and acidity. They also state if blending is permitted and give an indication of a wine's particular taste.  
It is Italy's highest quality designation for wines.
4. 12.5% - Alcohol content by volume.
5. Franciacorta - The name "Franciacorta" derives from "Franzacrta" (from the Latin "Franchae Curtes," i.e. the region exempt from paying taxes) from which the zone was identified in a 13th century codex. Nowadays, the name also defines the high-quality sparkling wine produced here, using only grapes coming from Franciacorta and refermenting the product into the bottle (chamenois method). Here, it is not referred to as "spumante" anymore.