

Gambero Rosso Tre Bicchieri Tasting 2008

Charles Scicolone (March 26, 2008)



305 wines were awarded "Tre Bicchieri" -- so many wines, so little time.

On March 3rd Gambero Rosso held its Three Glass (Tre Bicchieri) wine tasting in New York City. The event is the most important tasting of Italian wine in this country. Three glasses is the highest rating that a wine can receive. The awards are presented by Gambero Rosso/Slow Food, publishers of a number of wine, food and travel guides. Their annual wine guide is called Vini d'Italia in



Italy. An English version, called Italian Wines 2008, was released to coincide with the grand tasting.

Each wine in the guide is given a score which assigns a rating from none to three glasses. This year there were 305 wines that received the top award and most of them were at the tasting. It is not surprising that Tuscany had the most Three Glasses wines (65) followed by Piedmont (61). Other wines from northern and central Italy picked up most of the rest. The biggest surprise to me was that Sicily received 15 of the top awards, the most of any Southern region. Two Sicilian wineries had wines of the year.

It is an exciting and important wine event and always overcrowded because everyone with any interest in Italian wines wants to be there.

The Gambero Rosso Wines of the Year 2008

(one is chosen for each type of wine)

Red Wine: Faro 2005-Palari (
Sicily)

Sparkling: Franciacorta Collezione Esclusiva Brut 1999 - Cavalleri (
Lombardy)



White Wine: Collio Tocai Friulano 2006 - Raccaro (Friuli Venezia Giulia)

Sweet Wine: Moscato Passito Di Pantelleria Ben Rye 2006-Donnafugata (Sicily)

The Winery of the year - Gaja.

There were many great wines at the tasting but the following were my favorites:

· Barbaresco Vigna in Montestefano Riserva 2001 DOCG Produttori del Barbaresco (Piedmont)

This producer makes some of the best wines in Piedmont. They are a great value and the Barbaresco will age for 20 years or more.



· Barolo Monfortino Riserva 2000 DOCG Giacomo Conterno (Piedmont)

Over the past few months I have enjoyed with dinner the 1958 on more then one occasion. Even after 50 years this wine is still alive and still has all the qualities of a classic Barolo.

· Amarone della Valpolicella 2000 DOC-Bertani (Veneto)

This is traditional Amarone at its best. The 1962 is still a great wine.

· Brunello di Montalcino Riserva 2001 Tenuta Il Greppo DOCG- Biondi Santi (Tuscany)

This is a great Brunello from one of the most traditional producers. The Biondi Santi famiy were the first to produce Brunello. This wine will last for 50 years.

· Montepulicano d' Abruzzo 02 DOC Edoardo Valentini (Abruzzo). This wine is a classic and is a monument to tradition and terroir.



- Il Vassallo 2005 Colli Picchioni DOC Paola Di Mauro (Lazio) This is one of the best Cabernet and Merlot blends made in Italy. The 1985 is still drinking very well.

- Torgiano Rosso Vigna Monticchio Riserva 2003 DOCG Lungarotti (Umbria). This wine is better known as Rubesco. It is a wonderful wine that will last for many years.

- Merlot 05 Castello delle Regine 05 (Umbria) IGT

It has been said that the best place to grow Merlot in Italy is in Umbria and this wine proves the point.

- Dettori Rosso 04 DOC-Tenuta Dettori (Sardinia)

Made from 100% Cannonau grapes.

Simple and natural winemaking makes this wine an expression of the grape and the land. The winemaker, Alessandro Dettori, has returned to making wine like his grandfather.

- Trebbiano d' Abruzzo 2004 DOC -Edorado Valentini This winery only makes three types of wine and two of them received Three Glasses. This is one of Italy's great white wines and it can age.



· Soave Classico Calvarino 2005 DOC Leonido Pieropan (Veneto). I have been drinking the Soave Classico from Pieropan since the early 1980's and I am not going to stop now.

· Trento Brut Perle 2002 DOC-Ferrari (Trentino)

This is a great sparkling wine from a great producer.

· Vin Santo 95 DOC -Avignonesi (Tuscany) This desert wine defines all other Vin Santos and it will age for many years.

I am going to Sicily for a week. When I return there will be a full report on Sicilian, wine, food and travel.



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