

# THE TASTING PANEL

## Vinality in a Day

Deborah Parker Wong / photos by the author

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For last 46 years, the Italian wine industry has convened in Verona for that nation's largest wine tradeshow, [Vinality](#), established in 1966. The 2014 event, held April 6-9, was roughly the size of 19 football fields, over which 156,000 attendees navigated their way through booths manned by 4,200 exhibitors.

While the scale of Vinality may seem daunting, highlights from THE TASTING PANEL's day there prove that it's surmountable. With the help of many, we tasted our way from Friuli Venezia Giulia to Sicily. It was refreshing to find vintners and winemakers from estates both large and small pouring their wines. Authenticity is what makes Vinality a truly rewarding experience.

Granted, not every wine was tasted on the show floor. The third edition of OperaWine, a gathering of the "Finest Italian Wines: 100 Great Producers" organized by Veronafiere's Steve Kim, Managing Director of Vinality International, was held on the eve prior to the show.

Here were our highlights:

Friuli Collio Orientali producer Livio Felluga's **Refosco dal Peduncolo Rosso** is an ancient Friulian variety from the estate winery in Brazzano. Benchmark effort with deeply intense blueberry and cherry fruit, balsamic, chocolate, leather and a dark spicy finish.

Marino Humar's **Fruiliano** from the winery's **Collio** estate was equally impressive with white flowers, notes of petrol, mandarin orange and intensely bright stone fruit and orange flavors.

At Villa Sandi, winemaker Stefano Gava's **Cartizze La Rivetta**, a Valdobbiadene Superiore Prosecco from the Cortizze DOCG, hails from the estate's best site. White flowers, exotic tropical fruit, saline minerality and finely-textured mousse are the result of Gava's emphasis on precision fermentation.

Masi Agricola's flagship **Vaio Armaron** is a DOCG Amarone that hails from a namesake vineyard believed to be the inspiration for the wine style itself. Seventh-generation Raffaele Boscaini, who coordinates the Masi Technical Group, just released **Masianco**, an aromatic, structured, dry blend of fresh Pinot Grigio and lightly dried, indigenous Verduzzo to the U.S. market.

In neighboring Mezzane, Massimago winemaker Camilla Rossi Chauvenet employs the same method for her **Garganega** which spends five months in second year barrels for structured wine with grapefruit, green apple and plenty of dry extract and expression. Chauvenet describes her Amarone, which is fresher in style and shows evidence of new oak, as contemporary in style.

Roberto Coppo and his three brothers are Italy's Barbera d'Asti specialists and their **Riserva della Famiglia**, a Barbera d'Asti Superiore DOCG from the Nizza cru site on their estate in Canelli, is only produced in the best years. These umami-laden wines are balsamic scented with notes of cherry bark, spice, leather and coffee.

Barolo producer Aldo Varja preserved century-old Dolcetto vines in the heart of his Barolo vineyard for **Dolcetto d'Alba Coste & Fossati**. Deeply structured with smoky, black cherry and notes of black licorice, dried herbs, tobacco and earth.

Donnafugata Director of Winemaking Antonio Rollo is focused on biodiversity and reevaluating varieties indigenous to Sicily that have been abandoned. The winery's flagship Nero d'Avola blend **Mille Una Notte** from the Contessa Entellina estate shows prune, tobacco, cocoa, black plum and loam. **Ben Ryé**, a rare Passito di Pantelleria offers orange marmalade, honeyed stone fruit and dried figs.

The 2015 edition of Vinitaly will be held March 22—25.