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Italy's Best Wines: Tasting the Tre Bicchieri 2010

I pride myself on my broad tastes in wine. I like wine from everywhere, and don't believe I have a specific bias towards one region or another. However, each year, that claim is shaken a little as I emerge from what is one of the best wine tasting events held in San Francisco, The Gambero Rosso Tre Bicchieri tasting.

For those unfamiliar with the [Gambero Rosso](#), it is essentially an organization focused on the promotion and evaluation of Italian food and wine. Each year the organization publishes a guide by the same name. The Gambero Rosso is the Italian Wine bible, and in my experience, it is the most thorough and high-quality guide to any wine region that exists in the world. The guide covers a dizzying 14,000+ wines each year from the incredibly diverse regions of Italy.

Each year the Gambero Rosso guide awards one, two, or three "Bicchieri" (or "glasses") to wines of exceptional character and quality. From tens of thousands, there are usually a couple of hundred Tre Bicchieri wines, and every Spring Gambero Rosso brings many of them to San Francisco for the media and the trade to taste.

While I don't love all the wines at this tasting, I am constantly amazed by the quality and individuality of these wines. I leave the tasting every year pining for many of these wines, and wishing I had the means to add them to my collection, though invariably, there are always some fantastic \$15 wines that are easy to seek out and find. It's quite a contrast to attend this tasting merely a week or two after tasting 200 barrel samples of Napa Cabernet. Comparing Napa Valley to the whole of Italy is quite unfair, of course, but the adjacency of the two tastings definitely provides the opportunity to reflect on how narrow an experience one would have if they only drank wines from Napa.

This year I was particularly taken by a number of 2005 Barolos which are hitting the market after the much vaunted 2004 vintage and not getting the attention they deserve, in my opinion. I also fell head over heels in love with yet another wine from the flanks of the volcano -- my next trip to Italy absolutely must include a pilgrimage to Etna.

Without further ado, here's what I thought of these wines.

Whites

WHITE WINES WITH A SCORE AROUND 9.5

2008 Cantina Termeno A. A. Gewürztraminer Nussbaumer, Alto Adige. \$45

Pale gold in the glass, this wine has a beautifully fragrant nose of classic rose petal aromas. In the mouth it is rich and silky in texture with flavors of rose petals, orange blossom water, and a mixed bouquet of flowers that rise through an incredible finish. [Click to buy.](#)

2008 Donnafugata Passito di Pantelleria Ben Rye, Sicilia. \$25

Medium gold in the glass, this wine has a nose of freshly cut cedar and orange blossoms. In the mouth it is thick and sweet but with bright acidity that buoys flavors of candied orange peel, honey, and white flowers through a beautiful finish. Wow.

2007 Livon Braide Alte, Friuli Venezia Giulia. \$45

Pale blonde in color, this wine has a wonderful nose of green melon and floral aromas. In the mouth it offers rich silky textured flavors of star fruit, cucumber, and delicate white flowers that linger in a very long finish. The foundation of the wine is a deep rainwater minerality that is faint but persistent. Excellent.

WHITE WINES SCORING BETWEEN 9 AND 9.5

2008 Marisa Cuomo Costa d'Amalfi Fiorduva, Campania. \$42

Pale gold in the glass, this wine has a nose of peachy and vanilla aromas. In the mouth it is zingy and floral with orange zest and rose petal flavors, which morph to more citrus notes in the very long, clean finish. Delectable.

2008 Venica & Venica Collio Sauvignon Ronco delle Mele, Friuli Venezia Giulia. \$40

Palest gold in color, this wine practically explodes out of the glass with what may be the most incredibly floral set of aromas I've ever smelled on a wine. In the mouth it offers an incredibly delicate bouquet of mixed white flowers, from Lilly of the Valley to jasmine, all doused with rainwater and fresh green apple juice. An altogether disarming and beautiful wine. [Click to buy.](#)

NV Nino Franco Prosecco di Valdobbiadene Brut Rustico, Veneto. \$18. [Click to buy.](#)
2000 Ferrari Trento Giulio Ferrari Riserva del Fondatore Brut, Trentino. \$70.

WHITE WINES WITH A SCORE AROUND 9

2007 La Vis/Valle di Cembra Ritratto Bianco, Trentino. \$16
2008 Cantina Produttori San Michele Appiano A. A. Sauvignon St.Valentin, Alto Adige. \$45
2006 Cantina Terlano A. A. Terlano Pinot Bianco Vorberg is., Alto Adige. \$30
2008 Cantine Lunae Bosoni Colli di Luni Vermentino Cavagino, Liguria. \$??
2008 I Campi Soave Cl. Campo Vulcano, Veneto. \$25
2005 Il Mosnel Franciacorta Satèn, Lombardia. \$??
2007 Jermann Vintage Tunina, Friuli Venezia Giulia. \$50
2008 Nino Franco Valdobbiadene Grave di Stecca Brut, Veneto. \$28
2008 Planeta Cometa, Sicilia. \$??
2006 Terre Cortesi Conero Vign. Del Parco Riserva, Marche. \$??
2007 Villa Sparina Gavi del Comune di Gavi Monterotondo, Piemonte. \$50
2008 Volpe Pasini COF Pinot Bianco Zuc di Volpe, Friuli Venezia Giulia. \$32

WHITE WINES SCORING BETWEEN 8.5 AND 9

2007 Ca' Rugate Recioto di Soave La Perlara, Veneto. \$??
2008 Cantine Lunae Bosoni Colli di Luni Vermentino Etichetta Lunae Nera, Liguria. \$??
2007 Cusumano Sàgana, Sicilia. \$20
2007 Gioacchino Garofoli Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Cl. Sup. Podium, Marche. \$20
2008 Ottella Lugana Sup. Molceo, Veneto. \$16
2008 Pietracupa Greco di Tufo, Campania. \$25
2008 Prà Soave Cl. Monte Grande, Veneto. \$30
2006 Terre Cortesi Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Cl. V. Novali Ris., Marche. \$??

WHITE WINES WITH A SCORE AROUND 8.5

2008 Ca' Rugate Soave Cl. Monte Fiorentina, Veneto. \$23
2002 Cesarini Sforza Trento Aquila Reale Brut Ris., Trentino. \$90
2004 Guido Berlucchi & C. Franciacorta Brut Extrême Palazzo Lana, Lombardia. ?
2007 Ottella Lugana Sup. Molceo, Veneto. \$25
2006 Perticaia Montefalco Sagrantino, Umbria. \$50
2007 Sergio Mottura Latour a Civitella, Lazio. \$18
2008 Sergio Mottura Grechetto Poggio della Costa, Lazio. \$18
2008 Tenute Sella & Mosca Vermentino di Gallura Monteoro, Sardegna. \$??
2008 Vitivinicola Broglia Gavi del Comune di Gavi Bruno Broglia, Piemonte. \$36

WHITE WINES SCORING BETWEEN 8 AND 8.5

2005 F.lli Giorgi OP Pinot Nero Brut Cl. 1870, Lombardia. \$??
2002 Cavit Trento Altemasi Graal Brut Ris., Trentino. \$49

Reds

RED WINES WITH A SCORE AROUND 9.5

2005 Batasiolo Barolo Boscareto, Piemonte. \$75

Light ruby in the glass this wine has a wonderfully floral nose of dried flowers, herbs, and redcurrants. In the mouth it offers redcurrant and raspberry flavors that mix with dried flowers. You could call the wine delicate but for the muscular tannins that underlie the gorgeous fruit and floral qualities that linger with excellent balance in the finish.

2004 Elvio Cagno Barolo V. Elena, Piemonte. \$110

Light ruby in color, this wine has an incredibly aromatic nose of cherry and cedar aromas with hints of the floral. In the mouth it is beautifully juicy with cherry, leather, cedar and redcurrant fruit supported by firm, leathery tannins and enlivened with great acidity. The wine finishes long and airy. Outstanding.

2007 Palari Faro Palari, Sicilia. \$65

Light ruby in color, this wine has a nearly otherworldly nose of dried flowers and a perfect summer's day, with an underlying brightness of fruit. In the mouth it is nothing short of stunning, with near perfect balance and acidity cradling delicate flavors of redcurrant, cherry, and again that heavenly floral quality. The faintest of tannins give some grip and body to the wine, and they have an incredible sweet aroma to them that is quite unlike any other wine I've had. Remarkable and compelling.

2005 Zenato Amarone della Valpolicella Cl., Veneto. \$60

Dark garnet in color, this wine has a rich beautiful nose of violets and cassis fruit. In the mouth the wine offers the light sweetness of dried cherry fruit with rich chocolate covered cherry cordials and violets. The wine has an incredibly long finish that incorporates hints of spices. Stunning.

2004 Palari Faro Palari, Sicilia. \$n/a.**RED WINES SCORING BETWEEN 9 AND 9.5**

2005 Castellare di Castellina I Sodi di San Niccolò, Toscana. \$70
 2005 Marchesi di Barolo Barolo Sarmassa, Piemonte.
 2006 Allegrini Dedicato a Walter, Veneto. \$120
 2006 Barone Ricasoli Chianti Cl. Castello di Brolio, Toscana. \$58
 2005 Batasiolo Barolo Cerequio, Piemonte. \$75
 2005 Ettore Germano Barolo Cerretta, Piemonte. \$80
 2007 Fattoria Carpineta Fontalpino Do Ut Des, Toscana. \$35
 2006 Fattoria di Felsina Fontalloro, Toscana. \$??
 2007 Fattoria Petrolo Galatrona, Toscana. \$120
 2001 Fontanafredda Barolo Lazzarito V. La Delizia, Piemonte. \$110
 2004 Giancarlo Travaglini Gattinara Ris., Piemonte. \$??
 2006 Isole e Olena Cepparello, Toscana. \$70
 2005 Malvirà Roero Renesio Ris., Piemonte. \$60
 2004 Masi Amarone della Valpolicella Cl. Campolongo di Torbe, Veneto. \$120
 2006 Michele Chiarlo Barbera d'Asti Sup. La Nizza Court, Piemonte. \$55
 2004 Oddero Barolo Mondoca di Bussia Soprana, Piemonte. \$60
 2007 Palari Rosso del Soprano, Sicilia. \$35
 2005 Pio Cesare Barolo Ornato, Piemonte. \$109
 2006 Podere Le Berne Nobile di Montepulciano, Toscana. \$33
 2006 Podere Sapaio Bolgheri Sapaio Sup., Toscana. \$45
 2005 Prunotto Barolo Bussia, Piemonte. \$90
 2004 San Giorgio Brunello di Montalcino Ugolforte, Toscana. \$65
 2006 Velenosi Rosso Piceno Sup. Roggio del Filare, Marche. \$54
 2005 Vietti Barolo Lazzarito, Piemonte. \$150

RED WINES WITH A SCORE AROUND 9

2005 Allegrini Amarone della Valpolicella Cl., Veneto. \$90
 2006 Benanti Etna Rosso Serra della Contessa, Sicilia. \$??
 2005 Brezza & Figli Giacomo Barolo Sarmassa, Piemonte. \$75
 2006 Ca' del Baio Barbaresco Asili, Piemonte. \$??
 2007 Cantele Amativo, Puglia. \$??
 2007 Castello Monaci Artas, Puglia. \$35
2006 Donnafugata Contessa Entellina Milleunanotte, Sicilia. \$90
 2006 Fattoria Colle Allodole Montefalco Sagrantino Colleallodole, Umbria. \$90
 2006 Feudi della Medusa Gerione, Sardegna. \$80
 2007 Feudo Maccari Saia, Sicilia. \$??
 2004 Fontanafredda Barolo Lazzarito V. La Delizia, Piemonte. \$110
 2005 G. D. Vajra Barolo Bricco delle Viole, Piemonte. \$??
 2007 Giovanni Almondo Roero Bric Valdiana, Piemonte. \$55
 2007 Guerrieri Rizzardi Valpolicella Cl. Sup. Ripasso Poiega, Veneto. \$??
 2006 Melini Chianti Cl. La Selvanella Ris., Toscana. \$25
 2005 Michele Chiarlo Barolo Cerequio, Piemonte. \$99
 2006 Nino Negri Valtellina Sfursat, Lombardia. \$45
 2006 Nino Negri Valtellina Sfursat 5 Stelle, Lombardia. \$70
 2006 Pelissero Barbaresco Vanotu, Piemonte. \$65
 2007 Pietradolce Etna Rosso Archineri, Sicilia. \$35
 2007 Rocca di Frassinello Baffo Nero, Toscana. n/a

2006 Serafini & Vidotto Montello e Colli Asolani Il Rosso dell'Abazia, Veneto. \$60
2006 Tenuta Mazzolino OP Pinot Nero Noir, Lombardia. \$??
2006 Tenuta Olim Bauda Barbera d'Asti Sup. Nizza, Piemonte. \$40
2006 Tenuta San Guido Bolgheri Sassicaia, Toscana. \$150
2007 Tormaresca Masseria Maime, Puglia. \$40
2006 Valle Reale Montepulciano d'Abruzzo San Calisto, Abruzzo. \$38

RED WINES SCORING BETWEEN 8.5 AND 9

2006 Antinori Tignanello, Toscana. \$95
2004 Antonelli - San Marco Montefalco Sagrantino Chiusa di Pannone, Umbria. \$??
2006 Argentiera Bolgheri Sup. Argentiera, Toscana. \$??
2007 Barone Ricasoli Chianti Cl. Brolio, Toscana. \$22
2006 Barone Ricasoli Casalferro, Toscana. \$51
2005 Benanti Il Drappo, Sicilia. \$??
2004 Canalicchio - Franco Pacenti Brunello di Montalcino, Toscana. \$??
2006 Cantine Lunae Bosoni Colli di Luni Rosso Niccolo V, Liguria. \$??
2006 Castello di Cigognola OP Barbera Castello di Cigognola, Lombardia. \$??
2006 Cesarini Sforza Chianti Cl. Villa Cafaggio Ris., Toscana. \$28
2005 Còlpetrone Montefalco Sagrantino Gold, Umbria. \$85
2006 Conti Zecca Nero, Puglia. \$??
2007 Di Majo Norante Molise Aglianico Contado Ris., Molise. \$18
2006 Famiglia Cecchi Coevo, Toscana. \$60
2007 Feudi del Pisciotto Nero d'Avola Versace, Sicilia. \$33
2004 Greppone Mazzi - Tenimenti Ruffino Brunello di Montalcino, Toscana. \$75
2007 Librandi Cirò Rosso Duca Sanfelice Ris., Calabria. \$23
2004 MezzaCorona Teroldego Rotaliano Nos Ris., Trentino. \$39
2006 Nino Negri Valtellina Superiore Mazer, Lombardia. \$35
2004 Podere La Fortuna Brunello di Montalcino, Toscana. \$??
2006 Poliziano Nobile di Montepulciano Asinone, Toscana. \$??
2006 San Patrignano Colli di Rimini Cabernet Montepirola, Emilia Romagna. \$??
2006 Tenuta La Fuga Nozzole, Toscana. \$??
2007 Tenuta San Guido Guidalberto, Toscana. \$40
2005 Tenuta Sant'Antonio Amarone della Valpolicella Campo dei Gigli, Veneto. \$125
2007 Terre del Principe Centomoggia, Campania. \$??
2006 Umani Ronchi Pelago, Marche. \$99
2006 Umani Ronchi Conero Cumaro Riserva, Marche. \$52
2006 Villa Medoro Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Colline Teramane Adriano, Abruzzo. \$??

RED WINES WITH A SCORE AROUND 8.5

2006 Cantina Convento Muri-Gries A. A. Lagrein Abtei Ris., Alto Adige. \$??
2007 Castello di Cigognola Barbera Dodecidedici, Lombardia. \$??
2008 Ermete Medici & Figli Reggiano Lambrusco Concerto, Emilia Romagna. \$21
2005 Guerrieri Rizzardi Amarone della Valpolicella Cl. Villa Rizzardi, Veneto. \$??
2007 Tasca d'Almerita Cabernet Sauvignon, Sicilia. \$70
2004 Tenuta La Fuga Brunello di Montalcino, Toscana. \$65
2006 Tenuta La Fuga Cabreo il Borgo, Toscana. \$50
2004 Tenute Sella & Mosca Alghero Marchese di Villamarina, Sardegna. \$??
2006 Villa Vignamaggio Vignamaggio, Toscana. \$97

RED WINES WITH A SCORE AROUND 8

2007 Bricco Maiolica Diano d'Alba Sup. Söri Bricco Maiolica, Piemonte. \$??