

Selections



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Notturmo by Ferro Carlo – Our First VINTAGES Release!!!



F E R R O
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It seems so long ago!

It was the fall of 2005. We wanted to start a wine club and needed some wineries, so we enrolled in the huge Vinisud wine show that would be held in Montpellier in late February 2006. We had been told that this was a great way to meet winemakers from Southern France, Spain and Italy. We were to concentrate on Southern France; it was written right there in our business plan.

A couple of weeks later we received a call from the organizers of something called Cannes 2006 inviting us to stay at the fabled five star Carleton Hotel on the three kilometre long beach promenade called La Croisette in Cannes for a few days preceding Vinisud – all expenses paid!! In return, all we had to do was visit with a few vintners (who would be sponsoring our stay) and taste their products. We explained that we were not large, important wine agents. Heck, we hadn't even ordered our first bottle of wine! But the lure of the vast Ontario market and the LCBO was all they needed. So what could we do but accept?



The Carleton Hotel in Cannes

We intended to visit about twenty of our host producers - small, family-run wineries from southern France. When we arrived, the organizers had included a few additional wineries, which for some unfathomable reason wanted to see us, on our list. Two of them were Italian!! No way, I said. Remember the business plan! However, H el ene who had been arduously studying Italian

for the past two years thought it would be a dandy way to practice. “Just a social visit, mind, we don’t know anything about Italian wines”. So, late one morning after having already tasted about fifty wines (not as much fun as it might sound) we met with Lionello Rosso of Poderi Rosso Giovanni and Carlo Ferro of Azienda Agricola Ferro Carlo, two winemakers from Piedmont. Italian quickly filled the air like pollen in spring! Soon the twenty minutes allotted for the meeting were up and as we sauntered off to our next session H  l  ne said, “We have to sign up these two.” “But H  l  ne,” I wryly noted, “we didn’t taste their wine!”



Three days later we met again with Carlo and Lionello in Montpellier. I was determined to try their wines. As H  l  ne performed more linguistic exercises, I happily tasted away and came to the conclusion that they made very good wine. Perhaps we could make just two exceptions to our business plan.

Lionello, H  l  ne and Carlo – not a wine glass in sight!

Ferro Carlo and Its Wonderful Barbera d’Asti

The Ferro Carlo estate (we’ll present Lionello and his fine wines in a future issue of ‘Selections’) is comprised of ten hectares of vineyards in the borough of Agliano Terme, set between the Langhe and Monferrato districts in Piedmont (north-west corner of Italy). The third generation family-run winery grows Barbera, Dolcetto and Grignolino (I know - it all sounded like Greek to me too!) grapes in its meticulously maintained, south facing vineyards that are 300 metres above sea level. They produce three primary labels – “Giulia”, “Notturmo”, and “Roche”, all made from one hundred percent Barbera grapes.

Barbera d’Asti

Burton Anderson, an internationally acclaimed Italian wine authority who has lived in Tuscany for twenty-five years says this about Barbera d’Asti in his book, ‘Wines of Italy’:

Barbera d’Asti - The best wines are robust and full-bodied, with good acidity and are fuller and livelier than Barbera d’Alba. At its best Barbera d’Asti is hard to beat. Most is drunk fairly young. Also makes fruity novello. Some producers’ rich, structured wines will age a decade or more, though styles vary greatly in this vast zone of abundant production.

The Expressive Wines from Ferro Carlo

Of course we are going to feature our VINTAGES star, the crowd-pleasing 2004 “Notturmo”, but we are also pleased to present Ferro Carlo’s two other excellent, expressive red wines - the value-priced “Giulia” and the very classy, collectible “Roche” that come in **twelve-bottle cases**.

2004 “Notturmo” Barbera d’Asti Superiore – (14.5% Alc./Vol.)

\$19.95

We are thrilled to introduce you to our first wine to be carried by the LCBO’s specialty wine and spirits division, **VINTAGES**. It will be available in selected outlets on **June 23, 2007 – product # 026088**. We won’t go into the epic struggle that resulted in the listing; it would fill at least a chapter in a contemplated book about our vinous travails. Suffice it to say that two years of intensive Italian lessons do not adequately prepare one to translate one hundred or so pages of LCBO rules and regulations! Believe me, it is hard enough in English.



Here is what the VINTAGES panel said about “Notturmo” when they tried it in April: “Deep ruby colour with attractive aromas of plum, black cherry, smoke, tar and blueberry. It is dry, substantially fruity and is surrounded by a crisp/tangy core. Try this medium-bodied wine tonight with a truffle-infused pasta dish or put it in a cellar for 1-3 years.”

That is a very apt description, although it would go well with almost any pasta dish, grilled meats and charcuterie (it was terrific with Carlo’s homemade salami!). I also think it will keep well and improve in the cellar for at least ten years. I would decant it at least an hour before drinking and I believe it will mature beautifully in the cellar for at least five to seven years. Here is some more information about the wine. The yield is a stingy 35 hectolitres per hectare. It is vinified and kept in steel tanks for the first six months before being transferred to large oak barrels where it matures for at least a year. 2004 was a very good to excellent vintage in Piedmont.

The LCBO ordered 300 cases (3,600 bottles) of Notturmo for its VINTAGES outlets. If your favourite store hasn’t got it, ask them to tell you where it is being carried via their in-store computer.

2005 “Giulia” Barbera d’Asti – (13.5% Alc./Vol.)

\$16.80

This is sort of like the kid sister of the Notturmo – in fact, it is named after Carlo’s daughter. The big difference is that it does not spend any time in oak. After resting a year in steel tanks, it matures a further six months in the bottle before it is released. Grape selection is also very rigorous with a yield of only 42 hectolitres per hectare. A little less alcoholic, it is still a full-bodied wine that displays pleasing notes of raspberry, black cherry, leather and resin. It has a good tannic grip and promises to last for several years. I would decant this surprisingly complex wine at least an hour before serving – with BBQ fare, stews and most pasta dishes. This is one delicious wine for the money. [Order](#) some for Thanksgiving or the Grey Cup game.



2004 “Roche” Barbera d’Asti – (14.5% Alc./Vol.)

\$29.50

If the Giulia is the kid sister, the Roche is the big daddy of the Ferro Carlo trio of Barbera d’Asti



wines. It is named after the hill on which the vineyard is situated which, thanks to its position and soil, is considered one of the best Barbera growing locations of Agliano Terme. Like the Nottuno, the yield is a very selective 35 hectolitres per hectare from grapes exceeding fifty years of age. It too is vinified in steel vats and is matured for a year in new French barriques – small oak barrels. This is a huge, ruby red wine with excellent structure, body and aroma. It has a powerful bouquet of black cherries, leather, coffee, vanilla and

chocolate that all persist in the mouth. This is a real keeper that belongs in any cellar where it should remain and happily mature for at least a decade. I loved it. [Order](#) some for your stash or as a special Christmas gift.

Soon to Emerge from Arthur’s Cellar

Next will be the 2005 vintage of amazing Gigondas, Vacqueyras and Côtes du Rhône from Domaine Palon. Then will come some more marvellous Italian Barbera d’Asti from Poderi Rosso Giovanni, some wonderful, brooding Cahors from Château Famaey, nectar from the Burgundian house of Alex Gambal, some more Parker rated Châteauneuf-du-Pape (these from Mousset-Barrot), some delicious whites and a Blanquette de Limoux from Domaine Rives-Blanques and many others.

Where’s My Wine???

Generally, it will take three to four months from the time you order your wine till it is delivered. To find out where your next treasure is on its long journey from Europe, just go to our web site, www.arthursellers.com and click on “Delivery Status”. We update it regularly.

Where Can I Find Arthur’s Cellar Wine When Dining Out??

Timely question!

Bodega Restaurant (www.bodegarestaurant.com) at 30 Baldwin Street has a small supply of 2006 Rosé and 2005 Domaine Minervois red from Château Saint Jacques d’Albas on hand. Dine in their handsome restaurant or on the summer patio while you quaff some of Graham Nutter’s succulent wine along with chef and proprietor Paul Biggs’ splendid cuisine.

Le Paradis Brasserie Bistro (www.leparadis.com) at 166 Bedford Road has a good supply of white wines from a winery we have yet to introduce to our Members – Domaine Rives-Blanques. Get a preview of their scrumptious 2006 Le Chardonnay du Domaine, 2004 Cuvée de l’Odyssée Chardonnay, 2004 Dédicace Chenin Blanc or 2004 Cuvée Occitania Mauzac (a delightful surprise) while you savour David Currie’s superb bistro fare. Great food, great prices, great people!!

Tell them you are a Member of Arthur’s Cellar Wine Club!

Member Feedback

Your feedback is greatly appreciated. It helps us improve our club and better respond to your requirements. Many of your suggestions have been implemented and we are working on several others. Thank you and please keep the comments coming (jaswalker@arthursellers.com).

For the wine club to be successful, we need as many wine buying members as possible – please forward this newsletter to likely prospects and keep those referrals coming.

Thank you and ciao!

Hélène and Jim

PS: Our wines are also available for restaurants and other establishments that serve beverage alcohol by the glass – their prices will be a little lower because PST is not charged. If you are aware of any that might be interested, please let us know.

www.arthursellers.com

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