



STRAIGHT OFF THE VINE

Neil Cammies

I recently had the privilege to attend an Italy 2006 Anteprema tasting hosted by Berry Bros & Rudd at the historic Vintners Hall, London.

Consisting of some of the great wines of Italy before they are bottled to get an idea of the quality of the 2006 vintage, there was also the added advantage of gleaning advice from the wonderful wine makers to explain the harvest, technique and processes involved. The two main wines represented were Barbaresco and Barolo, both using the nebbiolo grape variety and from the Piedmont region in the very north-west of Italy.

Appreciating wines so young was a real challenge, but seeing beyond the taut yet expressive fruit and the very defined acidity and startling tannins gave an idea of what was to come.

Barbaresco houses represented were the perfumed wines with light attack of CASCINA DELLE ROSE (from £240), the whispered elegance but coupled with tannic structure from FRATELLI CIGLIUTI (from £204), the craft of RIVELLA SERAFINO (from £294) and the purist style born from rich biodiversity from ROAGNA (from £276).

Those used to the tar and roses flavour and aromas associated with Barolo would have been stunned by the differing styles featured here. The wines of FRATELLI ALLESSANDRIA (from £300) had the full floral bouquet coupled with soft tannins. From PIRA DI CHIARA BOSCHIS (from £396), Chiara produces in 2005 forward fruit bomb wines while the 2006 have a very traditional style. The wines of LUCIANO SANDRONE (from £816) were expressive on the nose and showed a huge

concentration of flavours.

The bright, frisky and balanced dark berry fruit from CANTINA MASCARELLO BARTOLO (from £582). While CASCINA FONTANA (from £294) showed delicate tannins to supplement the bright red cherry flavours.

PODERE MARCARINI (from £354) were classical in style with savoury punch to the deep, black cherry flavours.

A more relaxed style from GIOVANNI ROSSO DI DAVIDE ROSSO (from £450) showing punnets of expressive fruit.

GIUSEPPE MASCARELLO E FIGLIO (from £360) had the lightest of touches, with the floral aromas combining with an almost confectionery palate.

Stars from other regions were the sangiovese blends from the superb, approachable wines of TENUTA DI VALGIANO (from £288), where Laura and the gang tread the grapes at the winery overlooking Northern Tuscany. And finally one of the finest producers of chianti and a regular haunt of some of the world's great artists, including Anish Kapoor, is CASTELLO DI AMA (from £240) and their beautifully crafted wines.

Admittedly the wines from Berry Bros & Rudd above are some of the finest of their type, but it's worth rooting out Barolo, Barbaresco and other Italian greats locally.

The prices are for a case of 12 and in bond. Meaning duty, VAT and shipping are to be added when the wines are released. Check on www.bbr.com to find older examples that are sold by the bottle and are drinking perfectly now.

Any wine-related queries? Get in touch at neil.cammies@mediawales.co.uk and follow my blog on <http://blogs.walesonline.co.uk/lifestyle>