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Spit and Drive

Wine, corkscrew, go.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2010

Days of wine, and..well..more wine

In September and October, when wineries celebrate the harvest *and* introduce their new wines, the number of events one gets invited to can attend can weigh down an engagement book. The ones I can't pass up? Events where it's highly unlikely I'll have the opportunity to taste a lot of wines from one producer, side by side. (I'm still beating myself up over missing the Amarone seminar)



Monday, October 25th was such a day, the day Italy came to Manhattan! An early 11:00am start with a seminar at The New York Public library, and extraordinary space to hold events. A Grandi Marchi event, organized by this prestigious Italian association of wine producers that includes a range of producers from Tuscany based Antinori to Sicily's Donnafugata.

Piero Antinori, President of The Grandi Marchi Association gave the opening statements, with a brief overview of the enormous range of wines in different terroirs from the foothills of the Swiss Alps, Piedmonte area, to Sicily. The speakers who followed included Augusto Buffo, representing the Pio Estate as well as the very dynamic Jose Rallo, daughter of the family who owns Donnafugata of Sicily.

Later at The Simply Italy trade/media wine tasting downstairs, I tried several new introductions including this exceptional Amarone from Masi. This producer, Masi, is from the Veneto region (north-west Italy) just south-west of Venice. Amarone is a style of winemaking that is in use in other areas (even Long Island!) This Amarone was



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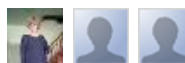
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ABOUT ME



Monica Forrestall

Monica Forrestall is currently a freelance writer, and prior to that was an on-staff editor at Food & Wine Magazine,

(over Long Island.) This Amarone was very full bodied, a rich, dense wine with strong stone fruit (cherry and plum) as well as cocoa flavours and aroma. The vines that face Lake Garda reap the benefits of the reflected sun's light, not to mention its mild climate. The Amarone production method involves the vinification of grapes that have been semi-dried for 3-4 months. This Costasera Amarone 2006 expresses a particular complexity and makes it a great match for mature cheeses.



Another outstanding wine, I tasted at the Simply Italy event was Ben Rye from Donnafugata. This sweet dessert or "meditation" wine as the Italians charmingly describe wines to enjoy on their own, has a bright amber yellow color. Intense notes include apricots, peaches, dried figs, honey, herbs and mineral notes. To pair with blue-veined or ripe cheeses or desserts.



Ran into a friend Frank DeFalco (left), who was pouring a delightful blend of Sangiovese and Canaiolo varietals: Rubesco Riserva Monticchio 2005 from the Umbria region.



Events today, overlapped and I had to exit early to get to the recently opened 42,000 square foot Italian Market, Eataly for the Vinitaly wine tasting event. I'm certain on paper this must have seemed like a natural match up of event and location, and a fabulous way of promoting wines, side by side with Italian food, but the reality was chaotic. Getting jostled by shoppers (who all seemed confused by the tasting tables that they were not welcome to stop at) as you're trying to focus on tasting was distracting and difficult. The acoustics are...well, like a marketplace ie: LOUD and shouting questions at wine sales reps, half of whom had a glancing familiarity with English, (winemakers seemed scarce here) was un-fun. I tasted some nice Sicilian wines from the producer Tema and ran into Lidia Bastianich, who runs the cooking school there. I had the



the Home Design Editor at Bridal Guide Magazine and Editorial Brand Manager for Sandra Lee Semi-Homemade magazine. Additionally she produced regular monthly product and food columns in Organic Style and Our Place magazines for many years. She has written innumerable articles for magazines and newspapers such as Town & Country magazine, Brix Magazine, Home, The Globe & Mail, The New York Sun and The Chronicle Herald as well as websites like Liquor.com and Fashionablebride.com.

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company of my friend Sarah, a fan of wine who lived in Italy for many years and picked up some minuscule cheese raviolis for my sons dinner.



Capped off the day by zipping across town to the Gramercy Hotel to a dinner at Danny Meyer's Maialino (famous for their all Italian wine list) hosted by the Consorzio for Chianti Wines. There was a tasting of seven Chiantis set up from the lightest bodied wine from producer Badia di Morrone a 2009 Sodi del Paretaio (left) to the fullest, a Chianti Superiore

2008 from Ruffino. My second visit to Maialino, the pork dish, which had been delicious the first time there, was overcooked and sat on people's dishes as guests raised their hands requested more of the juicy roasted chicken from the servers circling the table with platters of meat. Couldn't help thinking my friend Les makes a better pork dish. Altho the cracklin' still rocked.

--Monica Forrestall

Posted by Constant Comment at 7:19 AM 

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