

Wines from the Heel of the Italian Boot Come to NYC

Charles Scicolone (October 04, 2010)



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The beginning of fall marked the beginning of Puglia Wine Week in the US and producers from the heel of the Italian boot came here to present their wines. Five cities were visited: Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, San Francisco and New York.

In NYC a seminar and tasting with 20 producers from the different wine regions of Puglia--Daunia, Murge, Valle D'Itria, Messapia and Salento - was the first event. In order to make sure that consumers were able to taste these wines, many wine stores held tastings of the wines from these producers during the week.



A welcome dinner at Mia Dona, a restaurant specializing in the food and wine of Puglia, was hosted by the owner, Donatella Arpaia. In addition, during the week 13 restaurants held wine and food dinners for the press each one hosted by a representative from a winery. Each producer presented four wines to be paired with Apulian dishes.

In another program open to the public, Italian restaurants citywide created special Puglia-inspired menus for the week of September 27 to October 2. The menus were individually price-fixed and accompanied by an optional selection of Puglian wines from one of eight participating wineries which included Albea, Barsento, Cefalicchio, D'Alfonso del Sordo, Due Palme, Tormaresca, Vallone and Vigne E Vini.

These were some of the wines which I especially liked with some comments.

Agricole Vallone – Salento - This producer presented their wines at restaurant l'Artusi

and I was able to taste the wines here with dinner. The representative from the winery at the dinner was Giuseppe Malazzini.

Vigna Flaminio Brindisi Rosato DOC 2009 – 70% Negroamaro, 30% Montepulciano, \$16

Vigna Flaminio Brindisi Riserva Rosso DOC 2006. Grapes: 70% Negroamaro, 20% Montepulciano and 10% Malvasia Nera di Brindisi. \$16

Graticciaia Salento Rosso IGT 2005. 100% Negroamaro. This is one of the most expensive wines from Puglia, \$75, and worth the money. When I was working for an Apulian restaurant, I introduced this wine in NY. This is a very particular wine because the grapes are dried on straw mats (a play on the wine's name) between 15-20 days in the sun and wind of Puglia. Mr. Malazzini made sure we understood that the grapes were not late harvest. He felt that drying the grapes in this way produced a very special wine and preserved the wine's acidity. The wine was then aged for one year in new barriques and another in steel before it was released.

Alberto Longo – Daunia - I met Alberto Longo in NYC in January at Vino 2010 and I tasted his wines with him at Keste Pizza and Vino in NYC.

La Fossette Puglia Bianco IGT 2009. 100% Falanghina. Alberto said that production area was in San Severo' in Northern Puglia and the soil here was calcareous with loam texture. The wine is cold fermented in stainless steel tanks and the wine is kept on the lees for three months.

Donnadele Puglia Rosato IGT 2009. 100% Negroamaro. The production area was in Lucera also in Northern Puglia and the soil type was the same. It is vinified in steel in steel vats skin contact between 4-8 hours.

Cacc'eMmitte di Lucera DOC 2008. 55% Nero di Troia, 30% Montepulciano and 15% Bombino Bianco. The wine is aged in cement vats for 6 to 8 months and then in bottle before release.

Vini Coppa d'Oro - Daunia

Donna Ilia Anima Puglia Bianco IGT 2009 - 100% Bombino Bianco

Donna Ilia Amalia Puglia Rosso IGT 2009 - 100% Nero di Troia

Torrevento – Murge

Torre del Falcone Murgia Rosso IGT 2007- 100% Nero di Troia

Ghenos Primitivo di Manduria DOC 2007- 100% Primitivo



Apollonio- Salento This winery wine uses oak from America, France and Russia and ages one of its wines in acacia.

Terragnolo Salento Rosso IGT 2004 – 100% Primitivo this wine was aged in large barrels (botti) made of American oak.

Divoto Copertino Riserva Rosso DOC 2001- 70% Negroamaro and 30% Montepulciano

This wine was aged 24 months in large barrels (botti) made of French oak. The wine was not showing its age and I believe it could last for a number of years.

Albea – Valle D'Itria

Il Selva Locorotondo Bianco DOC 2009 – 60% Verdeca, 35% Bianco di Alessano and 5% Fiano Minutolo. The wine is fermented in stainless steel tanks and does not undergo maloactic fermentation.

LUI Puglia Rosso IGT 2006 – 100% Nero di Troia. Fermentation in stainless steel tanks and maceration on the skins for 16 to 18 days with regular pumping over. It is aged 10 months in Never, Allier and Troncais barriques.

Conti Spagnoletti Zeuli – Murge

Castel del Monte Rosso DOC 2009 – Nero di Troia and Montepulciano

Tormaresca – Murge – This winery is owned by Piero Antinori of Tuscan fame. The representative at the tasting from the winery was Peppino Palumbo, managing director and supervisor for cultivation. He made it clear that “Our daily commitment is to the territory identity of Puglian wines.”

Bocca di Lupo Castle del Monte Rosso DOC 2006 – 100% Aglianico. The wine is fermented in stainless steel tanks. The malolactic fermentation takes place in barriques made of French and Hungarian oak and the wine is aged in these same barrels for 15 months. It is aged another 12 months in bottle before it is released.

Over all I was very pleased with the wines at the tasting and those I had with dinner at Mia Donna and L'Artusi. I have always liked the wines from Puglia and have been drinking them ever since I visited Puglia for the first time in 1983.

There will be a full report on the wines, food and olive oil of Puglia when I return from my trip there in late November. I have not been there in three years and am looking forward to the trip after tasting these wines and seeing what else I can discover.

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