

Piemonte. Land of Perfection

Michele Scicolone (October 20, 2010)



Members of the Vignaioli Piemontesi Association visited New York to introduce their wines which are being featured at Eataly.

Representatives from nine wineries belonging to the the Vignaioli Piemontesi Association arrived in New York this week to introduce a marketing campaign aimed at promoting the region of Piedmont and its magnificent wines. The wines are being featured all week at Eataly, the new Italian market and restaurant complex located at 5th Avenue and 23rd Street.

Along with a group of restaurateurs, wine buyers and other journalists, I had a chance to sample some of these wines Monday at a luncheon at Del Posto Restaurant, which was recently given a 4 star review in the New York Times. Gianluigi Biestro, director of the Vignaioli Piemontesi Association, gave us a presentation on the current situation in Piedmont. The region, located in northwestern Italy is separated from France to the west by the Alps, and is one of the most prestigious Italian winemaking regions. Mr. Biestro said that "to a Piemontese, the first job of a wine is to be red", though the region is also know for its excellent white wines.



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We began the meal with one of those whites, Alta Langa Spumante Contessa Rosa NV from Fontanafredda. Dry, crisp and sparkling it was a refreshing starter and a delicious match to the first course, Lidia's Lobster Salad Catalana, cold poached lobster in a spicy tomato sauce with celery and yellow zucchini for a bit of crunch. Barbera d'Alba Superiore 2005 from Cantina di Govone was an alternate wine choice.

Agnolotti dal Plin, meaning "ravioli with a pinch" for the way they are shaped, are the quintessential stuffed pasta from the Piedmont Region. Typically the agnolotti are served with a meat ragu, or butter and sage sauce, but at Del Posto they were sauced with a bright green puree of ramps, a kind of wild leek, and butter. The slight bitterness of the sauce did not overwhelm the delicious meaty



filling and with the pasta we drank Dolcetto di Dogliani 2009 and the Dogliani “Il Clou” 2008, also from Clavesana.

The next course was a classic New York Strip steak with crisp fried potatoes, arugula and tomato raisins, tiny roasted cherry tomatoes with a sweet, concentrated flavor. With it we sampled four different wines. The first, was the “Paesi Tuoi”, a 2005 Barolo from Terre da Vino. Next came my favorite, the Barbaresco 2004 from Vignaioli Elvio Pertinace. This was followed by the Barbaresco “La Casa in Collina” 2003 from Terre da Vino and Barolo Serralunga 2005 from Fontanafredda.

Unfortunately, I had to get back to work, so I did not stay for dessert, a Tartufo al Caffè, with Dark Chocolate, Sant’Eustachio Coffee & Cinnamon Croutons which was served with Moncucco Moscato d’Asti 2009 from Fontanafredda. As I write this, I am really regretting that I had to miss it.

The luncheon was a splendid opportunity to sample these outstanding wines as they should be enjoyed, with food inspired by the classic cooking of the region. For me it was a preview of the good food and wine I will be enjoying when I go to Piedmont in a few weeks. I wonder if I can find that Tartufo in Alba.

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