

## Tre Bicchieri 2013

The annual Tre Bicchieri tasting is a highlight for anyone who appreciates Italian wine. The natural question is whether all these wines are indeed the very best examples of their denominations. I find myself agreeing with the assessment of Gambero Rosso in the sense that I am generally convinced of the very high standard of their selections. Here and there, of course, there is a wine that I feel may fall short of meriting top honors. Included in my notes are the latest releases of Tignanello, Ornellaia and Sassicaia. You will find my notes for Amarone awarded Tre Bicchieri in the separate “Amarone Families” file.

### **Sergio Mottura Poggio della Costa 2011 (Lazio) \*\*\*\*+**

*Pale brilliant yellow gold. Strikingly pure, clean nose, still youthfully restrained, with a suggestion of white fruits and a lovely creaminess. The palate is similarly pure with a composed, caressing quality. This shows beautiful understatement and finesse.*

### **Sergio Mottura Grechetto Latour a Civitella 2010 (Lazio) \*\*\*\***

*Pale brilliant yellow gold. The aroma is clean, soft and rich yet still held back, revealing a subtle creamy blanched hazelnut note. The attack is fine and rather delicate, then the wine gains in richness and expression. The finish offers a very fine ripe spine of acidity and a particularly smooth final impression. A Two Glass winner.*

### **Livon Collio Friulano Manditocai 2010 (Friuli Venezia Giulia) \*\*\*\*+**

*Bright yellow gold. Beautifully expressive and clean nose of yellow peach and a hint of mango. In the mouth, this white is ripe and expansive with marked volume and expressiveness, finishing very well-balanced with a ripe acid frame.*

**Ottella Lugana Superiore Molceo 2010 (Veneto) \*\*\*\*+**

*Pale bright yellow gold. Enticing, ultraclean and inflected aroma of white flowers and white fruits. The palate is very finely calibrated and poised, displaying arresting, pure aromatics which last through a persistent finale.*

**Ottella Lugana Le Crete 2011 (Veneto) \*\*\*(\*)**

*Pale brilliant yellow gold. Again striking for its cleanliness and purity to the nose, which exhibits nuanced white fruits. The taste is clean, pure, precise and lasting with fine acidity carrying the youthful flavors. Needs 6 months to show more. Two Glasses.*

**Mamete Prevostini Valtellina Superiore Riserva 2009 (Lombardy)**

**\*\*\*\*(+)**

*Very pale brick with a brown cast. Fabulous and exciting nose with considerable reserve revealing small red fruits, dried flowers and a faint tarry accent. The palate has impressive concentration without any weight or viscosity, leaving ultrafine, complex aromatic highlights. A wine of outstanding finesse which demands keeping to reach its full potential.*

**Roccolo Grassi Valpolicella Superiore 2009 (Veneto) \*\*\*\*(\*)**

*Moderately dense very dark garnet. The nose displays uncommon richness and purity for Valpolicella. There are perfectly ripe dark fruits and a dusty overtone. On the palate, the fabulous fruit quality and ideal maturity are evident once more, and the wine is precise and elegant. The finish is exceptionally long, with very fine persistent acidity. Very young and undeveloped but of superb quality for its denomination.*

**La Valentina Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Spelt 2008 (Abruzzo) \*\*\*\*(+)**

*Dense very dark red with purple cast. Aromatically, the wine is warm and very rich with generous, ripe dark fruit. The taste shows marked richness as well, though it is held in check by a ripe backbone of acidity. There is a lovely enveloping, mouth-coating feel at the center. Still reserved, this impressive 2008 will develop over the mid-term.*

**Barba Montepulciano d'Abruzzo I Vasari 2009 (Abruzzo) \*\*\*(\*)**

*Opaque black purple to the eye. The nose is potent and super-concentrated with dense black fruit. Surprises on the palate with its caressing, fleshy texture. The wine is full, mouth-coating and lasting. Ripe, well-integrated acidity carries and frames the taste. Needs some time to be tamed and may be superior.*

**Podere Castorani Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Riserva 2008 (Abruzzo) \*\*\*\*(+)**

*Nearly dense very dark red. Very attractive, inviting and warm to the nose with generous dark fruits. The palate is also marked by bountiful mature fruit with a sweet undertone. There is impressive volume and breadth. The wine finishes with a clean, dry but notably ripe fruit aftertaste. Ample and appealing style.*

**Podere Castorani Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Amorino 2007 (Abruzzo) \*\*\*\*(+)**

*Dense very dark red. Big, powerful nose with a combination of red and dark fruits and a tarry accent. The palate is ripe, fleshy and full-bodied. This is a very generous wine but short of heavy-handed. Firms up with fresh, clean acid frame. Still very young.*

**Illuminati Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Colline Teramane Zanna Riserva 2008 (Abruzzo) \*\*\*\*(\*)**

*Dense very dark red. Intense aromatics offering creamy red fruits and oak. The taste shows particular focus, restraint and definition from firm grip and elevated acidity. Overall, the wine is stylish, elegant, a touch austere, and still in the early phase of its life. This has been crafted with skill and departs from the dense, extracted style of Montepulciano.*

**Cantina Tollo Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Cagiolo Riserva 2009 (Abruzzo) \*\*\*(\*)**

*Opaque black purple. Super-ripe, dense black plum fruit dominates the nose. In the mouth, this Montepulciano is particularly ripe and rich with very ample mature fruit qualities. The wine is refreshed by a clean bite of acidity at the end.*

**Vietti Barbera d'Asti Superiore Nizza La Crena 2009 (Piedmont) \*\*\*\*(+)**

*Moderately dense very dark red with purple rim. The nose is very clean with youthfully restrained ripe dark red fruit. The palate similarly delivers a sense of reserve and possesses a soft center and a fresh, clean, dry finale. Still quite young, the classy Vietti Barbera will come out more with a few years in bottle.*

**Alessandria Barolo San Lorenzo 2008 (Piedmont) \*\*\*\*(+)**

*Pale dark brick-garnet. This Barolo delivers a sensational, perfumed nose with an amalgam of subtle red fruit and wood notes. The taste is very fine, polished and particularly sensual in feel for such a young Barolo. The flavors remain muted and there is a delicate, precise acid frame and fine-grained tannins at the conclusion.*

**Abbona Barolo Terlo Ravera 2008 (Piedmont) \*\*\*\*(+)**

*Pale very dark brownish brick. The nose is warm and deep with sweet dried red fruit, roasted accents, and a hint of menthol. The taste is far more backward and closed, ending with powerful grip and a hint of a long finish to come. A wine to forget in the cellar for at least a decade.*

**Marchesi di Barolo Barolo Sarmassa 2008 (Piedmont) \*\*\*\*(\*) !**

*Moderately dense very dark brown-brick. Arresting and profound aroma which is clearly very rich though largely undeveloped. There is budding complexity and a suggestion of creamy small red fruits. The palate is layered and multidimensional already. Despite its innate concentration, this superb Barolo has a surprisingly light feel and an inflected aromatic lift. The finish is long, sinewy and very young. First-class example.*

**Badia a Coltibuono Chianti Classico Cultus Boni 2009 (Tuscany) \*\*\*\*(+)**

*Moderately dense very dark red brick. Reserved at first to the nose with a creamy quality, then shows youthful small red fruits with notable underlying intensity. There are hints of spice and toasted wood. The attack is impressive and the wine is poised with a finely calibrated structure. There is inherent strength and elegance with a flourish of defining acidity at the end. Very young, with excellent cellaring potential over a decade or more.*

**Brancaia Chianti Classico Riserva 2009 (Tuscany) \*\*\*\*(\*)**

*Moderately dense very dark red-garnet. Aromatically, this Riserva display an intense, focused and complex profile. There are toasty and dusty accents together with sweet red fruits. The palate stands out for its beautiful focus, precision and length. The wine gains in complexity and expression from entry to finish, exhibiting both concentration and elegance in a balanced ensemble. Beautifully done.*

**Castello di Monsanto Chianti Classico Cinquantenario Riserva 2008 (Tuscany) \*\*\*(\*)**

*Moderately dense dark brick garnet. The aroma displays very ripe, warm and lifted dark red fruit with roasted notes. The wine has concentration and a great deal in reserve on the attack, then reveals more on a long, expansive finish. The tannins are firm and strong but not hard, and there is a notable spine of acidity.*

**Castello di Bolgheri Bolgheri Superiore 2009 (Tuscany) \*\*\*\*(+)**

*Moderately dense very dark red. The youthful, warm aroma offers a sense of depth and nascent complexity. Red fruit and oak are carefully integrated, and the wine shows poise and balance in the mouth. The palate is framed by a firm acid spine and well-integrated though pronounced tannins. Dry and authoritative. A mix of 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Cabernet Franc & 25% Merlot.*

**Podere Sapaio Bolgheri Superiore Sapaio 2009 (Tuscany) \*\*\*\*(+)**

*Dense black with purple rim. Highly concentrated, powerful and fresh nose with profound black fruits. The palate is similarly dense, very young and held back. The finish suggests the potential of this wine and is long, dry and assertive at this stage, with underlying black fruits and a dusty note. Evocative of its grape mix and Tuscan origins. 70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Cabernet Franc & 10% Petit Verdot.*

**Tenuta San Guido Bolgheri Sassicaia 2009 (Tuscany) \*\*\*\*(\*)!**

*Moderately dense dark brick-garnet. Concentrated, very reserved and warm to the nose, offering understated, classy red fruits and skillful oak integration. In the mouth, Sassicaia is strikingly pure in its tone and feel as well as concentrated and harmonious. The wine shows very careful selection and handling in all respects. There is an undertone of sweet red fruit. The finish is marked by a structure of pronounced acidity and*

*firm, integrated tannins. The youthful flavors remain for a very long time on the palate. At a very early stage of its life. Lives up to its reputation. 85% Cab Sauvignon & 15% Cab Franc. Aged 24 months in barrique.*

**Tenuta Sette Ponti Orma 2009 (Tuscany) \*\*\*(\*)**

*Dense dark red garnet with purple rim. Orma exhibits a very rich and warm aroma with generous red fruits. On the attack, the wine is muted, and overall the fruit is concealed by prominent oak. There is a ripe frame together with subtle red fruit and wood accents at the end.*

**Tenuta dell'Ornellaia Masseto 2009 (Tuscany) \*\*\*\*(+)**

*Nearly dense very dark garnet red. Aromatically, Masseto exhibits focus, concentration and restraint with a skillful marriage of red fruit and wood treatment. The palate is especially backward, revealing a highly concentrated core together with a powerful structure of tannin and acidity. This is very young and undeveloped with long-term keeping potential. Italy's most famous Merlot (with a nod to Montiano) speaks more of its terroir than the grape variety.*

**Tenuta dell'Ornellaia Bolgheri Superiore Ornellaia 2009 (Tuscany) \*\*\*\*(\*)**

*Dense very dark red. The aroma of Ornellaia is reserved at first, then reveals profound, controlled and intense dark red fruits with notes of wood maturation. The taste is impressively rich and boasts ample dark red fruit. The wine is polished at the center and chewy in the aftertaste, and the flavors are largely mute and undeveloped. The wine finishes with a firm, well-structured frame. An outstanding wine for extended cellaring. 52% Cab Sauv, 22% Merlot, 21% Cab Franc & 5% Petit Verdot. Aged in 70% new barriques.*

**Marchesi Antinori Tignanello 2009 (Tuscany) \*\*\*(\*)**

*Dense very dark garnet. Warm, very generous aroma of ripe dark fruit together with a touch of fruit compote and an oxidative accent in the background. In the mouth, Tignanello is ripe, full and fat. The wine possesses plenty of substance but is not particularly elegant, and is backed by moderate ripe acidity. There is a sediment of some kind; given its youthfulness, it is likely to be tartrate-based but bears further inspection to be sure. 80% Sangiovese, 15% Cab Sauvignon & 5% Cab Franc. Aged in French and Hungarian oak.*

**Poliziano Vino Nobile di Montepulciano 2009 (Tuscany) \*\*\*\*(+)**

*Moderately dense very dark red brick. This Tuscan red offers a high-toned aroma with toasty and roasted notes. There is excellent intensity but little development. The taste is focused, nuanced and persistent. The wine is framed by clean, bright acidity and leaves an overall impression of precision. In need of several years in bottle to reveal itself.*

**Poderi Boscarelli Vino Nobile di Montepulciano Nocio dei Boscarelli 2008 (Tuscany) \*\*\*(\*)**

*Moderately dense very dark red with small purple rim. The nose displays well-integrated toasty, creamy oak and small red fruits. The aroma is clean, pure and concentrated. The attack is direct and has youthful force. There is evident concentration and intensity along with a firm, dry finale. This is a very young wine in need of 5 to 7 years to soften and show more.*

**Terenzi Morellino di Scansano Madrechiesa Riserva 2009 (Tuscany) \*\*\*(\*)**

*Nearly moderately dense very dark red garnet. The aroma has concentrated ripe small red fruits and well-married oak. The palate follows in the same vein, offering ripe, sweet red fruit and attractive integration. Long, fresh and well-defined.*



**Giampaolo Tabarrini Montefalco Sagrantino Campo alla Cerqua 2008 (Umbria) \*\*\*(\*)**

*Moderately dense very dark red brick. Focused and young to the nose, offering small red fruits, wild berries, spice and wood notes. The wine is held back in the mouth with a sinewy conclusion. There are gripping tannins and dried red fruits. A backward wine which will benefit from aging of 8 to 10 years or more.*

**Colpetrone Montefalco Sagrantino 2007 (Umbria) \*\*\*\*(+)**

*Moderately dense brick red. Concentrated, intense aroma dominated by red fruit and creamy oak. The palate is focused and well-calibrated with a concentrated core. The aftertaste is quite long and delivers nuances of red fruit and oak. This Sagrantino is particularly fresh and has excellent presence in the mouth with a firm, dry ending.*

**Falesco Montiano 2010 (Lazio) \*\*\*\*(+)**

*Dense very dark red. The wine's aroma is very clean and delivers pure, soft red fruits and well-integrated oak with excellent concentration. The taste of this pure Merlot is ripe and harmonious, gaining in richness from attack to finish and concluding with a very fine acid spine and a touch of tannic grip. Skillfully crafted with all elements in place. This is still very young but has excellent potential.*