

**Tasting Notes
May 2022 Pick-up
Wines of Northern Italy**



Welcome to your May 2022 Smart Wine Club pickup. The theme this quarter is wine from the northern part of Italy.

We'll be enjoying wine from three regions: Piedmont, Friuli, and Emilia-Romagna. I always have fun tasting Italian wines, especially from the North, because they are often made with less-familiar grape varieties. For white wines, we have one made from the Cortese grape, as well as a Pinot Grigio made in an unusual style. We'll try a classic Lambrusco, the famed sparkling red wine of Emilia-Romagna which I think is really fun to open on a hot day. Lastly, we'll have three classic red grapes of the North: Dolcetto, Nebbiolo, and Barbera.

I hope you enjoy these bottles as we move into warmer weather (hopefully someday!!).

- **2019 Produttori del Gavi "Il Forte" Gavi DOCG** – Wines from Gavi are considered some of the best white wines from Piedmont, and are always made from 100% Cortese grapes. The grapes used in this classic example grow in the shadow of "Il Forte," an iconic ancient fortress that overlooks the village of Gavi. The wine is made by a co-op of 83 local families that joined together in 1951. The wine itself is an intense straw-yellow color, with lovely, delicate aromas of peach and almonds. It has a wonderful balance between lively acidity and a creamy texture in the mouth. Reg retail: \$16 Smart price: \$15

Pairing: The most famous food pairing for Gavi wines is any type of seafood dish, from sushi, to pasta with clam sauce, to seafood risotto. They also pair well with goat cheese, olives/olive oil, and fresh herbs or pesto.

- **2020 Di Lenardo Pinot Grigio "Gossip", Friuli** – This is a very interesting pinot grigio made in the traditional "ramato" style which was nearly ubiquitous in the farmhouse wines of the Friuli region prior to the 1960s, when the style changed to appeal to the export market. The word "ramato" comes from the Italian word for copper, *rame*. It is not exactly rosé (made from red grapes but with the skin only in contact for a short time) nor is it orange wine (made from white grapes but with the skin in contact for a long time). The uniqueness of pinot grigio, which is a white-fleshed grape but with darker pinkish-grey skin, allows for the creation of ramato. You'll enjoy lush aromas of strawberry, elderberry, hay and dried roses with hints of dried fruit and nuts. Reg retail: \$16 Smart price: \$15

Pairing: Ramato wines are exceptionally food-friendly and can pair with charcuterie, shellfish and other seafood, chicken or pork, and a variety of Asian dishes.

- **Alfredo Bertolani Lambrusco Reggiano Rosso all Antica NV, Emilia-Romagna** – Lambrusco is both a family of red grape varieties as well as the classic and unusual style of lightly sparkling red wine from Emilia-Romagna. This particular bottle includes the sub-varieties Salamino, Marani, and Ancellotta. The Lambrusco style dates back to ancient Etruscan times (as in, 500BCE – very, very old). This winery started in 1920 and is known for respecting tradition while taking advantage of modern techniques for a superior product. The wine has a beautiful ruby color, with the frothiness and richness expected of Lambrusco. Enjoy a nice dry finish but with bold flavors of berry and plum.
Reg retail: \$16 Smart price: \$15

Pairing: Lambrusco is lower in alcohol and just a lot of fun! Open it with friends and surprise them with something new. It's great for brunch, summer afternoon sipping with hard cheeses or charcuterie, grilled pizza, or tacos.

- **2020 Vietti Dolcetto d'Alba DOC "TreVigne"** – The first of our three summery red wines, all of which are classic Piedmontese grapes, made in an un-oaked style. Oddly, the grape name Dolcetto means "little sweet one" although it is generally a little tart and good with food. This particular bottle has lovely raspberry and blackberry aromas and flavors of blueberries and minerality. Medium-bodied with pleasant soft tannins.
Reg retail: \$21 Smart price: \$19

Pairing: Any summery grilled meats or sausages; any pasta with red sauce; grilled or roasted vegetables; mushroom dishes.

- **2019 Ca' del Baio Langhe Nebbiolo DOC, Piedmont** – This is a fresh, easy-drinking take on Nebbiolo, which can sometimes tend to be overly massive and unpleasantly tannic. You'll enjoy aromas of dried flowers, scented geranium, and hints of clay; with light, fruity red berry flavors. Soft and supple with light to medium tannins. This bottle could age for a few years but is very tasty right now. Reg retail: \$18 Smart price: \$16

Pairing: This might sound crazy, but try it with Chinese Mapo Tofu or something similar. It pairs well with the savory brown sauce and the five-spice flavors of some Chinese dishes. Also great with a juicy beef or turkey burger.

- **2018 Bricco Carlina Barbera d'Asti "Fontanavi", Piedmont** – Siblings Camilla and Francesco Scavino founded Bricco Carlina in 2014 after experimenting with winemaking on their grandmother's farm as teenagers. All grapes are farmed organically. This is a light, bright Barbera with a gorgeous violet-red color. Aromas of delicate red and black fruits with hints of leather and spice. Reg retail: \$19 Smart price: \$17

Pairing: Barbera pairs well with rich blue cheese, warm spice blends (think Moroccan or Indian curries), and tannic foods like braised greens or walnuts. In general, richly flavored roasts or braises are a good choice.