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Dear friends:

It is with pride and deep satisfaction that I e-mail to your attention these excerpts from the Holiday 2006 News of published by

**WINE EXPO / Enoteca Centrale / Champagne World HQ**  
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Robert Rogness, the General Manager, is the author of these brilliant comments.  
Two notes: a) the Newsletter was "mutilated" keeping only the wines represented by Premium Brands.  
b) If you want to use these comments or portion of them, please mention the source.  
It is matter of fairness and courtesy.  
Enjoy the reading!

Paolo Boselli

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## Althe'a



**Althe'a dall'Azienda Agricola Drusian, Vittorio Veneto, Veneto**  
**Althea Prosecco di Valdobbiadene Frizzante, Veneto \$13.99**  
**Althea Prosecco di Valdobbiadene Spumante Extra Dry, Veneto \$14.99**  
**Althea Prosecco di Valdobbiadene Superiore di Cartizze, Veneto \$29.99**

This estate, run by Marika Drusian, is the latest addition to a long history of the Drusian family in the classical zona of Prosecco production. The wines are delicious, creamy, packed with pear and apple flavors and teeny, tiny bubbles and will put a grin on almost anyone's face. The Frizzante is about 2/3 the pressure of the Spumante which just makes it that much easier to get to your second refreshing glass. Cartizze, the most prized vineyard in the Prosecco zona, produces rich, complex and perfumed wine with intense white fruit flavors and wonderfully balancing acidity. NO, it is not bone dry, it is not TRYING to be! It is lush and opulent like a big fat kiss or a really ripe pear. Serve it with some salty anti-pasti or some mixed nuts and watch the smiles erupt. Cheers!

## Baltieri



**Azienda Agricola Baltieri, Mizzole, Veneto**  
**Baltieri Valpolicella Superiore Monte Paradiso 1997, Veneto \$26.99**

From TheWineGuru.com in December 1999: "Valpolicella 1994? \$30?!?!.....You gotta be #%\$&\*#% kidding me? My thoughts exactly, but then I tried it. It's wonderful. I found out this guy is the fruit source for the famed Dal Forno Romano. This Valpolicella was intense and very ripe. Dark in color. Aromas of cinnamon and spice with raisin and plum fruit scents. A mouthful of plum, green olive and finishes with tannin and good acidity. This wine came as a shock and I did not expect to be impressed by it. Good luck finding it, I'm not sure of its distribution in the US. \$30." That was SEVEN years ago and we have the current vintage at a LOWER price....welcome to WINE EXPO!

**Baltieri Amarone della Valpolicella Sortilegio 2000, Veneto \$59.99**

This is huge, unctuous, velvety, almost fluffy in texture, a real meal in a glass. Put on some ECM Jazz or maybe Eric Satie piano pieces and unwind...

**Baltieri Rosso del Veneto Primo 1997, Veneto \$120.00**

Bigger and richer yet and with added structure from 12 months in barriques, this one could have been packaged in tooth paste tubes!

**Baltieri Recioto della Valpolicella Pensiero 2001, Veneto \$59.99 / 500ml**

**Baltieri Recioto della Valpolicella Dolce di Regina 1996, Veneto \$149.99 / 375ml**

It must be Jelly 'cause Jam don't shake like that or If Edward Teller (father of the H-Bomb) had been a winemaker... Truly insanely concentrated answers to the magical question "Just how many bottles worth of grapes CAN you squeeze into a half bottle if you take most of the water out?". Some sort of fusion at the molecular level must be going on here as the wines approach vinous singularity: the flavors are not just more concentrated, there are MORE flavors and aromas than seem possible. They are the final expression of the chain that leads from Valpolicella through Ripasso and Amarone: Take enough old vine Corvina grapes to make a case of normal Valpolicella, air dry them till the juice is so thick that the valiant little yeasties give their lives for your pleasure at 15+% alcohol leaving just enough sweetness to make this the most comforting thing you've put in your mouth since Grandma's homemade hot cocoa with a dash of rum. Serve in place of Porto and enjoy it with (or drink from the navel of) someone you love paired with dried fruit, veined cheeses, roasted or smoked nuts or just light a fire, pick up a good book and meditate...Worth every penny.

## Caprari

### **The most Italian wines we offer: Are you man enough to drink a Fizzy Red?**

Have you ever caught yourself watching old Tom and Jerry, Bugs Bunny or Ren & Stimpy cartoons while eating Trix Cereal out of the box or maybe singing along in the car with the Archies about "Sugar, Sugar" (which was actually done by Alex Chilton so it is kind of secretly hip)? Even though your inner weasel is large and in charge most of the time, your inner child IS hiding in there and these wines are almost guaranteed to bring him / her out. Aside from making almost any food taste better, they are PERFECT for casual sipping with friends....Try one!

#### **Giuseppe e Ricciarda Caprari, Reggio Emilia, Emilia- Romagna**

Lambrusco is a very mysterious wine: most people will never admit to drinking any yet, as Carl Sagan might say, every year millions and MILLIONS of bottles are made, sold and enjoyed. Somehow when someone opens a bottle of quality Lambrusco, the contents seem to vaporize as if by magic and everyone forgets their old college war stories of bad run ins with Riunite, Cold Duck or worse. Cantina Caprari was established in 1927 and the current generation are making the best wines ever with a strong eye towards traditional methods, styles and culture (the Foieta is named after a traditional bowl used to consume broth, wine and filled pasta all in one go to fortify the vineyard workers for their tasks) while taking advantage of newer technology where it fits in.

#### **Caprari Lambrusco dell'Emilia Secco Frizzante Foieta 2004, Emilia-Romagna \$14.99**

BONE Dry, deeply colored and flavored with bright fruit and spice, this can be served with a wide range of plates: Penne Arrabbiata, real Smoked Bar-B-Que, your family Lasagna recipe, Tandoori meats, Szechuan stir fries, you name it, it works. Mmm Mmmm Good!

#### **Caprari Lambrusco dell'Emilia Dolce Frizzante 2004, Emilia-Romagna \$12.99**

The softer, sweeter (but not too sweet) sister of the Foieta, this rocks with fruit and cheese, spicy red sauce Q, picnic fare or just a sunset and a friend....

## Castel Sallegg



### **More Mountain Grown Goodies...**

#### **Castel Sallegg, Bolzano, Alto Adige**

In 1851 the Castel Sallegg with its surrounding vineyard was bought by Archduke Rainer of Austria, Viceroy of Lombardy-Veneto. It was then inherited by the Counts von Kuenburg through Prince Henry of Campofranco. You might expect a guy with a name like Count Georg von Kuenburg who lives in a castle worthy of a fairy tale to be a stuffed shirt straight out of a Peter Sellers movie set in the Alps but, in fact, he is wonderfully down to Earth and friendly and makes delicious wines that have been big hits here since we first took them in five years ago.

#### **Castel Sallegg Sauvignon (Blanc) 2005, Alto Adige, \$19.99**

One of our latest discoveries in the mountains of Alto Adige, this very food friendly: bursting with flavor and zest and packed with citrus and white fruits, herbal notes and minerals but no oak to slow you down on your way to a second glass.

#### **Castel Sallegg Gewürztraminer 2004, Alto Adige \$19.99**

BONE DRY, floral and spicy on the nose and one of our favorite casual sippers: delicious with anything from picnic goodies to sushi, charcuterie to Thai stir fries, brunch to a midnight snack.....

#### **Castel Sallegg Bischofsleiten Lago di Caldaro 2005, Alto Adige \$15.99**

The Lago di Caldaro is 100% Schiava Gentile, the traditional local wine for centuries (and a big hit in Germany as well), producing a red wine of very light color but with an inviting texture, soft red fruit flavors and fabulous drinkability. This is perfectly suited to grilled fish, ham, veal or pork dishes or just sipping with friends (a good chill on hot days or with spicy hot foods gives it a whole new and vibrant vibe as well).

#### **Castel Sallegg Pinot Nero 2001, Alto Adige \$17.99**

Let Pinot be Pinot! This delicious Pinot Nero (Noir) is rich and full flavored with intense cherry, smoke and meat on the nose and deeeeeep red fruit on the palate with a smooth, soft finish. While not as intense (or as costly!) as some of the current rage of Pinots that would be Blueberry Pancake Syrup, it is still looking for some air and some interesting food.

#### **Castel Sallegg Lagrein Dunkel Riserva 2002, Alto Adige \$24.99**

This Lagrein is the product of a story you could not make up: Count von Kuenburg was driving through a zona famous for producing some of the best Lagreins in the Alto Adige when he noticed a famous vineyard site being torn up to build a shopping center. Where most people would just bitch about "there goes the neighborhood", our friend Georg got on his cell phone, found out who owned the land and contracted to have dump trucks come and haul away 300 truckloads of soil and even the rocks underneath and take it to HIS estate. Starting from bedrock, he constructed a new hillside from scratch with not just this outstanding raw material but also perfect exposure to the sun and the results are fantastic. Deeeep, dark and lovely with intense plum, smoke and even coffee notes, this wine is living proof of one man's dedication to his wines. Bravo Bello!

#### **Castel Sallegg Merlot Riserva 2001, Alto Adige \$27.99**

Just beautiful with lots of spice and Rosé petal on the nose and big, weighty mouthfeel, this one is looking for a nice mixed grill or some lamb.

#### **Castel Sallegg Cabernet Sauvignon Riserva 2000, Alto Adige \$23.99**

#### **Castel Sallegg Cabernet Sauvignon Riserva 2000, Alto Adige \$50.00 MAGNUM**

Wonderfully complex with smoke, meat, black currents and more on the front end and a long, dry finish. The best value on serious Cab we've had in years.

#### **Castel Sallegg Moscato Rosa 2000, Alto Adige \$59.99 / 375ml**

Red Nectar??? This is intensely flavored RED dessert wine but not fortified with alcohol like Porto. Moscato Rosa seems to be a method of freebasing wild strawberries and Rosé petals and has insane intensity through sheer reduction of the raw materials by air drying. It has to be experienced to be believed and is actually worth the tariff. Did someone say "Chocolate"?



## Cecilia Beretta

### **Cecilia Beretta della Famiglia Pasqua, Verona, Veneto**

Cecilia Beretta is the jewel in the Pasqua Group's crown and takes its name from the splendid Villa Beretta built in the 17th century at Mizzole, in the eastern part of the Valpolicella zone, by Count Giuseppe Beretta, podestà (municipal ruler) of the city of Verona, as well as a noted agronomist and bucolic poet. The estate serves as the standard bearer and quality research station of the much larger Pasqua Vigneti e Cantine group. The aim is to reaffirm the essential character of the indigenous varietals and styles of the Valpolicella and Soave zonas while maintaining good value in the marketplace.

#### **Cecilia Baretta Soave Classico Brognoligo 2004, Veneto \$10.99**

Get out of your Pinot Grigio rut with this classy alternative: rich roasted nut and white fruit flavors with a clean, crisp finish just made for a wide variety of foods. It's a Garganega thing that will have you reaching for a second glass in no time flat.

#### **Cecilia Baretta Valpolicella Classico Superiore Ripasso 2003, Veneto \$18.99**

Corvina, Rondinella and Molinara put through a secondary fermentation on the lees of the Amarone just below to achieve a deep richness of flavor and an wonderfully soft texture. Smooth, smooooooth, Smooooooove!

#### **Cecilia Beretta Amarone della Valpolicella Terre di Cariano 2000, Veneto \$38.99**

The vineyards of Monte Cariano at the heart of the Valpolicella Classico, south of the village of San Pietro in Cariano, are harvested at peak ripeness then air dried to concentrate the flavors and textures resulting in one of the best value Amarones we have offered in a long while. 10 cases only...

## Coffele

### **Azienda Agricola Coffele, Soave, Veneto**

The love that Alberto Coffele has for his perfectly situated vineyards nearly explodes out of the bottles of his wines. These are NOT trying to be Chardonnay or even White Burgs, they are unabashedly, gloriously Soave: carefully ripened and vinified Garganega just loaded with white fruit, almond, citrus, spices and more on the nose and they are very rich and flavorful on the palate without being overbearing. They are also prime cellar candidates and we have tasted ten year old bottlings that were just coming into their prime.

#### **Coffele Soave Classico Cà Visco 2005, Veneto \$17.99    Coffele Soave Classico Alzari 2004, Veneto \$21.99**

The Cà Visco is a star ballerina, deftly balancing myriad flavors and aromas with no oaken staves for support but a nice nuttiness. The Alzari has had a passing acquaintance with French oak barrels and the result is a much richer, chewy texture balanced by gorgeous fruit and acidity making it a good starter kit to get someone you love out of their Chardonnay rut.

## Corte Marzago

### **Corte Marzago da Tenuta Aurelia, Valeggio, Veneto**

Just outside the old and pleasant village of Salionze, between Valeggio sul Mincio and Peschiera del Garda, in the heart of the Bianco di Custoza and Bardolino zonas, sits this former convent that has been lovingly transformed into a wonderful agriturismo and winery. The wines are light in body and easy to drink (except the Le Bugne, more on that later) yet richly perfumed and very flavorful, classic compliments to the local seafood specialties served at the myriad lakefront cafes. They are also the result of backbreaking, manual and organic agriculture so we feel they are outstanding values for money as well:

#### **Corte Marzago Bianco di Custoza Vigna la Soldanella 2005, Veneto \$13.99 ORGANIC**

Garganega, Cortese, Trebbiano Toscano, Tocai and Chardonnay woven into a light and lively sipper with honey and white flowers on the nose, almonds and apples on the palate followed by a crisp dry finish sure to make you reach for more.

#### **Corte Marzago Bardolino Chiaretto Vigna la Ceresare 2005, Veneto \$14.99 ORGANIC**

Wonderfully crisp and dry, this is a lightly colored Rosé made from local varieties that lovers of Valpolicella know, Corvina, Rondinella and Molinara, giving it a nice dried cherry and Rosé petal zing. It will be superb with Salmon, Ham, or Chicken dishes and, at just 11.5% ABV, you can pound it with relative impunity.

#### **Corte Marzago Bardolino Vigna la Morara 2005, Veneto \$13.99 ORGANIC**

Proof positive that lighter, more elegant wines still have a place at your table, this is just plain delicious: packed with fresh red fruit flavors and enough acidity to pair well with grilled fish or red sauces but with almost no tannin to slow you down.

#### **Corte Marzago Rosso Veronese Le Bugne 2001, Veneto \$23.99 ORGANIC**

One of our greatest discoveries this past year in Italy, Le Bugne is rich, round and comforting like an Amarone but with more forward fruit (blackberries, currants, pomegranate) on the palate and an intriguing nose of roast coffee and exotic spices. And, with entry level Amarones approaching \$40, this is a stellar buy as well.

## Curto

### **Delicious Wines from Ancient Vines: Antica Azienda Agraria Curto, Ispica, Sicilia**

#### **Curto Eloro Rosso 2003, Sicily \$12.99    Curto Eloro Rosso Fontanelle 2002, Sicily \$26.99**

While relative amateurs compared to the folks at Agnes, Faltognano or Novacella, the Curto family have cultivated vineyards since 1670 (as demonstrated by an official dowry note of that era) and have a vast experience in various types of agriculture including wine, olives, citrus fruit, almonds, prickly pears, grains and produce. The wines are made from VERY old, head-pruned alberello system Nero d'Avola vines that look like miniature olive trees and yield no more than two tons of grapes per acre of the pure extract of the mountainous earth. This results in rich, meaty reds softer than your average Pinot but packed with complex flavors (which will really expand with a good airing in the glass or decanter). Fun fact: a spin of the globe will reveal that the vineyards are actually located SOUTH of Tunisia, in a zona called Pachino in the province of Ragusa which gets more sun than any other zona in Italy (but cool sea breezes moderate the temperature at night, a crucial factor in quality wine production).