

Themes:

1. Wine from Veneto and Lombardy, regions controlled by Austria before the unification of Italy. (Note: Part of Lugana falls within Lombardy.
2. All wines purchased from Grape Expectations, Lower Kings Road, Berhamsted. (grape-expectations.co.uk). Sam, the manager, was extremely helpful.

Soave DOC TerreLunghe 2024 Vicentini Agostino, Cert. Organic - £14.99 12.5%

Vicentini is a family business where Agostino works with his wife, Teresa, and their children Emanuele and Francesca. Based in San Zeno, a village at the mouth of the Val d'Illarsi which resides inside both the Soave and Valpolicella DOCs, but is outside of their respective Classico zones. But don't let this last point cloud your vision to their outstanding wines produced in two distinct and great terroirs. The first terroir is on volcanic rock within the Valle dei Ciliegi, here the land is largely responsible for their "Valpolicella" and "Soave Casale". The second terroir is on limestone in the commune of Terrelunghe, where Garganega and Trebbiano di Soave are grown for the 'Terrelunghe' Soave. Organically farmed from 30+ year old vines of Garganega and Trebbiano di Soave that are trained using the traditional pergola system deliver beautiful stonefruit with a lemon lift along with a touch of sweet almond and gorgeous aromatic, leafy herbs. Absolutely spot-on Soave! SO DELICIOUS.

Lugana Le Fornaci 2024 Tommasi - £19.99 12.5%

Classy and complex white from Lake Garda. Dry but also rich, creamy and opulent. Le Fornacci is a Tommasi family project located just south of Lake Garda. Produced in vineyards that are in the heart of the denomination. Le Fornacci Lugana is fruity and fragrant with notes of tropical fruit and an enjoyable minerality. It's ideal for aperitifs and pairs well with fish and other delicate dishes.
Grape: Trebbiano

Sooner or later, wine drinkers seeking to get to know Italian wine, in all its diverse flavours and styles, always come to hear of the renowned Tommasi family. Their history speaks for itself: after Giacomo Tommasi purchased a small parcel of land in Valpolicella Classica in 1902, the firm gradually expanded to all corners of the peninsula. Today, on the southern shores of Lake Garda, Tommasi produces Le Fornaci Lugana, yet another jewel in the family's viticultural crown.

The dynamic Lugana DOC is the birthplace of some of Italy's most intriguing and distinctive dry whites. Turbiana, (aka [Trebbiano di Lugana](#)), the area's traditional grape, has won many fans with its orchard and tropical-fruit flavours, fine structure and vibrant freshness. It should come as no surprise that the Tommasi family, consummate professionals with over a century of winemaking experience producing site-specific, authentic wines across the whole of Italy, took note of the potential of both the variety and the region's distinctive terroir.

A special terroir

Yet quality winegrowing is anything but straightforward. It requires a magical combination of terroir, climate and tradition – a union between the plant, the winemaker and the landscape. Lugana, sitting in the far east of Lombardy, on the border with Veneto, is a place where this special combination can be found. With a relatively small area under vine, the production zone spans Lake Garda's southern shore, from the historic Desenzano del Garda in the west to Peschiera in the east.

Despite Lugana DOC's small size, there are few vineyards in northern Italy that can compete with its geographical – and geological – advantages. With a decidedly favourable aspect and sub-Mediterranean climate (with mild winters and temperate summers), the vines are cooled by fresh breezes that blow in from the waters of the lake. Meanwhile, calcareous soils, rich in minerals, yield small berries of highly aromatic fruit. The very best of these raw materials are used to make Lugana's seminal white: Tommasi Le Fornaci.

A pure reflection of the land

The wine is expressively aromatic, racy and complex – a product of the diverse terroirs (certain parcels are grown on clay-rich soils, while others are planted on more sandy and silty terrain) and the exceptional winemaking skill found at Tommasi. Purity of fruit expression is the overriding goal; to this end, hand-harvested berries are fermented at low temperatures in stainless steel, with lees ageing thoughtfully used to enhance texture and mouthfeel. The result is a harmonious balance of fruit, minerality and verve.

In the 21st century, Tommasi Le Fornaci has established itself as exemplary in the annals of Lake Garda; without a shadow of a doubt, this is a region, and family, in the ascendant.

Desiro Sauvignon Blanc £15.99 12.5%

Unusual 100% Sauvignon Blanc from the Veneto. Pale in colour, straw yellow with greenish highlights. An aromatic bouquet that ranges from tropical fruit to citrus, with a spicy hint of clove.

The palate is generous, with intense aromas and a pleasant acidity that enhances the freshness. A surprisingly delicious, crisp white wine that brings out the best of Sauvignon Blanc.

This wine stands out for its herbaceous and sweet aroma with a vibrant acidity and excellent minerality. **Fruity:** Mandarin, Passion Fruit, Grapefruit, Mango, Quince, Banana. **Citrus:** Lemon, Mandarin. **Herbaceous:** Tomato Leaf, Green Pepper, Mown grass. Fresh and light.

Vigna Madre is not just the name of a vineyard – it is the name of a family history that has unfolded in the hilly countryside of Abruzzo since 1830. In the village of Villamagna, the Di Carlo family's journey with wine began when their ancestors grew grapes and made wine for local consumption. Over time, both their experience and ambitions grew, and today the seventh generation is continuing the legacy.

What characterizes Vigna Madre is an unusual ability to unite the earthy with the long-term – where wine is not just a product, but a way of life, a craft and a cultural continuation. The name "Vigna Madre" is not accidental; it is a tribute to the role of the mother plant in the world of wine – the symbol of roots, continuity and care.

The winery is located in Abruzzo, a region of great geographical and climatic variation. Here, the Adriatic Sea meets the Apennines, and this very contrast has created an ideal climate for winegrowing over the centuries. The vines, clinging to the slopes around Villamagna and the historic Val di Foro, have always been part of the rhythm of the landscape.

The Di Carlo family has never sought quick results. On the contrary, they have mastered the art of slowness: understanding the field, the vintage, the craftsmanship and the responsibility that comes with carrying on a tradition. Each generation has left its mark, but always with respect for the family's history and for the country in which they are deeply rooted.

Corvina del Veneto 'C' 2023 Alpha Zeta - £11.99 12.5%

The Alpha Zeta wines encompass the range of grapes and flavours found in the province of Verona in north-eastern Italy. They are resolutely modern, yet rooted in the area's ancient tradition. First produced in 1999, the wines are still made by top winemaker from New Zealand Matt Thomson from grapes grown in the hillside vineyards outside Verona.

C is for **Corvina**, the best native variety from this region. With a **contemporary** style and **crimson** colour, this wine has spiced plum and **cinnamon** flavours that are woven through the ripe fruits and rounded tannins.

This is a youthful, bright ruby coloured wine with fresh, vibrant aromas of ripe cherries and red berries. The palate is balanced and juicy with a supple structure, plum and cinnamon flavours and a lively finish.

Historically in the Veneto region Corvina was often confused with Corvinone, a similar larger red grape that ripens later, but DNA profiling has shown that they are two distinct varieties. In 2005, DNA evidence showed that Corvina was a parent variety to the **Venetian grape Rondinella**.

The wines produced here are from the indigenous grapes grown in the hilly vineyards found on the northeastern side of Verona in Italy.

It is a guaranteed fact that the wines created in Alpha Zeta Winery are true representations of the character of the fruit and the soil. The Verona hills, located along the Valpantena and Alpone Valleys, are quite ideal for the grapes, because of the climate is moderate here and the hills are quite close to Lake Garda, which makes the ambience cool enough for the grapes to ripen slowly and naturally.

The grapes were hand harvested, destemmed, crushed and pumped into 1200-hectolitre stainless steel tanks prior to fermentation, which occurred at 22-28°C with regular pump overs. The wine was aged in the same stainless steel tanks and then transferred into concrete tanks for final filtration before bottling.

Alpha Zeta C Corvina is a beautifully crafted Italian red wine, originating from the Veneto region. Known for its generous bouquet of ripe cherries and spice, it offers a harmonious balance of fruit and acidity that boasts a full-bodied and silky finish. The rich flavour profile and elegant aromas effortlessly encapsulate the traditional Italian winemaking experience. This wine pairs exceptionally well with vigorous meat dishes, aged cheeses, and rich pastas. Perfect for savouring during a cosy dinner, Alpha Zeta C Corvina embodies elegance, bringing a captivating taste of Italy to every sip. Highly recommend for a truly indulgent experience.

Nestled in the heart of the famous Veneto wine region in Italy, Alpha Zeta winery is a haven for all wine enthusiasts and connoisseurs. The winery is noted for its quality and affordability, managing to marry the two into a harmonious whole.

In Alpha Zeta winery, every glass promises an exceptional journey, a story of passion, expertise and a perfect symbiosis of man and nature: A sip of Alpha Zeta is a sip of Italy. And it is an experience worth savouring and returning for!

Rosso Veneto Appassimento 2021 Soprasasso - £12.99 13.5%

The Biscardo Family, of whom perhaps more later, have been making wine for over 150 years and the operations are currently led by brothers Maurizio and Martino Biscardo..

Soprasasso (above stone) recalls the devotion and the pursuit of harmony between nature and spirit just like the “stone balancing” discipline. In the same way the vintners devotedly look after the vineyards. The slightly dried grapes give the wine a deep red hue, fruity and dense nose and a round and balanced palate.

It particularly suits wooden oven baked pizzas, pasta or poultry. Delicious with a barbecue, truffle carpaccio, or a salad with grilled chicken. It also makes a surprisingly good pairing with grilled tuna. Perfect for a flavorful meal.

This Soprasasso Rosso del Veneto is a refined red wine from northern Italy, made from Classic Valpolicella grapes of Corvina, Corvinone, Rondinella made using the ancient part-dried grape technique to achieve fuller body and smoother tannins. Lush like Amarone but bright, vital and snappy like Valpolicella. It has soft aromas of red berries, cherries, and raspberries, with a fruity and well-balanced flavor. A truly delicious, smooth wine.

Neropasso Rosso IGT, Veneto 2021, Biscardo - £14.99 13.5%

Biscardo Neropasso Rosso is a wine that originates from Northern Italy, specifically from the Veneto region. It is made from a blend of traditional grape varieties such as Corvina, Corvinone, and Rondinella, that are first dried for about three months before fermentation takes place. This process leads to a wine that is rich and full-bodied with an intense ruby red color. The nose is filled with aromas of dark berries, dried fruits, and spices, while on the palate, the wine is bold and layered with flavors of black cherry, plum, and hints of vanilla. Perfect to pair with roasted meats, pasta dishes, or matured cheeses, Biscardo Neropasso Rosso offers a fantastic value for its price point.

Lots of black fruit, namely blackberry and berry compote, leather, subtle cocoa, red apple skin giving acidity and structure and a nice minerality strewn throughout. Dry with a medium+ finish. Great value.

A red wine from the traditional Venetian agriculture partially obtained from withered grapes. A wine with complex aromas Neropasso is the discovery of the Biscardo family, (Maurizio and Martino)

The story and history of Biscardo began towards the late 1800s. The Biscardo remained a reputed name in the textile and wine industries during the 1800s. The latter started with the endeavour and venture of Francesco Biscardo. In 1840, Francesco began wine production in the basement of a coaching house he used for his guests. Later, Pietro Biscardo, with Terenzio, his son, took over the management and ownership of the family business in 1867. It started the wine legacy within the family.

Biscardo got established in 1878 by founder and owner Terenzio Biscardo. Terenzio used the knowledge, information, wisdom, and skills passed down by his father to set up the winery and operate it. He established the wine estate in the heart and middle of the Italian village and town of Bussolengo. It made Biscardo one of the first companies to produce and sell wine while getting managed by ‘Veronese’ traders. During Biscardo’s setup, the Biscardo family remained engaged and invested in several businesses. It included the coaching horse hotel

continuing from Terenzio's father's time. The wine produced at Biscardo made its first appearance there, immediately capturing the hearts of numerous people. It allowed the winery's products to gain notoriety and fame rapidly, growing to the point and stage we see today.

Biscardo operates on the principles of sustainability. The winery believes that the land's natural qualities and characteristics are essential to make superior, world-class wines. Thus, the wine estate implements specific techniques and practices in the parcels that ensure that the terroirs' ecosystems and natural happenings remain unaffected.

The vineyards owned and managed by Biscardo remain spread over Valpolicella's Classico Area. The region lies at an elevation of 1800 feet and enjoys a beneficial microclimate. It allows the winery's wines from this area to retain superior aroma and flavour.