

REGIONS OF THE MONTH



VENE TO



Venezia, a city built into the sea, is like no other, haunted by the princes and poets of its noble past and by centuries of tourists. The cities of Padova, Vicenza, and Verona, originally frontier posts on the Roman trade route between Venezia and Genova, grew into Renaissance splendor and are marvels in their own right. In the 16th Century, the region's great architect Andrea Palladio worked throughout the area and his buildings are everywhere, in the cities and in the countryside. Nature exhibits its own marvels in the region, the spectacular Dolomite Mountains in the north, the rolling Euganean hills in the south, vast Lake Garda, Italy's largest lake, on the eastern border, and to the west, the Adriatic with its beaches and ports.

Today, Veneto is a thriving agricultural center, a lush land of vines, ranking third after Apulia and Sicily in wine volume but the first with classified DOC wines. There are three general areas of premium production: the western province of Vero-

na in the hills between Lake Garda and the town of Soave, the central hills in the provinces of Vicenza, Padova, and Treviso, and the eastern plains of the Piave and Tagliamento river basins along the Adriatic coast northeast of Venezia.

Verona is the leader in classified DOC wines and the site of Vinitaly, the largest wine trade fair in the world. A major part of the DOC wines in the region are Soave, Bardolino, and Valpolicella, a blend of Corvina, Rondinella, and Molinara. When young, Valpolicella is a full, fruity red, but when the grapes are partly dried, they are made into Amarone, one of Italy's most noble wines. Bardolino is made from the same grapes as Valpolicella but is a lighter version. Similar to Soave, Bianco di Custoza is another DOC white as is Lessini Durello, a steely dry wine, usually sparkling.

The central hills produce whites similar to Soave as well as Tocai, the Pinots, Merlot, and Cabernet. Prosecco, a dry to lightly sweet white, is produced in the area as is the renowned Venegazzu, both usually sparkling.

The eastern plains have been dominated by Merlot and Cabernet Franc for decades, but the local red Raboso and white Verduzzo still have admirers. Pinot Grigio, Sauvignon, and Chardonnay are also gaining ground.



YOUR ACCESS TO OUTSTANDING WINES FROM CALIFORNIA AND ITALY

Italian *Wineries of the Month*



Azienda Agricola Inama

Small Wineries, Big Plans in Veneto

Azienda Agricola Inama

In the 1950s, estate founder Giuseppe Inama began purchasing small vineyards in the heart of the Soave Classico region, using nothing more than his savings. His idea was to assemble only top quality vineyards of old-vine Garganega and fashion from them a wine that would be the best expression of the Soave zone. He gradually acquired thirty hectares and, in addition to Garganega, planted Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc. For multiple vintages during the last 10 years, the winery's Soave Classico has received Gamber Rosso's coveted *Tre Bicchieri* (Three Glasses) award. In the 1960s, Giuseppe's son, Stefano Inama, assumed control and expanded production to include red wines. Stefa-

no settled on the Colli Berici for his project, a hilly area some 15 kilometers east of Soave in the neighboring province of Vicenza. The mineral-rich hills were planted with Carmenere in the middle of the 19th Century by emigrants returning from Aquitaine. Bordeaux was in its heyday, and cuttings of Carmenere, then a popular grape, were brought back to the Colli Berici. Today, Carmenere is considered a local variety in the hot, dry climate of the Colli Berici. Along with Cabernet, Merlot, and the indigenous Raboso Veronese, Inama has embarked on developing the potential of this special zone with several red wines from two new properties, which are farmed with organic methods.

See **WINERIES** next page



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WINES OF THE MONTH



ARTISAN SERIES

Tenuta Sant'Antonio
2006 Soave Classico

Well known for the superb quality of its Suave, Tenuta Sant'Antonio blends 90% Garganega, 5% Trebbiano Soave, and 5% Chardonnay for this delicious white wine. This Soave presents fresh floral hints and ripe white fruits like apple and pear on the nose, while the taste is light and sustained but well balanced with acidity and a pleasant almond finish. Serve with pasta primavera and risotto and with fish and breast of chicken.

Tenuta Sant'Antonio
2006 Valpolicella

A blend of 70% Corvina and 30% Rondinella, this Valpolicella has a fruity bouquet with cherry and red fruit notes that hint of flowers and spice. Its taste is full, fragrant, and pungent with a soft tannin texture. The Nanfre Valpolicella was aged for six months in stainless steel tanks instead of oak barrels, so the wine is light and fruity and can be paired with many different foods. Serve with cold meats, pasta, rice, and risotto, first courses of vegetable soups, and light main courses, like dinner salads and white meat dishes.



WINERIES from cover

Tenuta Sant'Antonio

Brothers Armando, Tiziano, Massimo, and Paolo Castagnedi grew up in their father's vineyards in the Valpolicella region. Their father, Antonio Castagnedi, founded the cooperative Colognola ai Colli Cantina and sent his grapes, as did neighboring growers, to the communal winery. In 1989, the brothers bought 30 hectares around Mezzane, and when added to the 20 original ones belonging to their father, increased Tenuta Sant'Antonio vineyards to a total of 50 hectares

WINEMAKER SERIES

Tenuta Sant'Antonio
2003 Valpolicella Superiore La Bandina

The La Bandina is 70% Corvina, 20% Rondinella, 5% Croatina, and 5% Oseleta. Aged for 24 months in new, French, 500-liter barrels, the wine is deep ruby red in color and has an intensely fruity bouquet with hints of cherry, liquorish, tobacco, and cedarwood. Its taste is full and soft but balanced with fine tannins. The 2001 La Bandina won Gambero Rosso's *Tre Bicchieri* (Three Glasses) award.

Inama
2005 Carmenere

Piu means "more" in Italian, and the word refers to the varietals in the wine, other than Carmenerre, including 30% Merlot and 10% Raboso Veronese. Raboso is an indigenous grape that gets little attention, but the region has also ignored the Bordeaux varieties, including Carmenerre and Merlot, which were introduced in the 19th Century. Although the winery is best known for its white wines, it is justly proud of its reds, which are lately garnering much attention. Aged for 12 months in French oak barriques, the Carmenerre is deeply colored with a pronounced nose of black cherry, damson, cocoa, and violets. On the palate, the wine is structured with fresh acidity and integrated tannins. Serve at room temperature with roasted meats.

that begin at an elevation of 120 meters and climb the hills to an elevation of 320 meters. In 1995, they built their own winery on a hill near San Briccio, among their vineyards, and began making their own wine rather than selling grapes to other wineries. Today, Tenuta Sant'Antonio produces Soave, Valpolicella, Amarone, and Cabernet Sauvignon. Their Valpolicella Superiore, La Bandina, and their Amarone Campo dei Gigli have both been honored with Gambero Rosso's coveted *Tre Bicchieri* (Three Glasses) award.

WINES OF THE MONTH

COLLECTOR SERIES

Inama
2003 Oracolo

The winery made 800 cases of this single vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon from the Colli Berici zone. Produced only in exceptional vintages and in limited quantities, the wine reflects the zone's mineral-rich soils and hot, dry climate. Aged for 18 months in French oak barrels, Oracolo is a powerful wine, inky black, concentrated and viscous on the palate, but balanced with acidity and ripe tannins. Decant and serve at cool room temperature.



Tenuta Sant'Antonio
2003 Selezione Antonio Castagnedi

Made from traditional Amarone varietals, this Sant'Antonio Amarone is 70% Corvina, 20% Rondinella, 5% Croatina, and 5% Oseleta. After two years ageing in 500-liter French oak barrels, the Amarone Antonio Castagnedi is ruby red in color with aromas of ripe red fruit and spicy notes of liquorish, black pepper, and hints of chocolate. On the palate, the wine is soft, elegant, and well structured with round, sweet tannins. At 14.5% alcohol, the wine can be described as a modern Amarone that will complement foods rather than the heavier classical style, which is Port-like in its richness and more suitable as a "contemplation wine" to be sipped with nuts and dried fruit. Serve at cool room temperature.



PICK & CHOOSE

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JUST CALIFORNIAN?
JUST ITALIAN?
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Winemaker Series: \$62/month, 2 reserve reds
Collector Series: \$112/month, 2 collectable reds
Artisan red-Winemaker red: \$48/month
Winemaker red-Collector red: \$87/month

CALIFORNIA-ITALIAN COMBINATIONS

CA Artisan red-IT Artisan red: \$35/month
CA Artisan white-IT Artisan white: \$32/month
CA Winemaker-IT Winemaker: \$62.50/month
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Alternate CA & IT Winemaker Series: \$62.50/\$62/month

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