



Tim's Wine Market

November 2021

By JP Donnelly

The fun that is logistics in 2021 never ends! These features are supposed to be the December selections, but our scheduled wines for this month never left New Jersey. Luckily our December features were waiting at the distributor, who was more than happy to move them out early.

Originally I picked our two selections to give you unusual combinations for the Thanksgiving table. The theme still fits, just different wines! I think you will find both of these are very good, crowd pleasing wines that will work great with turkey, standing rib roast or whatever else you serve your family and friends this season.

Monte Tondo Corvina Rosato Frizzante - \$20

The Veneto is the largest wine-producing region in mainland Italy, with over 200,000 acres under vine. While Tuscany and Piedmont get most of the attention, it is no stretch to say that many of the Italian wines enjoyed in the United States today stem from this region; including Pinot Grigio, Prosecco, Soave, and Valpolicella, to name just a few. Our first featured producer, Monte Tondo, represents the changing face of the Veneto, producing both traditional white wines and inventive sparkling wines from local varieties.

Monte Tondo, set against the rolling hills of the Soave Classico DOC, is the passion project of the Magnabosco family. Founded by Aldo Magnabosco in 1979, the original estate produced Soave Classico exclusively. However, around the turn of the millennium his son Gino decided to expand the family's holdings, purchasing 25 acres of vineyard land in neighboring Valpolicella. The family has deliberately re-planted at higher altitudes, which contributes acidity and minerality to the fruit. Today, Gino is assisted in the vineyards by his daughter Marta, who is poised to take over the estate and share her love of hospitality and her family's sparkling wines with an even wider audience.

This particular feature is produced from the Corvina grape, a ubiquitous variety used in many of the region's red wines. Corvina is a high-yielding variety that provides acidity and red fruit characteristics, although most of its popularity comes from the intensely structured Amarone della Valpolicella. That is produced from dried grapes, which concentrates its natural sugars and produces intense, powerful wines. However, in this instance the Magnabosco family have chosen to go in the opposite direction. Rather than drying for additional concentration, the grapes for this cuvee are harvested early to preserve their natural acidity. All of the fruit is sourced from dry-farmed, certified organic vineyards and harvested by hand.

To make this wine, as stated above, the grapes are harvested by hand and brought to the winery to be hand-sorted. After sorting, gentle pressing occurs in stainless steel tanks, with the resulting juice seeing a very short maceration on the skins- about 8 hours. The wine is then raked to stainless steel tanks before a light filtration occurs, and bottled before fermentation is complete. This process traps a small amount of carbon dioxide in the bottle, which creates a frizzante, or lightly sparkling, wine. After 3 months in bottle, the wine is released ready for sale (and immediate consumption).

Despite being a red wine, you will want to serve this well chilled, about 40-45 degrees. On the palate, red fruits and berries dominate, with notes of wild raspberry, tart strawberry, Macintosh apple peel, strawberry leaf, and pencil lead. This wine, due to its lightly sparkling qualities and bright, natural acidity, will go with just about anything, but some favorite pairings include prosciutto-wrapped asparagus, grilled salmon with mixed greens, and charcuterie.

Dow's Vale do Bomfim Douro 2017 - \$15

This red wine is a product of the Symington family, luminaries in the world of Port and the name behind several long-established Port houses such as Graham's, Warre's, and of course, Dow's. The patriarch and founder of the firm, Andrew James "AJ" Symington, left his native Scotland in 1882, and after a short stint working for Graham's Port decided to set up his own wine-shipping business. He and his Portuguese wife, Beatrice, worked tirelessly in the world of Port, quickly acquiring vineyards throughout the Douro, and eventually their children and grandchildren would expand the business even further by purchasing many neighboring wine lodges. During the post-World War II years, when the vineyards of the Douro had been all but abandoned due to lack of demand, the third generation of Symingtons were

instrumental in restoring the fortunes of the region. Yet, during all this time, there was little mention of a non-fortified wine! Not until recently has the fifth generation of the family begun to produce dry reds.

The fruit for this cuvee comes exclusively from Quinta do Bomfim (“Bomfim” translates to “Well-Placed Valley” in Portuguese) in the Upper Douro, originally constructed by Dow’s Port lodge in 1896. By the year 1912, AJ Symington became a partner in Dow’s and moved his family to the property, choosing to make it his home as well as place of business. South-facing slopes with bountiful sun exposure have produced intensely ripe fruit here for generations, though most was destined to be shipped down-river to Oporto for fortification. Due to consumer demand in recent years for dry wines, now a significant amount of the grapes are being bottled as wine that is completely dry. Many Symington owned Port houses now bottle a dry Douro red, with the Vale do Bomfim being one of the family’s first ventures into this rapidly-expanding category.

To make this wine, many traditional Portuguese viticultural techniques are used. Field blending, or the process of planting a wide variety of native varieties together and harvesting them all at once, is still very much in use here. Several indigenous Douro red varieties not seen in more “modernized” wineries can still be found at Bomfim. Because the hillside terraces are so steep, hand harvesting is required. Once the grapes have all been hand-picked, they are brought to the winery and crushed in traditional stone fermenters, or lagares. Where once this was done exclusively by foot-treading, today the Symington family have patented a mechanical version of the process which reduces the amount of labor needed while still extracting plenty of color and fruit. The wine is then transferred to stainless steel until fermentation is complete, where it is then racked to older oak barrels for 6 months before filtration and bottling.

When you open this wine, you will want to decant for at least half an hour. Once this wine has some time to open up it is quite full-bodied with notes of black plum, blackcurrant, wild cherry, clove, dried herbs, and dried rose petal. Drink now through 2023 with short ribs with onion, smoked pork sausages, or shepherd’s pie.

Turkey Tetrazzini

After two months of pasta recipes I tried to not do another, but the circumstances force my hand. I am going out on a limb to say that I am only lukewarm on turkey, and even less excited about days worth of leftovers. However, a few years ago my wife started making a version of this recipe, actually roasting a turkey breast to provide the meat. Later I began whipping up my version the day after Thanksgiving, using both roasted and smoked turkey, whatever we have left. Now I neither dread the turkey or the leftovers. In fact, I sort of look forward to them. Also, for those of you who have commented that my recipes are occasionally too complicated, please take note that this recipe is best if your primary kitchen tool is a can opener.

12 oz vermicelli or spaghetti, broken in half
1 tbsp butter
1 medium onion, diced
1 8 oz package sliced mushrooms
2 garlic cloves, minced
4 cups cubed turkey (smoked, roasted or both)
1 1/4 cups shredded Cheddar - divided
1/4 cups Parmesan cheese
1 10.75 oz can Cream of Mushroom soup
1 10.75 oz can Cream of Celery soup
1/2 cup chicken broth
1/2 tsp salt
1/2 tsp pepper

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Cook pasta according to package directions. Meanwhile, melt butter in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat; add onion, mushrooms and garlic. Sauté 5 minutes or until tender. Stir in turkey, 3/4 cup cheddar cheese and remaining 7 ingredients. Drain the pasta and add to the turkey mixture, stir well.

2. Spoon the mixture into a greased casserole and sprinkle the top with remaining cheddar cheese. Cover with aluminum foil and bake for 20-30 minutes until bubbly. Remove the foil and continue baking until the cheese begins to brown in spots.

If the thought of yet another meal based on turkey is unbearable to you, this recipe also freezes well. Spoon the mixture into one, or split into two, disposable casserole pans and sprinkle with remaining cheddar cheese. Then wrap tightly with aluminum foil and freeze for up to 2 months. To reheat simply thaw in the refrigerator for one day, then cook in a 350 degree oven (keeping the foil on) until warm and bubbly. Then remove the foil and cook until the cheese is spotty brown.