

Gala Italia In New York!



The Italian wine industry put on a big party last week at the Pierre Hotel. Sponsored by the Italian Wine and Food Institute, the annual Gala Italia featured a wine tasting reception with food from some of the city's Italian eateries, followed by dinner in the ballroom.

The actual dinner was pretty grim, with institutional hotel food served, slowly, by ancient waiters in white jackets – it could have been the 1950's – but the wines were a treat, with both old friends and new discoveries delighting the palate.

Here's a rundown of my favorites.

Ferrari
Trentino



Both the Blanc de Blanc and Blanc de Noir, sold under the *Perl * label, were impeccable.

Beautiful and pure, fizz far superior to many more expensive Champagnes.

[Tenuta Santa Caterina](#)
Piemonte

Santa Catherina is a property I haven't encountered before, probably because they have only limited US distribution. [Note to importers: grab this one, the wines are spectacular.]



They were poured by the charming Giulia Alleva who seems to do everything at the estate, a family-owned property that includes a delightful-looking small hotel, Tenuta Santa Catherina Relais.

Her *Arlandino*, *Grignolino d'Asti DOC*, *Tenuta Santa Caterina 2013*, \$25, is a light summer red from the indigenous Piedmontese grape, Grifnolino. Lively and unpretentious.



Setecapita, Barbera d'Asti DOCG Superiore 2001, Tenuta Santa Caterina, \$50. A luxurious wine, ripe and voluptuous, with a complex minerality from high altitude vineyards, older vines and long aging.

Sori di Giul, Freisa d'Asti DOC 2011, \$35.

A serious, wine-lovers wine, deep, layered and complexity. (Freisa is an indigenous Piedmontese red varietal.)

Planeta Dorelli's Cerasuolo di Vittoria Classico DOCG 2013 \$33, Sicily,



An earthy, rustic red made from the Nero d'Avola and Frappato grapes, all volcanic rock and Sicilian sun.

Rocca delle Macie has long been one of my favorite Chianti properties because it makes wine that tastes of Tuscany, but their *Moonlight 2014*, \$15, is a new release I hadn't encountered before.



A blend of Pinot Grigio, Vermentino, Trebbiano and, yes, Chardonnay. It doesn't taste particularly Italian, but is bursting with fruit-filled pleasure.

Andrea Formilli Fendi, Sauvignon Blanc 2013, \$35, Perugia.



A perfectly balanced and harmonious Sauvignon Blanc packed with fruit but, really, \$35? *Marchesi Antinori's Villa Antinori Chianti Classico DOCG Riserva 2011, \$29.*



What more accolades can be heaped on the achievements of the Marchesi? His inexpensive, reliable and widely available stand-by red was the perfect companion for the braised short ribs at the discombobulated dinner.

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/nickpassmore/2016/02/25/italian-wine-invades-new-york/2/#51eaa8d7e092>