

## La Spinetta One Liter Club, for the real wine lover...



Newsletter January 2010

### Happy New Year

A bit belated but still, we would like to wish you a very happy, healthy, enjoyable and eventful 2010 and hope that it has already started very well.

We are excited that this year we will release our first One Liter format bottle and that the Club has received so much attention, that today we already count 200 members around the world. We are also excited about new projects in our vineyards, new wines and a new olive oil from Sardegna. The new year will bring interesting and good things to all of us wine lovers...

*Bruno, Carlo and Giorgio Rivetti and the La Spinetta Team*

### A word from Giorgio



Both chefs and wine producers use recipes when making something special. Their recipes are an expression of their philosophy. But apart from the recipes, both trades work with a list of ingredients. The quality of ingredients is as essential for making a great meal as the quality of ingredients are when making a great wine.

Today, I would like to use this opportunity to talk about the "ingredient" vineyard, as the most important factor in winemaking. The quality of La Spinetta's vineyard "ingredients" are determined by: the age of the vines, the position of the vineyard, the type of soil, the weather conditions and the respect and attention the vineyard receives by those who work it.

**There is no classification for old vines.** Old is a subjective word and at La Spinetta when we say "old", we are talking about vines with an age of 45 years or more. A vine can reach an age of up to 100 years or even older, but its life span depends hugely on the "life style" the vine has had to face. If a farmer mass produces fruit by fertilizing, irrigation and/or the use of chemicals, vines tend to die young. By the time they reach an age of 30, they are literally out of power or too sick to produce decent fruit. Producers that want mass productions will replace those vines quickly with new vines, meaning that their vineyard will never have a chance to grow old. At La Spinetta, we treat our vines with great respect. We never irrigate or use

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chemical fertilizers, herbicides or pesticides and we always leave small amounts of fruit on each plant for each growing season so the vine has the chance to maintain its strength and strong immune system to become very old. Just when there is no irrigation and fertilization, the vine has the possibility to continue to grow its roots further into the ground. As soon as one puts water and nutrients on the vineyard surface, the vine has no motivation to have its root look for water and food further down. The root refuses to grow and stays on the surface. A 50 year old Barbera vine can have roots that will dig as much as 10 meters into the ground. The deeper the roots reach, the more layers of different ground they can pass. It is those layers of different soil that will give a final wine a certain minerality. At 8 or 10 meter depths, a vine will also securely have enough water even during the driest summers.



In Piedmont, the best vineyards face south. Especially Nebbiolo, which has a very long growing season, needs as much daylight and sun exposure as it can get. Only the south facing vineyards will surely secure ripe fruit in the Fall.

To find the right soil is something amazing for me. Just yesterday I had a bottle of a great white Burgundy and I asked myself, why nowhere else in the world can a Chardonnay of such greatness be produced? A Chardonnay with such length and minerality? The obvious reason is that the soil of these Mersault or Montrachet Cru locations is the essential ingredient to these wines. This soil must be so unique, that nowhere else in the world winemakers can produce such amazing Chardonnays.

The weather and the climate itself of course always plays an important role. We cannot control the weather and in my opinion, it makes the whole world of winemaking more exciting. Of course I am not a fan of hail storms or cold and rainy summers, but I love the fact that different vintages express themselves in the flavors and perfume of a wine.

The people that work with and in vineyards need to respect the vineyard. It cannot be our role to manipulate the plant by adding substances to the ground, kill all life around the plant by using herbicides. We cannot train the vine for mass production, weakening its existing immune system which will require the use of pesticides in order for the plant to continue living.

La Spinetta inherited vineyards or bought vineyards that were inherited by their previous owners. The people who planted these vines are farmers, not scientist nor food and beverage industrials, just people who showed the vineyard its deserved respect. With these thoughts I believe that it is in our hands to continue the path that they have taken.

*Giorgio, the farmer*

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### Interview: speaking with Bernard Glaude from Trinidad / Tobago



**Bernard Glaude** was born in 1983 in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (Caribbean Sea).

We got to know Bernard during a lunch at Renzo Cervere Restaurant. While we were all enjoying a delicious meal, Bernard told us he had just finished his 3 years studies at the University of Gastronomic Science (Slow Food) in Pollenzo.

We were fascinated by this young man, who came all the way from the Caribbean to study in Piedmont about food and wine, we decided to interview him on the spot...

***Bernard, how did you first hear about the University of Gastronomic Science?***

In October 2005, I was invited to a 4 week trip to Italy. This trip was organized by a local Caribbean wine distributor and paid by several Italian producers who wanted to give sommeliers and wine buyers from the Caribbean the chance to get to know Italy's wine growing regions. You have to know, that most of us, including myself, at that point had never seen a vineyard or a winery. One of the four weeks we spent in Piedmont.

Osteria Boccondivino in Bra, the founder of Slow Food's favorite Osteria, was one of the many great restaurants I ate in during this trip. It was there, where I first heard about the university. After the meal, the chef came out of the kitchen and told me all about the possibilities of studying at this new University in Pollenzo.

Back home I signed up for the University newsletter and eventually asked for application forms. I applied to the school and for a scholarship. I did not have high hopes.

In July 2006 I received a phone call from the University, with the exciting news that I was accepted to the school with a scholarship paying my tuition for a 3-year program.

***At that point you were only 23 years old, what had made you become interested in wine and food?***

When you are born in raised in the Caribbean, a passion for wine and food is not laid into your cradle. My passion for wine was pure coincidence. As a teenager, I was already working at a bar in one of our convention centers, where many weddings were held. After one of these weddings, the groom came to me wanting to thank me for my good service. In addition to a tip, he gave me a bottle of good French red wine. I was 17 years old and never had had wine before. At that age, my friends and I drank beer and rum. I remember exactly how I drank the entire bottle from the neck, after work. I did not think to pour the wine in a glass. I liked the taste, but what I found even more astonishing was, that the next day I did not have a hangover or even the slightest headache. It sounds bizarre, but this was the moment in which

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I started to become interested in wine.

After that, I used any opportunity possible to taste and drink wine. At 19, I started working as a server at the Hilton Hotel in Trinidad. The sommelier there was pleased with my keen interest in wine and gave me the opportunity to learn more. When this sommelier left the Hilton, I was offered the position. This new challenge and responsibility made me even more eager to learn. In 2004 I passed a sommelier course as the second best of my class. TV, Internet and books were my constant teachers, but at that point I still had not seen a vineyard or a winery.

By the time I left Trinidad in September 2006 to go to Pollenzo to study, my only wine related trips had been the one to Italy and one to South America visiting Chile and Argentina.

### ***Did you have any concrete expectations when you left?***

I honestly, did not even know what the word 'gastronomic' in University of Gastronomic Science meant. I, for sure, expected the university to be more formal. I was planning to wear suits to school and felt out of place immediately, when I saw the other students.

I had no concrete expectations. All that mattered to me, was that I would finally learn the "life" surrounding food and wine production.

I learned a lot about the way food is being made and produced. But not only that, I know the historical, cultural and ecological background of food production. I don't feel like I am an expert in one specific field. I am much more somebody who now has a very good general knowledge on food and wine production. These studies opened new horizons for me.

### ***What else did the studies give you?***

I first shared an apartment with an Australian and an Italian from Piedmont. Then I met and became friends with German, Austrian and Japanese students. Living in Bra, in such a small town, you become family with your friends. For sure some of my friends, especially the ones that I traveled with, will stay great friends for life.

### ***Soon you will be returning to the Caribbean, what are your plans?***

I am not planning to go back to my old job at the Hilton. I want to include my new knowledge of food production into my new job. I have two projects in mind. One is getting together with local farmers to develop an organic growth plantation and farm.

For my second project, I am aiming to partner with a resort, which wants to create an eco-agricultural hotel. A hotel that grows its own produce and uses local resources to sustain itself. Of course I won't forget my love of wine and try to pass on the knowledge that I have learned in my 3 years Piedmont. Its important to pass this knowledge onto young people interested in wine, that I will meet in my home country.

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***If you were able to go back to September 2006 and start all over with your studies, what would you do differently?***

I would pay more attention to history, that I had a hard time with. (I often slept in class.) Now I understand the importance of it. I also would talk more to the producers that I met during my studies and not have been so shy (also because now I speak Italian and don't have any language barriers) I would ask more questions, get the most information out of every situation...

-Mats Hanzon, wine lover, exceptional wine connoisseur and journalist from Sweden, will be answering our questions in the next newsletter.

### Barolo Campe Vine: work in the vineyard

We are planning to follow a vine from our Barolo Campe vineyard for a year, in order to show you the development of the plant as well as to explain the work that we are doing in each phase to this Barolo vine, and to any other red variety plant, that we cultivate.



This photos was taken on:

**November 1st:**

**December 1<sup>st</sup>**

**January 1<sup>st</sup>**

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From November to February we leave the vine to itself. No work is really necessary during these winter months. In November, the vine still has some leaves and some high growing grapes left. By December, those grapes have either fallen off or have been eaten by birds. Also, the leaves are gone. For December and January we hope for snow and the more snow we get, the better for the vineyard.

Snowfall is very important, as the vine will benefit from the collected water in the next growing season. Most of Piedmont's vineyards are located on hills, some of them are very steep. The steeper a hill the more risk of erosion one might have to face. When it rains on such hills, the water quickly comes downhill without being absorbed into the ground. With snow, the watering effect is completely different. Snow always melts slowly, giving the ground the chance to absorb all the water. This irrigation is long lasting and can help an older vine, which has roots going deep into the ground, to be able to access water even in August, when it has not rained for the past 8-12 weeks. This is very essential and since not everybody knows, we like to mention here that irrigation is not permitted in Piedmont nor in the part of Tuscany where we grow our Sangiovese.

In February, the intensive vineyard work starts with cutting back the dried out branches. This is an important process, one that needs skills and vineyard experience, but more about that in our next newsletter...

### Winey visits in Piedmont...

Almost everybody who decides to visit Piedmont is a lover of very good food and wine. What makes Piedmont worth the travel is definitely the huge selection of simple trattorias, where family members cook you excellent local food with fresh ingredients. There are also many Michelin star restaurants that will impress with their creativity, ingredients, service and a good selection of reasonably priced wine lists. Also, accommodation has reached high standards. From simple, yet exquisite B&Bs to 5 star luxury hotels, Piedmont can offer it all.

But, what really makes every gourmet tour in Piedmont complete is certainly one or several winery visits. Who has been to a US, a South African or an Australian winery, might be surprised that winery visits in the land of Barolo, Barbaresco, Barbera, Dolcetto and Moscato are different.



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Most wineries only receive visitors by appointment, preferably from Monday to Saturday. Sundays are reserved for family time. During Piedmont's high season (September to beginning of November) it is recommended to even book your winery visit appointment way in advance. The best way to do this is to send the producer an e-mail, asking for a possible visit. You should give a day and time, that you would like to visit and the number of people coming with you. It always helps to let the producer know that you are familiar with some of their wines.

After so much effort, you should be rewarded. Piedmont wine tastings are sit down and very personal. Hardly any small producer has hired staff to show you around. You will be able to spend time with a family member or the winemaker and owner. Most wineries also don't charge for their time and the wines you can sample and are the person giving your tasting is happy if you ask questions and engage them in conversation. Best times for a long tasting are the winter months and the Summer, when the producers are not as busy.

Many wine lovers return from their Piedmont travels telling their friends about the time they spend with Domenico Clerico, Chiara Boschis, Guido Fantino, Elio Altare, or when they met Angelo Gaja, the Conternos or Giorgio Rivetti. It is a true memory and makes the next bottle of wine from one of these producers at home, even more special.

If you plan to visit Piedmont and would like to have restaurant and hotel recommendations, please follow this link to our website, where we recommend places from our personal experience.

<http://www.la-spinetta.com/downloads/Page%201%20normal%20downloads%20ing.htm>

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### Cooking Piemontese with Giovanna Rivetti



Giovanna Rivetti was born in 1947. She is our "vineyard manager" and our "in house chef". She learned the work in the vineyard from her father and the work in the kitchen from her mother. Both parents taught Giovanna skills, which until today are great assets to La Spinetta.

In each newsletter Giovanna will share one of her secret recipes with us. Today she is teaching us how to make an antipasto called "Frittata". Her Frittatas are made with onions, and is a great recipe, especially in the winter months. You will need the following ingredients (portion to serve 6 people):

6 relatively mild white onions (Giovanna of course takes the ones out of her garden), 3 eggs (from Giovanna's chicken) 50 gr of Parmigiano cheese, 50cl water, 50cl dry white wine, 7 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil, salt, pepper and nutmeg.

The easiest thing on earth to make, says Giovanna, who loves to spend every minute that she is not in the vineyard, in the kitchen.

Start by peeling and cutting the onions into thin slices. Then use a pan and warm up 2 tablespoons of olive oil adding the onions, water and the wine. It is very important to cook everything on low heat, stirring the onions now and then. After 20 minutes, take off the lid and continue cooking so that the liquid evaporates. After, beat the two eggs in a bowl and add the Parmigiano cheese, nutmeg, pepper, onions and at the very end, the salt, while continuing to stir everything. Take a second pan and warm up the remaining olive oil,



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then fry the mixture by taking tablespoon portions of it and form little round 5-8 cm Frittate (see photo). Fry until golden. Then take the Frittate out of the pan and remove some of the oil by letting them rest on paper kitchen towel for a minute. Serve warm.

**Buon appetito!**

### One Liter Club event: "one day hands on at La Spinetta"...

In our last newsletter we told you about our ideas for our first One Liter Club event. "One day hands on at La Spinetta". As many of you requested that we confirm the exact date, which allows you to better plan your trips and holidays, we have checked our itineraries and have decided for: **Saturday, September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010.**

For those who have not yet seen the program and the participation details, please read on...

The day will start in the morning with a small verbal introduction from Giorgio Rivetti, followed by a vineyard workshop (groups split into smaller groups), where you will be able to harvest Moscato. Giovanna and Marco Rivetti will show you what rules you have to follow when picking Moscato grapes. Picking might seem easy, but you will realize that a lot of attention needs to be paid.

Afterwards, we will have a picnic in the vineyard with local antipasti and La Spinetta wines from Tuscany.



Afternoon cellar workshop (groups split again into smaller groups), where you again will be able to get your hands dirty learning how to crush and press Moscato grapes and learn the fascinating steps of Moscato fermentation in closed autoclave tanks. Andrea Rivetti and Stephano Mazetta will be showing insights of their work.

Evening dinner at Campe winery. Giovanna Rivetti will cook local Piedmont dishes accompanied by La Spinetta Piedmont wines. During the second half of the dinner, wines (not only La Spinetta) will be served blind for a more objective opinion. You are more than welcome to bring a wine for the blind tasting.

Participation will be free of charge. Members only. Minimum number of participants: 15, maximum 30. La Spinetta will arrange for special room rates at a very nice local hotel and also offer assistance to

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further program your visit, if you decide to spend a couple of days in the area. Reservations are accepted on a first come first serve basis. We, however, require a reservation deposit of 200,00 Euro per person to confirm your participation, that will be returned to each participant on the day of the event. With this requirement we hope to avoid cancellations. Further details will follow.

At present we have 17 people that already have reserved their spot for the event. If you consider coming to Piedmont, please do send us an e-mail and let us know that you would like to join us on this exciting day!

### Events

Where you can find us traveling the world:

#### February:

February 16 <sup>th</sup> :	Paris	Gambero Rosso Road Show tasting
February 17 <sup>th</sup> :	Brussels	Gambero Rosso Road Show tasting
	13:30 -18:30	Radisson Blu Royal Hotel

For further information please e-mail Manuela [mrivetti@la-spinetta.com](mailto:mrivetti@la-spinetta.com)

February 20 <sup>th</sup> :	Arosa, Switzerland	La Spinetta Tasting at Arosa Getraenkeservice
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#### March:

March 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Luzern, Switzerland	<b>Tasting and Apero at Hotel des Balances</b> <a href="http://www.balances.ch">www.balances.ch</a> please contact Thomas: <a href="mailto:Thomas.Glanzmann@wyhusbelp.ch">Thomas.Glanzmann@wyhusbelp.ch</a>
March 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Stuttgart, Germany	<b>Tasting of new La Spinetta releases</b> at Fischer & Trezza <a href="http://www.fischer-trezza.de">www.fischer-trezza.de</a>
March 10 + 11th	Athens, Greece	<b>Winemaker Dinner</b> with Giorgio Rivetti at Matsuhisa/Nobu <a href="http://www.matsuhisaathens.com">www.matsuhisaathens.com</a> please contact Nancy: <a href="mailto:info@vosswater.gr">info@vosswater.gr</a>

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### Anything new at La Spinetta

#### **New release from Tuscany:**

One of the La Spinetta highlights for this year is the release of our first white wine from Casanova, Tuscany: **Toscana Vermentino 2009**. We are proud to present this very special white wine at the beginning of March.

**Toscana Vermentino 2009:** 100% Vermentino, natural fermentation in steel, wine is left on yeast in steel vats for 4 months after actual fermentation has finished, a perfect example of what Vermentino should be, brimming with fruits and floral notes adding minerals at the end. Light golden in color, the palate is medium-bodied with fresh apricot and peach, some rosemary and pine notes. The crisp acidity and long finish help show this wine's true indigenous Tuscan class.



### Your opinion on...

Going out to eat for a wine lover is not just a question of food, but a question of what the restaurant's wine list/cellar has to offer. Many times we are pleased with the thick or even a bit thinner "wine bible" and some time to study it in order to choose a wine, but sometimes we like to have help from the sommelier. Especially if we visit wine regions and look for something very local.

What characterizes in your opinion a good sommelier? And what do you expect from him/her? Do you think some sommeliers are too much, or you feel that they want to sell you something rather than giving advice? Write us your good or bad experience with this special trade!

If you like to share your thoughts and opinion with us and would like to have them published in our next newsletter, please write to [myopinion@la-spinetta.com](mailto:myopinion@la-spinetta.com)

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### Your comments to our question in October's Newsletter:

What is your opinion? Should wine labels state further information? If yes, which information would you be looking for? Should this be part of our laws?

*"When it comes to the content of a label, my opinion is that less is more, especially when it comes to high quality wines".* **Mattias Pleiner, Sweden**

*"I agree that many labels don't give enough information, but I don't think it would be better to have something too detailed and too complicated to read and understand. In my opinion, it would be good to have more information on the labels regarding the wine making process rather than just fulfilling the law requirements of information. For example the producers could print on the label (or better on the back label) time of aging and the percentage of grape varieties in a blend if the appellation allows different grape varieties. Also interesting would be an emphasis on the work and the personal philosophy that each producer has. In regards to Sulphites my ideas differ. I think that it should be compulsory to add not just "contains sulfites" on the labels but also the exact quantity".* **Mauro Villa, Italy**