

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



Newsletter Winter 2014

Buon Anno Nuovo...

The year 2013 flew by uneventful... Another very good vintage for Barbera, Nebbiolo, Barbaresco and Barolo as well as for Vermentino and Sangiovese in Tuscany. It seems the less vintage weather problems a year has, the faster the time goes by. Our challenge for this year will be to keep up the good work in the vineyards and in the wineries and at the same time set our minds to improve communication with you and all of our clients around the world. The Asian market will continue to grow this year and we will need to better understand the market. Who would have thought, that one day, three Piedmont farmer sons, want to better understand the wine consumers in China?

While Asia is far away in regards to wine travels to Piedmont, we will focus again on all the wine lovers that travel to the Langa and want to be with us. Wine lovers visiting is an honor for us and in 2014 we will try even harder to accommodate everybody to meet with us, see our wineries, hear about our philosophy, peak behind the scenes and taste our new vintage releases.

We hope that also you will be among those many people, that we will open our doors to in 2014. Cheers e saluti!

Bruno, Carlo and Giorgio Rivetti and the La Spinetta Team

A word from Giorgio



Great wine is healthy wine, did you ever think about why this is the case?

I can't exclude myself from all the many people that at the beginning of a new year make some resolutions. I do that every year and every year, most of the resolutions I make, I keep only a short while going into the year. Of course, being a wine producer, it is not easy to keep the resolution to "drink less wine". I am confronted with wine from early morning to evening, but, that is not the real "problem". The "problem" is, that I **LOVE** wine. Together with my "drink less wine resolution" I also want to be more healthy, eat well, exercise and lose a couple of pounds. While I cannot argue, that La Spinetta wines are calorie free and therefore ideal to lose weight, I can argue, that La Spinetta wines are healthy. Our

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



Newsletter Winter 2014

wines have a minimum of sulfites, our grapes come from Estate grown vineyards, we don't use chemicals, especially no pesticides, herbicides or chemical fertilizers to grow our grapes. The grapes we harvest are of top quality and are healthy to eat, which means, the wine is healthy to drink. We designated this newsletter primarily to the subject of healthy wine making, as I believe, great wine is healthy wine, but not necessarily healthy wine is great wine. Why? Well, please read on and you will discover the answer...

Giorgio, the farmer

Organic, biodynamic, natural...a lot of words, but what does it really mean for the world of wine and to us?

In recent years it seems one can hardly talk about wine without at least one of these terms sneaking its way into the conversation. As vintners, we're interrogated about this hot topic all around the world when sharing our wines and our philosophy. Questions like, "Are your wines organic/biodynamic/natural? Why? Why not? What do you think about (insert whichever terminology you prefer) wines? Are they better? Are they worse?" are inevitable.

Shelves and wine lists are overflowing with these (both physical and philosophical) labels, and in efforts to bring some clarity to the subject matter, we wanted to try to outline just what each of these terms mean...and, more importantly, what they mean to us at La Spinetta.

ORGANIC. It's important to note that while many wineries have been marketing their wines as "bio" (Italian for organic) for years, an official European regulation defining what that really implies was only approved two years ago, in February 2012. Wines could be labeled as "made with organic grapes," but the wines themselves were not officially considered "organic." For those that are interested, the European Commission's full regulations can be viewed here, but as these sorts of documents can be long and tedious to navigate, we've highlighted the major points below:



Organic wine must be made with organic grapes. This seems like an obvious point, but it's worth emphasizing as it underlines the importance of the work in the vineyard, which is where the real difference between any two wines lies, organic or non. Grapes must be grown and tended in conformance with the principles and guidelines of organic agriculture - this means

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



Newsletter Winter 2014

no chemical or artificial fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, growth hormones or genetically-modified organisms (GMOs). Some specific natural preparations may be used as protection against insects or disease and only "natural" or organic preparations can be used as fertilizers. There are a dozen or more national and international organizations that can certify the grapes and farming practices as "organic," though it is important to note that not all use the exact same standards for certification....

Restriction or limitation of certain practices in the cellar. While, the production of organic grapes concerns only that which happens in the vineyard, the regulation on organic wines addresses vineyard practices as well. Prohibited activities include: concentration by cooling, dealcoholization, elimination of sulfur dioxide by physical processes, electro-dialyses and the use of cation exchangers. The idea is that these oenological practices "significantly modify the composition of the product to the point that they may be misleading as to the true nature of organic wine." Other practices are limited: thermal treatment cannot exceed 70°C and while microfiltration is allowed, nanofiltration is not.

Limitation of additive products and substances. Most all ingredients of natural origin (vegetal, animal and microbiologic, including yeasts and bacteria) are allowed, preferably organic, while synthetic additives are very regulated or prohibited all together. The use of sulfites is very restricted; red wines are limited to 100mg/L and 150ml/L is allowed for whites and rosè. (for more on sulfites, see the article below...)

Though certainly a step ahead, these regulations still fail to fully address many of the subtler issues related to an organic philosophy like attention to the life of the soil, quality of yeasts and other ingredients, and sustainability, both in the vineyard and cellar (energy use, packaging, etc...). Thus, many wineries turn to private organizations for certification, which, though can provide an ulterior guarantee, is also ever more complicated for the consumer...

BIODYNAMIC. Biodynamic wines come from grapes produced according to the biodynamic agricultural principles laid out by Austrian Rudolf Steiner in 1924. Steiner's approach to agriculture is much more holistic, and spiritual, suggesting that the health of soil, plants and animals are indissolubly linked with the creative and transcendent forces of the universe.

While both organic and biodynamic farming practices prohibit the use of chemical/artificial fertilizers and pesticides, the biodynamic model goes even further, sustaining that agricultural practices should be synchronized with the spiritual forces of the universe. Special preparations (as indicated by Steiner), used in place of chemicals to enhance the life of the soil, are applied in the vineyard at specific times in accordance with the rhythms and cycles of the natural universe. Planting and harvesting are also carried out based on the phases of the moon or positions of planets. In the cellar, only natural yeasts are used and the use of any additives is discouraged. Sulfites, if used at all, are kept to an absolutely minimum.

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



Newsletter Winter 2014



In August 2013, Demeter Italia (Italian branch of Demeter International, the body responsible for the regulation and certification of biodynamic agricultural products) approved additional standards, beyond those adapted for the rest of the world, for the production of "biodynamic wines" – grapes must be hand-harvested, even less sulfur is allowed, even non-oak casks are permitting for ageing, and polypropylene filters can be used. The standards required for a wine to be considered "biodynamic" are very rigorous and apply to each phase of the production process.



NATURAL. This is perhaps the most ambiguous term as no formal regulations or certifications exist for the production of natural wines. Producers of these thus-called wines operate on more of a philosophy of minimal intervention by the winemaker, allowing the grapes, and resulting wines, to most fully express their natural characteristics. Grapes are generally farmed organically and harvested by hand, followed by natural fermentation (using only indigenous yeasts) and avoiding, at least for the most part, the additional of sulfur to stabilize the wine. Generally natural wines are neither filtered nor fined as to not interfere with the "true" nature of the wine. Natural winemaking, however, is not controlled by any official regulation or certification thus it is up to each producer to decide just what "natural" means to him or her.

So, what does all of this mean to us? And perhaps more importantly, what does it mean to you, the consumer?

Being "green" has become incredibly trendy in the last years and wine is no exception.



However, it often seems that (unfortunately) marketing drives much of this attention. Many producers have become certified organic/bio/biodynamic primarily for marketing or publicity purposes not necessarily as testimony of their commitment to quality or the environment. We are not certified nor do we plan on becoming so. Our sole objective and driving philosophy is to produce the absolute best grapes possible in the vineyard and highest quality wines in the cellar. This lofty ambition automatically implies the adoption of much of the criteria necessary for certifications in any

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



Newsletter Winter 2014

case.

In the vineyard, we do not use chemical or artificial fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, growth hormones or genetically-modified organisms (GMOs). We indeed believe that the health of soil, plants and animals are intricately connected to the creative and spiritual forces of the universe. It goes without saying, as it is really a basic criterion for producing quality wines, all grapes are harvested by hand.

In the cellar, we do not adopt practices such as concentration by cooling, dealcoholization, elimination of sulfur dioxide by physical processes, electro-dialyses or the use of cation exchangers (note that most DOCG rules don't permit these practices in any case). No thermal treatments exceeding 70°C are used, nor nanofiltration, and the high-end wines are not filtered at all. We avoid synthetic additives, use only natural yeasts and restrict the use of sulfites as much as possible (when wine is handled properly, the necessity of sulfites is automatically reduced). And while we don't think dancing in the vineyard at full moon is necessary, we do respect lunar phases when transporting wine in the cellar and bottling.

Bottom line, we believe that one cannot make great wine without full respect for the land and the intricate natural balance in the vineyard; nor are great wines made through the manipulation of fruit and the juice in the cellar. This necessarily implies adopting organic/biodynamic/natural philosophies. However, a certified organic/biodynamic wine does not necessarily mean that it is great.



One factor, and undoubtedly one of the most important, which continues to be overlooked by all the various

certifications is the human factor. The intensive manual care and attention dedicated to every activity in the vineyard, thorough and perfectly hygienic work in the cellar, and the uniqueness and experience of the human palate contribute enormously to the creation of a genuine wine. It is therefore up to each consumer to decide whether what's written on the label is important, be it "organic," "biodynamic," "natural" or anything else, or whether what is in the bottle and the philosophy and intention behind it that truly makes a wine great.



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



Newsletter Winter 2014

La Spinetta's second vintage Rose is out: Il Rose di Casanova 2013...



The second vintage of our fabulous pale salmon pink color, 50% Sangiovese and 50% Prugnolo Gentile wine is now available.

While the first vintage was a huge success, the 2013 will amaze even more. Il Rose di Casanova is one of those few examples, that immediately suggest to be enjoyed not only in season, but all year round.



Fine nose of ripe red berries, with notes of grapefruit, orange peel and mint. In mouth, full and crisp, with fruit balanced by a beautiful freshness, minerality and length. A very impressive Rosé, that has the finesse, the elegance and the minerality of the Provence combined with the structure of an Italian Red.

The wine is vinified using the "saignée" method (short maceration on the skins for a couple of hours) at cold temperature then kept on fine lees in the tank. No malolactic fermentation.

If you haven't had a chance to taste last year's release, you must not miss to taste it this season. Please contact us, if you like to receive information on retailers in your area. In some countries, where shipping costs are relatively low (e.g. Denmark, Germany, Belgium, France, Sweden, etc.), we might also offer you the wine directly and ship cases. Price without shipping, including sales tax is 13,50 Euro per bottle, 81,00 Euro per case. Minimum order 18 bottles.

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



Newsletter Winter 2014



Cooking Piemontese with Giovanna Rivetti

Giovanna Rivetti, our "vineyard manager" and our "in-house chef", was born in 1947. She learned the work in the vineyard from her father and the work in the kitchen from her mother. Both parents taught Giovanna skills that remain treasured assets of *La Spinetta*.

In each newsletter, Giovanna shares one of her secret recipes with us. To keep in line with the general subject of this newsletter, we asked Giovanna to share a very healthy recipe with us. Giovanna had to admit, that the focus of traditional Piedmont cuisine is not "very healthy", but she decided to give away her secret recipe of a winter fruit salad, that she swears can cure any cold or mild flu!

Following you will find the preparation for this "Macedonia alla Giovanna" for 4 people:

Ingredients needed:

4 ripe kiwi (great source of Vitamin C)
 2 ripe, but not too ripe pairs
 8 mandarins
 2 apples
 10 ml freshly squeezed lemon juice
 Moscato d'Asti Bricco Quaglia



The preparation is simple, but requires a maceration period of 12 hours. Peel and cut the pairs into small cubes, peel the mandarins and cut each small piece into two. Combine both fruits in a bowl and add 0,2 l of Moscato Bricco Quaglia. Let the fruit sit in the Moscato for a minimum of 12 hours at cool temperature, add lemon juice as well as the peeled and cubed kiwi and apple. Mix well. Add sugar to your taste!

Serve with a glass of Moscato!!!

Buon appetito!

P.s. Giovanna also adds some fresh whipped cream... but she "forgot" to tell us!

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



Newsletter Winter 2014



Wine “contains sulfites”, no kidding, but what does this really mean?

The term “sulfites” has become another buzzword one can’t seem to get around when speaking about wine. This is the collective term for sulfur dioxide, a chemical compound generally used in winemaking as a preservative to prevent spoilage (from bacteria) and oxidation, or in some cases to stop fermentation. Especially with the heightened interest in natural and organic products (wine obviously included), there’s a lot of talk surrounding the effects of sulfites and how much additional, if any, should be allowed in wine. Like most matters having to do with health, there are plenty of different opinions and points of view so we wanted to delve in a little deeper and get the facts.



First, it is important to point out that ALL wines contain sulfites at some level, as SO₂ is a natural by-product of the yeast metabolism during fermentation. Even in those wines to which no sulfur dioxide is added, the compound is naturally present at concentrations of up to 10 milligrams per liter. It is also important to point out that wine is by no means the only food product to contain sulfites. Dried fruits are notorious for containing high levels of sulfites, but you might be surprised to learn that also foods like Dijon mustard, powdered mashed potatoes, lemon juice and

crustaceans often contain quantities of SO₂ well above any glass of wine.

The amount of SO₂ permitted in wine depends on the country. For the production of “conventional” wines in the EU, 150mg/L is allowed for reds, 200mg/L for whites and rosés and up to 200/250mg/L for dessert red/white wines respectively. Organic and biodynamic wines must adhere to stricter limitations, however. In fact, the recently approved (2012) European Organic Wine regulations state that only 100mg/L of SO₂ is permitted for red wines and 150mg/L for whites and rosé wines (an additional 30mg/L are allowed for sweet wines).

Biodynamic certifications (according to Demeter Italia) only allow 70 mg/L for reds, 90mg/L for whites and rosés and 110mg/L for dessert wines. The varied allowances for each (red, white, dessert) wine are due to differences in the winemaking process. Red wines need less sulfur dioxide during winemaking and ageing as they contain tannin (in the skins and stems), a natural preservative and stabilizing agent. White wines, however, are generally not left in contact with skins after crushing and therefore are more disposed to oxidation and thus

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



Newsletter Winter 2014



require larger amounts of SO₂. Dessert wines require the largest quantities of sulfites as higher levels residual sugar would tend to continue fermentation without the addition of SO₂.

So, why all the commotion about sulfites? Sulfites have been blamed for a wide variety of ails, the most common being headache or migraine and, in particularly sensitive cases, severe asthma attacks. However, particularly in the case of headaches, there are plenty of other substances added to, or naturally present in, wine that are more likely culprits – alcohol for starters. Sulfites are often considered “unnatural,” an addition that changes the inherent character of the wine. However, as mentioned before, all wine naturally contains some SO₂, so, except for situations of legitimate sulfur allergies of course, the question is really how much.



Sulfites are generally added in very large amounts wherever wine is being mass-produced and production costs are kept low. However, under EU law, any wine containing more than 10mg/L of sulfur dioxide must be labeled as “containing sulfites.” Honestly, this information is of no use whatsoever as it includes virtually all wines. Additionally, there is no way of knowing whether the wine in question contains 15mg/L or 150mg/L. Those two little words – “contains sulfites” – tend to frighten consumers more than truly inform them.

In recent years, improved winery and vineyard practices have helped to greatly reduce the need for additional SO₂. A better understanding of how sulfur dioxide breaks down and binds during winemaking (only a part of the SO₂ added to a wine is effective as an antioxidant – the rest combines with other elements in the wine and is “lost”),

better overall hygiene in the cellar, and more careful practices in the vineyard to ensure healthy grapes have allowed producers to significantly diminish the use of sulfites.

Following careful winemaking and viticultural practices, we are indeed able to limit considerably the amount of sulfites we use at La Spinetta. It's only makes sense we share that information with you and have thus indicated below the total amount of SO₂ in several of our most representative wines:

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



Newsletter Winter 2014

Vermentino 2012: 82mg/L
 Barbera Ca' di Pian 2010: 54 mg/L
 Pin 2010: 85 mg/L
 Barolo Campe' 2009: 94 mg/L
 Barbaresco Staderi 2010: 85 mg/L

As you'll note, the amounts are considerably lower than the levels permitted for organic, and even many biodynamic, wines. You'll also note, however, that we do add some sulfites. This is not because we are or aren't bound to any particular regulation, but because we believe that a judicious use of SO₂ is useful in our efforts to craft the best wines possible – wines that are true and representative of the natural characteristics of each particular vineyard and grape variety, but wines that are also capable of ageing perfectly to be enjoyed for many years to come.

Where you can find us (Giorgio) in March and April ...

Here are some dates and events around the globe, where you can run into Giorgio and our wines. For further information please contact Anja: anja@la-spinetta.com. We also try to keep you informed via our website. If you visit <http://www.la-spinetta.com/ontour.html> you may always know, where in the world you might find Giorgio!

- March 3rd and 4th: Giorgio in Paris
- March 5th and 6th: Giorgio in Minneapolis
-
- March 10th Fort Lauderdale, FL: Consumer Tasting with Giorgio at Wine Watch www.winewatch.com
- March 12th Naples, FL: Wine & Dine with Giorgio, organized by and more information from: Naples Wine Connection www.napleswineconnection.com
- March 14th Los Angeles, 8:00pm Wine Tasting at Wine House www.winehouse.com
- March 17th San Diego: Wine & Dine with Giorgio at Caffè Calabria 6:30pm featuring food pairings by chef Mario Cassineri from Bice Ristorante www.caffecalabria.com
- March 26th Belgium: Wine & Dine with Giorgio at Domain Park West www.parkwest.be
- March 23rd and 24th, Piccolo VinItaly Tasting with Manuela Rivetti, Duesseldorf, Germany
- April 6th to 9th, VinItaly Wine Fair, Verona, Italy, Pavilion 9, Stand A2.



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



Newsletter Winter 2014

The One Liter Club goes into its 5th year... and you may benefit from a 5% discount...



Time goes by quickly and it made us realize, that the first members joined our club already in 2009, nearly 5 years ago.

We would like to honor these faithful members of the "first hour" and animate them to restock on their One Liter bottles.

Anybody, who joined the One Liter Club between September 2009 and September 2010 will thus receive a **5% discount and a present** on their order in March!!!

Don't miss your opportunity and in case you don't remember, when you joined the club, just ask us, we have all the information on file.