

ヴィノテーク

# Vinotèque

ワインと食の情報誌

Vin et  
Gastronomie

1998

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## もう一つのイタリアワイン革命児

フランチャコルタとカ・デル・ボスコの世界

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スペインワインを選ぶなら……

ポルトガルワインへの道しるべ

## コニャック紀行 I

## Vertical Tasting of Ca'del Bosco

There are only two regions in Europe that have the privilege of indicating their sparkling wine with the geographical denomination of the territory without other specification, Champagne and Franciacorta. We will never find "vin mousseux" written on the label of Champagnes, but we know that Champagne means fine sparkling wine. The same thing with Franciacorta. We never find "spumante" written on the label of Franciacortas, but we know that Franciacorta means fine sparkling wine made in this eastern Lombardian region.

In late October, Maurizio Zanella (the owner of Ca'del Bosco) came to Japan and organized the vertical tasting for readers of "Vinotèque". Maurizio Zanella is the most celebrated Franciacorta winemaker who has contributed much to today's fame of Franciacorta.

He brought 3 types of wines of different vintages directly from the cellar to let us understand the characteristics of Ca'del Bosco and Franciacorta. They were Franciacorta d.o.c.g., Chardonnay Terre di Franciacorta d.o.c. and Maurizio's Cuvée Annamaria Clementi VdT.

The first tasting included Franciacorta d.o.c.g. Cuvée Annamaria Clementi 1991, 1990, 1989, 1985 and 1983. Until 1989, it was simply called "brut mille-années" (vintage brut). Since 1995 when Franciacorta was upgraded to d.o.c.g., this prestige cuvée is called by the first name of Maurizio Zanella's mother who founded Ca'del Bosco in 1968.

It is fermented in a small barrel, Cuvée Annamaria Clementi is released only after over 5 years of aging including the second fermentation (the second fermentation must be over 18 months according to the d.o.c.g. law).

The 1991 had a slightly greenish pale yellow color with subtle and persistent bubbles. The 1990 offered a promising nose of gentle yeast, green apple, and a milky tone, followed by lively young acidity and powerful structure in

the palate. It was a magnificent vintage. The 1989 was delicious with a honey tone. The 1985, at its best, exhibited a dense acacia honey scent and a truffled flavor. This mature Franciacorta would be marvelous with veal or other light meats. The 1983 was a very charming aged Franciacorta with elegant acidity.

There are many contradictory opinions for the aging potentiality of sparkling wine. It is surely a very interesting subject that should be deepened. I visited in late November Ca'del Bosco winery and saw many bottles of old vintage Franciacorta kept in an enormous underground gallery in contact with yeast, not only 750ml bottles but also magnum bottles and even larger ones. These old vintage Franciacortas are tasted periodically and their aging potentiality are examined.

Zanella did not use flute glasses but normal white wine glasses for tasting of Franciacorta. A participant asked why. "I have continued for years crusading against flute glasses. It is not the question of the flavour nor of the taste, but simply because I think it is not pleasant to drink with flute glasses. When you drink wine with flute glasses, you have to incline your head behind more than 45 degrees like a bird. Why such an uncomfortable position at the table? I want to enjoy a meal comfortably", answered Zanella with a humorous gesture.

It is the typically European way of thinking that first of all wine should enrich the pleasure of the table. "For the form of glasses, I will let each of you to decide, because the taste preference is very personal", added Zanella.

The next tasting covered 1995, 1994, 1993, 1991 and 1989 Chardonnay. This Chardonnay was released for the first time in 1982 and was one of the first Italian Chardonnays fermented and aged in new small oak barrels. The 1995 offered a brilliant young greenish yellow color and a clean, rich fruit (pineapple, pear) nose intermingled with scent of clean new oak vanillin. This young Chardonnay possessed ripe, rich tropical fruit, beautiful acidity and slightly bitter taste of new oak. The 1995 reminded me of a modern Californian Chardonnay style while the next 1994 had a classic "Puligny" style. It was a very elegant wine with gentle lime fruit. The full-bodied 1993 was an exuberance of fruit, honey and vanillin. It was a powerful and dense wine from a fabulous vintage. The 1991 seemed to have less character than the first 3 wines. The 1989 offered unctuous and concentrated taste with a





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dry honey flavor.

Drinking 5 vintages together, I noted that the recent 3 vintages had a cleaner and more elegant style. The total malo-lactic fermentation of previous vintage (until 1990) was reduced gradually to today's two thirds. And now grapes are harvested earlier than before with more acidity. These are two major causes of the change of style.

A question from the audience about cloning. "Chardonnay and Pinot Noir for Franciacorta are clones of Champagne, while Chardonnay and Pinot Noir used for still wines are clones of Bourgogne. Pinot Bianco is Alsatian. But now we select clones from our vineyards", answered Zanella.

The last tastings were for 1995, 1993, 1991, 1990 and 1988 **Maurizio Zanella, Bordeaux blend "vino da tavola" (C.S 45%, C.F 25%, Merlot 30%)**. This wine to which Zanella gave his own name has been produced since 1980. Fermented and aged in small oak barrels (80% new) for 13-15 months, this wine is released after 12-14 months of aging in the bottle and made only in very good years.

The 1995 (not released yet into the market) had dark ruby color, and a stylish nose of dry plum, cherry jam and mint. This massive yet well balanced wine exhibited the impressive riches of fruit. Strawberry-raspberry scented 1993 offered a well-rounded silky taste. This rich and harmonious wine was very seductive even in its youth. The 1990 had a monumental bouquet of blueberry jam, marasca cherry and pepper, a velvet texture with rich fruit, soft tannin and solid acidity. This super-concentrated wine would be capable of over 10 years of evolution. The 1991 was rather similar to the 1990 style, but less powerful. The 1988 was very good to drink now with its soft texture and ripe fruit. While the 1988, 1990 and 1991 had a long-lived concentrated Médoc style with high acidity, the 1993 and 1995 had a elegant and harmonious style with sweet fruit and softer tannin which we can enjoy also young.

A question from a participant, "How about yeasts?" Zanella seemed excited by a series of professional questions. "We try to use only natural yeasts. We use selected yeasts only in the case of emergency. Naturally it is a risky choice, but I would like to produce wine with great character also with some little defects rather than perfectly controlled wine without personality", said Zanella.

In this very interesting vertical tasting, I noted Ca'del



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Bosco wines have changed from a very concentrated and powerful style to a harmonious and balanced style. Before they were wines which impressed critics with their muscular concentration, while now they are delicious and elegant wines that give us infinite pleasure on the table. In the past wines for the tasting to get admiration, now wines for the table to give people joy of drinking.

Years ago, probably, it was necessary for a young Italian winery (Ca'del Bosco was founded in 1968) to win some prizes at professional tastings and be noted by international critics with powerful wines. Now having obtained international fame, Ca'del Bosco can afford to produce wines that Zanella believes are really delicious.

I think this change of Ca'del Bosco's winemaking is also parallel to the general change in Italian winemaking in recent years.

At the beginning of the tasting, Zanella showed us some slides of Ca'del Bosco winery. It is very important to visit Ca'del Bosco to see how the philosophy of high quality dominates even in smaller corners of the winery. In this winery, no banal wine is produced. Corks are always the bests and the longest like Gaja's. Labels are cared and artistically designed. The winemaking department is maintained in perfect order. And the winery is really beautiful. The entrance gate called "Solar gate" is a work of one of the most important modern Italian sculptors, Arnaldo Pomodoro. After this bronze-steel made gate (5 tons in weight, 6 meters in diameter), will take you to the very modern winemaking department through the vineyards beautifully cared like garden. In the hall of the office beside the heliport, there are many prizes and memorial objects of some special taste exhibited. You wonder if you were in some first class country hotel or in some modern art museum. Every detail is cared and controlled to realize the top quality. Here you can really understand the Ca'del Bosco's philosophy of producing in the ideal ambience high quality wines worth being consumed on the best occasion.

The last comment of Zanella, "I have travelled all over the world. But it is the first time that I have had such interesting participants in the tasting. I am very happy". Useless to say that good wines are necessary for the success in tasting, but a enthusiast participation of the audience is even more important.

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