



On page 23, Maurizio Zanella. Left, Ca' del Bosco has its own heliport.

This Franciacorta has been made in Ca' del Bosco's unmistakable style, and it is an example and a model for other new bubbly that will appear on the world market. Maurizio Zanella, Ca' del Bosco's founder and one of Italy's foremost prestigious winemakers, explained it this way: "It makes sense to invest in Satèn if it is seen by the local wineries as a wine that can showcase the uniqueness of Franciacorta." Zanella sees only one way to compete with the great sparkling wines dominating the world markets, French champagne and Spanish Cava. "Only the quality of our Franciacorta product matters, and that means rules that are tough and tougher. It means intelligent investments and courageous choices that favor the constant improvement of our wines." That may also mean the end of mechanized harvesting, the planting of new vines only in the best zones, and collaboration among local

producers in terms of research and the exchange of ideas. Producer and entrepreneur Maurizio Zanella, the Remy Krug of the Franciacorta zone (Lombardy), not only brought his own name to the world's attention, but also introduced a previously unknown territory to wine enthusiasts. His sweeping view of his profession takes in not only the culture and economy of his corner of northern Italy but also the globalization of wine commerce. The development of the products he is best known for, his Chardonnay and the Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot blend known as Maurizio Zanella, reflects his own story and that of his winery. The origins of an elegant wine such as its barrique-aged Chardonnay reveal why Ca' del Bosco has achieved world-wide renown. Zanella tells us, "We needed a product that would let us penetrate the upper echelons of the international market, a passe-partout wine that would

Satèn

Not Just a Pretty Sound

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appeal to all the best restaurants, the most prestigious hotels and wine shops. So from 1983 to 1991, our Chardonnay was an invaluable ambassador." At the beginning that meant analyzing the style that a wine needed to travel in the best circles: "ready to drink immediately, impressively concentrated, with powerful structure that felt muscular on the palate." After the 1991 harvest, Zanella wanted a change of direction for his Chardonnay. He aimed for another tasting experience, less concentrated but on the whole more complex, perhaps more thought-provoking. Although the wine was elegant and immediately drinkable, it was able to evolve and improve with time. Zanella points out, "It's like a great Burgundy, able to brilliantly age for as much as ten years, getting even better and better with time." These achievements, although part of the romance and passion of wine, depend on Zanella's conviction that

global business is interested in what's best, and that top-quality is synonymous with appeal.

The story of Satèn has a parallel in literature. In a popular modern Italian novel *Silk*, by Alessandro Baricco, a character introduces a small town mayor to a new idea, silk manufacturing, by bringing him a scarf made of the marvelous fabric. "Do you know what this is?" he asks. "A woman's thing," the bureaucrat answers. "Wrong. A man's thing: money." Today, bubbly in Franciacorta is like the silk in Baricco's novel. A caprice of the wealthy now means serious numbers. A few years ago Ca' del Bosco joined forces with Count Paolo Marzotto, doubling the number of bottles produced. The 400,000 bottles turned out in 1993 have become 800,000 in 1999. Franciacorta Satèn 1995 reaffirms Ca del Bosco's priorities, a winning combination: continuity and quality.

WINE TRAVEL FOOD

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Tre Bicchieri 2000 Italy's Best Wines



Tre Bicchieri, or three glasses, is the recognition given to Italy's best wines, after a year-long series of blind tastings carried out by teams of experts. Many other excellent wines are awarded Uno or Due Bicchieri. The results of this research are published in *Vini d'Italia 2000*, released in November 1999 in Italy. The volume also reviews more than 1600 wineries and their most noteworthy labels. The English language version, *Italian Wines*, will be available world-wide in March, 2000.

The thirteenth edition

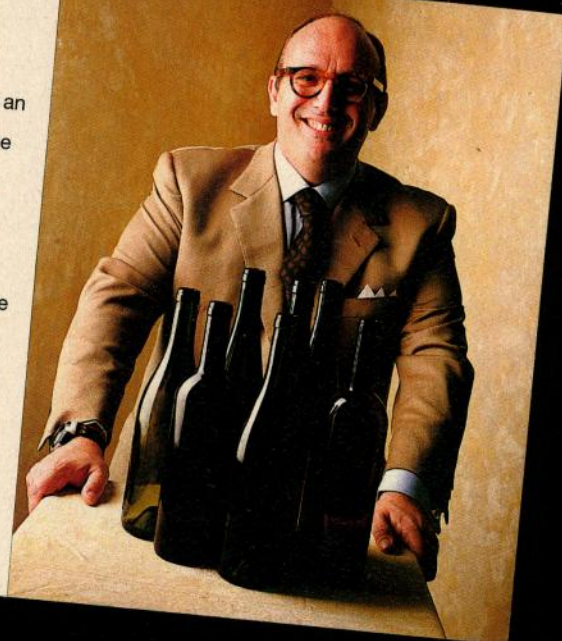
of the Gambero Rosso/Slow Food guide, Vini d'Italia, bears a heavy-duty number on the cover, 2000. It is the last one of the century, of the millennium. It is also the edition awarding the largest number of Tre Bicchieri, three glasses, in its history: 182. And finally, the book represents a definitive affirmation of the judgments and trademarks that are behind it. The annual wine guide is a vital part of both Gambero Rosso's and Slow Food Arcigola's work. By publishing this book, both of us came to be known to wine enthusiasts first and to a wider public with time. When we started out, we never dreamed of reaching 50,000 readers, a vast number for Italy and ten times what we printed in 1987. If we add the 25,000 copies of the Hallwag German edition and the 20,000 of Italian Wines 2000, we are at almost 100,000 copies. It is an impressive showing for a book that talks only about Italian wine and costs 55,000 lire in Italy, over \$25 in the United States. Today, it's rare to find a wine lover, wine merchant, producer, importer or distributor who doesn't have a copy somewhere. But the guide is no longer just a trade book. We know we're a success when we hear that customers walk in to wine shops with our book in their hands and ask for Tre Bicchieri labels. I'm proud to have invented that term. Due to its immediate comprehensibility, it has had the success of the Guide Michelin's Trois Etoiles, three stars.

The first great break we had, the one that boosted our numbers sharply, was the purchase of 60,000 copies by a pharmaceutical company, Sigma Tau. Every doctor in Italy received a personalized copy of our guide as a gift. Some of those were already wine enthusiasts. Others found a new interest thanks to that present, and our names became known outside the usual circles. Between 1988 and 1994, over the course of seven editions, we went from reviewing 450 wineries to about 1,000, from evaluating 1,500 wines to over 5,000. We limited ourselves

to giving only one Tre Bicchieri award per winery, which underscored the value of the prize by limiting the number. The downside of this policy was that it risked seriously damaging the images of certain leading labels. I still smart from the scoldings delivered by Angelo Gaja and Maurizio Zanella, both of whom fiercely objected to that kind of treatment. At the same time, new and interesting things were happening. Right from the beginning, we focused on the renewal of Italian wine, and the personalities that were in the forefront of change: Elio Altare, Giorgio Rivetti, Domenico Clerico, Silvio Jermann, Giovanni Manetti, Paolo De Marchi, Federico Carletti, Alois Lageder, and of course, Maurizio Zanella. Today these are famous names. Thirteen years ago, that was less true. I don't think it's presumptuous to say that our guide and our Tre Bicchieri contributed in part to their success. With the 1995 edition, we changed our rules. No longer did we give only one prize per winery. Gaja won four, Altare three, Zanella two. They had been justified in feeling angry. Even without Sigma Tau, our numbers rose. In those years we printed 20,000 copies, and in Germany, over 10,000. We were feeling successful. Between 1995 and 1999 there weren't many competitors on the Italian scene, apart from Veronelli and Maroni. Our guide became more and more a point of reference for our country's wine world and today it strongly influences the market for quality wine in Italy. For me, that's the realization of an old dream. For both Gambero Rosso and Slow Food, the Guide is a hall mark and fundamental to the credibility of their names. Both companies have even become fashionable, especially since Slow Food's wildly successful Turin food show in 1998, Salone del Gusto, and Gambero Rosso's TV debut in July, 1999, as Gambero Rosso Channel. Both companies have once again shaken up the sleepy Italian wine and food world. But the Guide is still the Guide.

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Ca' del Bosco means Maurizio Zanella, the heart and soul of the top prize-winning spumante winery in Italy. This year Maurizio has given us an extraordinary Franciacorta Satèn 1995, and we have recognized it as the best bubbly tasted for this edition of our Guide. Many of his labels have achieved this prestigious position in past years, but an extraordinary vintage Annamaria Clementi stands out. Ca' del Bosco's entire range is top-quality, both the Franciacorta wines such as Dosage Zero and vintage Brut, and the still wines. Among the second group, whether we think of Chardonnay Maurizio Zanella, Rosso Maurizio Zanella, or Pinèro, we are talking about superior wines made in one of Italy's most beautiful and technologically advanced cellars. But that's not all: in the last twenty years, Maurizio has energetically and enthusiastically promoted his name all over the globe. It's no accident that he's at the top.





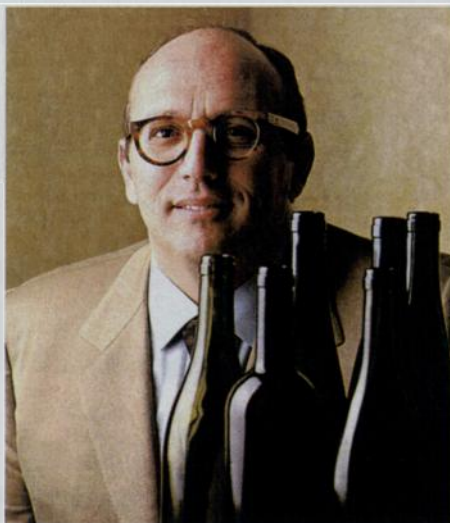
Vini d'Italia 2000



Franciacorta Satèn '95 Ca' del Bosco

Satèn Not Just a Pretty Sound

BY GIACOMO MOJOLI



We've never believed that a name or a word had the power to assure a great wine's success and recognition. However, the term *satèn*, used only in Franciacorta to replace a French word, *cremant*, seems to sum up all this wine's qualities, to suit its sensory profile. *Satèn* is first of all a sound, but it triggers an image of a soft, shiny product, as smooth as silk, a wine made exclusively with white grapes such as Chardonnay

and Pinot Bianco. But here we're not talking about generic *satèn* but of Franciacorta Satèn 1995, one of the four most elegant and admired wines to emerge during the Tre Bicchieri final tastings. About 26,000 bottles of this label were produced: it is an important, impressively structured and powerfully seductive wine. Its aromas are penetrating and varied, gifted with astonishing harmony; the flavors are deep and soft.