

Why Wh-ine

Smaller Italian vineyards currently producing exceptional results, says leading London party caterer Zafferano



Smaller Italian wine producers are currently offering wines of particularly high quality, one of London's leading party caterers, Julian Saipe of Zafferano, said today after a visit to some of Italy's lesser-known vineyards.

These included vineyards run on 'biodynamic' principles: a step beyond organic production that involves the vineyard being run in a holistic, sustainable way, focusing on soil fertility, crop nutrition, and with pests and disease being counteracted, for example, by plant-based teas and infusions made in the vineyard from oak bark and nettles. 'Wines from biodynamic vineyards demonstrate a profound bouquet and offer more elegance and purity of fruit' Julian comments. 'We observed a leaf picked from a non-biodynamic vine that wilted far sooner than the leaf picked from a biodynamic vine'.

Julian Saipe says: 'Every bottle of wine tells a story, and during this visit my aim was to find out the story of some of the less well-known Italian vineyards. What really impressed me was the sheer devotion the producers I met had to their wine; devotion that typically involved an entire extended family.'

Three producers whose wine especially impressed Julian were:

Alois Lageder, whose vineyards are located

in the Alto Adige region of Italy, formerly the South Tyrol. Julian tasted a particularly fine Pinot Bianco from a vineyard he describes as having 'warm sunny days and cool nights which help to preserve the grapes' natural aromas and acidity.' Alois Lageder's estate is run on biodynamic principles.

Nicolis in Valpolicella (the oldest and most prestigious wine growing land in the region), a producer Julian says is 'a classic example of an Italian family-run business' Three of the eight Nicolis brothers now run the winery and we were also treated to a fabulous lunch by Mama Nicolis who still has a strong input into the running of the estate. The house style is a vibrant wine with ripe cherry fruits, elegant tannins which run through the complete range up to the epic Amarone. A full bodied, structured wine with a high alcohol content that has been nicknamed 'Vino da Meditazione!' 'tasting the 'Amarone' at 11 in the morning was an interesting experience' Julian remarked.

The Bisol family and their estate in the beautiful region of Valdobbiandene are the masters of their genre, and have spearheaded the revival of Prosecco and its demand worldwide. 'All the fruit comes from their own land (something which is extremely rare in the region), and they have centuries of experience. The Cartizze hill which produces perhaps the best Prosecco in the region is

reputably the most expensive vineyard land in the whole of Italy at around 1,000,000 euros per hectare'

Wines from many of the vineyards Julian visited will be selected for Zafferano events held in the run-up to Christmas and in the New Year.

Zafferano is one of London's leading high-end party caterers organising parties for corporate and private clients. Zafferano's party organisers work with clients to create events that are not only immensely enjoyable on the night, but which linger in the memory. The company is known for the particular quality and inventiveness of its food and drink.

