

Northern Neck Uncorked met at Belle Mount Vineyards on March 5th with Tom Iezzi presenting wine and food styles of Northern Italy. Tom is past president of AWS, past AWS Chapter Chair and a wine expert with expertise in Italian wines. Pat McMurry aided by Diane Kean provided appetizers to accompany the wines. Tom presented a selection of wines from the noted Virginia winemaker Gabriele Rausse, a local favorite - Ingleside Vineyards and Proseco, an Italian sparkler.

The tasting started with an explanation of the various breads, cheeses, meats and fruits. It was stressed that by pairing certain foods with each wine it would enhance the enjoyment of both samples.

Proseco was the first of the wines to be evaluated. It was a light and refreshing sparkler from Northern Italy. The attendees enjoyed the wine and paired it with Piadina with Pinzimonio, a flatbread and dipping oil preparation. That set the mood for the old-world experience of textures and flavors. It was deemed to be a good Italian substitute for Champagne.

Then we tasted Refosco by Gabriele Rausse paired with Prosciutto and Mortedella, a pressed meat. The wine was a spicy dry red with medium body. It is traditionally grown in the region near Venice.

Next we had a Gabriele Rausse Nebbiolo. It was paired with a Polpetta, a type of meatball. The wine was very pale in color but was amazingly rich in flavor. It had bracing tannins and deep structure components that most of the tasters seemed to rate highly. Nebbiolo is primarily grown in the Piedmont region of Italy.

A Gabriele Rausse Cabernet Sauvignon was paired with Parmigiano and Pecorino cheeses. It was the most highly rated wine of the evening being smooth, with a long finish. Some thought it was earthy and elegant with layers of cassis and herbs. Cabernet Sauvignon is grown in the Tuscany region.

An Ingleside Sangiovese was sampled with strawberries and Balsamic vinegar. It had aromas of cherry and blackberry. Light tannins make this an easily approachable red.

The last wine was Vin Santo by Antinori. It is made primarily from Trebbiano, one of the starter wines, blended with Malvasia. The procedure for selecting the grapes in this wine is based on picking the grapes at various harvest timeframes to achieve a unique balance. Grapes are harvested and spread out on straw mats to dry until December. This provides for complex aromas and hints of honey and dried fruit in a high alcohol wine. It was sampled with Cantucci a type of biscotti. Vin Santo is grown in the Tuscany region.

The experiences and travels of Tom Iezzi helped make the tasting educational and exciting. Tom described some to the wineries and growing regions of Italy and made the prospect of a visit very inviting.

Proseco \$15

Refosco by Gabriele Rausse was \$19

Nebbiolo by Gabriele Rausse was \$35

Cab Sauvignon by Gabriele Rausse was \$35

Sangiovese by Ingleside was \$23

Vin Santo by Antinori was \$35