



PLUMPJACK
WINES

PlumpJack Wine Club

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Winegrowing and the regular consumption of wine have been a mainstay of Italian culture for millennia. Italy possesses over a thousand indigenous wine grape varieties, more than any other country, and wine is made from hundreds of these. While wine has been made in the southern part of Italy for over a few thousand years, the drive to improve its quality has come only in the past ten or fifteen years. Until recently, if you went to a restaurant or local wine shop searching for a southern Italian wine, Primitivo, a Zinfandel clone, and Salice Salentino, a robust, blended red wine, would likely have been your only choices. Today, wines made from other indigenous

varieties and many new producers are appearing in our markets. While wines from the south of Italy have never achieved the recognition or the acclaim of the wines in the north, their status and standing has begun to improve dramatically. Our wines this month show the tremendous quality and value of these wines. They are both made from indigenous varietals and offer a unique and very distinctive spectrum of flavors and aromas. Through my sense of smell and taste, I can imagine the black volcanic soils, the cool breeze coming off the sea, or the mountains jutting dramatically out of the earth overlooking the Mediterranean. Take the time to swirl and slurp these wines. Take a minute (or ten) to experience their delicious and complex aromas and flavors and note how they change as the wine airs. Your organoleptic sensors will guide you in this transcendental experience, but remember to come back to your glass for another taste!



Campania, located in the southwestern Italy on the Tyrrhenian Sea, is the shin of the Italian boot. Its total population is about 5.8 million, making it the second most heavily populated region of Italy. Campania devotes about 100,000 acres to grapevines, with a total annual wine production of about 52 million gallons, and ranks 9th among the 20 Italian regions. About 64% of the wine production is red or rosé, leaving 36% for white. The region produces 17 DOC (Denominazione di Origine Controllata) wines and one DOCG wine, Taurasi. Only 2.8% of Campania wine carries the DOC designation. In 1970, only three wineries in Campania were making wines commercially, and only one, Mastroberardino, produced significant enough amounts of wine to be known outside of the region. Today Campania now boasts over 120 wineries. You could say, Campanian wine begins and ends in Pompeii. The eruption of Mount Vesuvius that buried the town and its vineyards two millennia ago was just one of many such eruptions that have marked the geological development of the area. The sharp peaks of the Apennines themselves mark the huge tectonic forces at work in the region, and these upthrusts have provided the altitude necessary to grow fine wine grapes in a hot climate. The volcanoes themselves have created the mineral-rich soil that makes the grapes and their wines so distinctive. Campania is home to almost 36 major and secondary grape varieties, and some of the best wines are derived from the ancient grape varieties introduced by the Greeks and revered by the imperial Romans. Aglianico and Fiano may not be as familiar as Cabernet and Chardonnay, but these

*2007 Viticolori De Conciliis
Fiano "Donnaluna"
Paestum IGT
Prignano Cilento, Italy*



*2006 Torre Quarto
"Bottaccia" Uva di Troia
Puglia IGT
Cerignola, Italy*

enduring indigenous grapes are capable of yielding wines just as good and often more distinctive. It's not just the abundance of native grapes that makes Campania so special. The region possesses a variety of highly differentiated terroirs and microclimates that give its wines a distinctive and unique character. Campania is divided into 5 provinces and this month's producer, Viticoltori De Conciliis, is located in the province of Salerno. De Conciliis's pockets of vineyards are located in the relatively uncharted Cilento zone on the Campania coast, considered the leading wine zone in Salerno. They are relatively high up, overlooking the Mediterranean, where the cool sea breezes in the afternoon and early evening help offset the region's searing heat. The fruit for De Conciliis' Fiano "Donnaluna" comes from three vineyards: Cannetiello-planted in 1982, Destre-planted in 1998, and Casalvelino-planted in 1994. The grapes were hand-harvested mid August and fermentation took place at cold temperatures in stainless-steel tanks. Once fermentation was complete, the wine was aged an additional 4 months in stainless-steel and then bottled. De Conciliis believes in making natural wines that have complexity, natural fruit and energy, capitalizing on his vineyard's southern exposure, ancient soils and ripe climate. The 2007 Fiano "Donnaluna" is a rich, vibrant wine displaying aromas of pineapple, peaches, apricots, flowers and spices. There is an immediate intensity of fruit that attacks the palate, and then as the wine travels over tongue, it becomes bright and refreshing, leaving the mouth clean with lingering flavors of tropical fruit, minerals, and a hint of smoke. Try this wine with fritto misto, grilled sea bass with wild mushrooms, or fettucine with arugula, sundried tomatoes and Mozzarella di Bufala.

The 2007 Viticoltori De Conciliis Fiano "Donnaluna" is \$20.99/bottle, \$215.90/case.



Puglia (also known as Apulia) is "the heel" of the boot of peninsular Italy. It is bordered by both the Adriatic and Ionian Seas, giving it one of the longest coastlines of any region in Italy. Puglia is one of the most fertile regions in all of Italy, on a par with the Po Valley. It produces more wine than any other Italian region usually making up around 17% of the national total. It also competes with Sicily for first place as grape producer. For a long time much of the wine made here was shipped north to Turin where it was used to make Vermouth, or to France where it was used to give structure to French wines when the local harvest was either poor or insufficient. Recently, Puglia has become one of the southern Italy's most striking viticultural outposts. While it continues to develop and realize its inherent potential, it is currently thriving in the high-quality value genre. Torre Quarto winery was built by the French Dukes De la Rochefoucauld in 1847. They built a winery in the area surrounding Cerignola where their land holdings consisted of 12,500 acres of which 7,400 were vineyards. It was called "Quarto Ducale" ("ducal quarter") because the estate comprised a quarter of the Cerignola district. Once the largest and most important wine producer in the area, the name and cellar of Torre Quarto provide an important historical reference for southern Italy. After years dedicated to other business ventures, Dr. Stefano Cirillo Farussi restored his family's winery to its original beauty. Together with talented young winemaker Cristoforo Pastore, the Farussi family has set out to conquer the world with the underdeveloped grapes of Puglia. Quality at the 150-acre estate is unparalleled. Modern technology combined with a deep respect for winemaking traditions in Puglia produce wines as natural, as rich, and as terroir-true as they can be. Puglia's three main reds—Primitivo, Negroamaro, and Uva di Troia—have emerged on the scene as individual personalities. Uva di Troia may not possess the name recognition of its fellow reds, yet many regard it as the most intriguing of Puglia's trio, given its pronounced aromatics and dense coloration. Uva di Troia (also known as Nero di Troia) may be one of Puglia's oldest grapes, and the favored grape of desperate 17th century Bordeaux winemakers when it came to "ameliorative" grapes for blending. Structure is the hallmark of Uva di Troia, and its black-fruited core is as seductive as fine Cabernet Sauvignon, with an endless juiciness that makes it match wonderfully with food. Torre Quarto's 2006 "Bottaccia" is made from 100% Uva di Troia. "Bottaccia" means "big barrel," and refers to the ancient casks in which the owners of Torre Quarto used to ship their wines to Bordeaux. The grapes for the 2006 "Bottaccia" come from vineyards surrounding the town of Cerignola and were harvested at the end of October. Vinification took place in stainless-steel tanks and then the wine was aged in stainless-steel for 5 months and barriques for 7 months. Plums and cherries flood the nose, with blackberries, juicy cherries and chocolate on the palate. Full-flavored, long on the palate, and multi-dimensional, the dominant dark plum fruit is layered with smoky overtones and brighter cherry notes. This wine is the perfect addition to meals that include roasted or grilled red meats, strong-flavored cheeses, or pasta with a spicy tomato sauce.

The 2006 Torre Quarto “Bottaccia” is \$18.99/bottle, \$248.30/case.