

Wine Spectator Weekly

Internet Only

Marvin R. Shanken, Editor and Publisher

GET WINE SPECTATOR RATINGS HERE FIRST—EVERY THURSDAY

Italy / Northeast

Italy's northeast region is best known for its whites, but my recent tastings here in Tuscany unearthed a number of northeastern reds that are also worthy of mention. Carlo Guerrieri Gonzaga, owner of Tenuta San Leonardo in Trentino, continues to make an outstanding Bordeaux blend in collaboration with Tuscan-based consulting enologist Carlo Ferrini. In the Alto Adige, Martin Foradori of the Hofstätter family estate shows once again that the local red variety Lagrein, which often produces wines that are rather light and rustic, can also turn out an outstanding, full-bodied and concentrated red that can compete on the international stage.

One of my best discoveries in a long time, however, comes from the Movia family estate, which actually straddles the border of Northeast Italy with Slovenia. Over half of the estate is in Slovenia, where the family, with 44 acres of vineyards, has been in operation since 1820. In fact, during the communist years of the former Yugoslavia, it was the only private wine-producing estate in the country. Today they are making some very interesting red and white wines with a very decent price tag. The whites are aged for between two to four years in barrel while the reds are matured for five to six years in the cellar.—J.S.

Movia

Chardonnay Brda 1999

92 points | \$21 | 600 cases made

Very ripe, with melon, dried pineapple and lemon rind character. Full-bodied, with lots of ripe fruit and a crisp, steely, mineral aftertaste. A bright and rich white.—J.S.

Movia

Brda Veliko Bianco 1998

91 points | \$29 | 50 cases imported

A beauty. Intense aromas of lemon rind, apple, mineral and fruit. Full-bodied, with mineral and freshly sliced apple character. Long and superclean finish. A blend of Ribolla, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Grigio.—J.S.

La Sansonina

1998

90 points | \$60 | 100 cases imported

An exotic and wild Merlot, with green olives, berries and fruit cake character. Full-bodied, with round and soft tannins and a long finish. So fruity it's almost off-dry. From Veneto. Drink now.—J.S.

J. Hofstätter

Lagrein Alto Adige Steinraffler 2000

90 points | \$40 | 100 cases imported

The undisputed champion of Lagrein. Impressive concentration of blackberries, spices and minerals with hints of grilled meat. Full-bodied, with chewy tannins and a long, plummy finish. Best after 2005.—J.S.

Movia

Brda Veliko Rosso 1995

90 points | \$29 | 770 cases made

This is an off-the-wall, but cool wine from Slovenia. Hard to believe that this is a current release, but it's still fresh and refined. Medium- to full-bodied, with silky tannins and a lovely currant, light vanilla aftertaste. A delicious red made from Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Pinot Noir. Drink now.—J.S.

Movia

Ribolla Brda 2000

90 points | \$24 | 660 cases made

Fantastic aromas of mineral, lemon and dried orange peel. Full-bodied, with a fresh and clean character and a bright, fruity and long finish.—J.S.

Vie di Romans

Isonzo del Friuli Voos dai Ciamps 1999

90 points | \$43 | 80 cases imported

A delicious red, with meaty, spicy and chocolaty character. Medium-bodied, with well-integrated tannins and a long, flavorful finish. Best after 2004.—J.S.