

TERROIRSENSE

WINE REVIEW

TERROIR ACADEMY

Ian D'Agata's Best Italian Wines of 2020

Even in a year as difficult as 2020 turned out to be for the world of wine (not that 2021 has been a walk in the park, at least, not this far) there were reasons to smile. Clearly, the smiling was limited to when the mind stopped focusing on the Covid-associated disaster at hand and concentrated instead on the many wonderful wines released in 2020 all over the world. And Italy certainly contributed its share of very fine wines indeed, such that setting out to choose the top 20 wines of 2020 looked to be a highly enjoyable task. So enjoyable in fact that I had gotten to forty wines before I even realized I was wayyyyyy over my self-imposed wine number limit!

Fact is, Italy offers not just an amazing diversity of wine grapes, but of habitats too, and so the potential to make fine wines is almost endless. Narrowing a list down to only 20 “best wines of the year”, those that you should not miss out on, is really no easy feat. And unlike other countries that are best known mostly for one or two specific wines, with Italy it is hard to focus on just one grape or one wine type or one region, because that means missing out on some real beauties.

After a year of tasting through at times a truly compelling set of wines, ranging from surprising discoveries to mainstream products to rare small-volume efforts, I compiled the following list of top Italian wines of 2020 based on their quality, value, score, and availability. Clearly, there were certainly many other very fine wines made in Italy in 2020, but in an effort to come up with a serviceable, easy to read list, I have limited the wines on this “Best of” list to those I scored 96 /100 or above, but again, I want to stress that there were many, many other truly exciting wines top-drawer released in Italy last year.

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Vini Franchetti 2018 Terre Siciliane Contrada G

95

Between the wines he makes at his Tenuta di Trinoro estate (this year's releases are all outstanding yet again) and these at Etna's Vini Franchetti, there is probably nobody in Italy who makes more hedonistically sensual, opulent wines than Andrea Franchetti. Think Pingus with an added note of minerality and you'll know exactly what I mean. Franchetti's greatness is that his wines, though remarkably generous, fleshy and glyceric, are never over the top) The Contrada G has that note of minerality and extra lift without the massive uncompromising tannins of say the Contrada P or R and is simply an amazingly good Etna Rosso that you should try and stock your cellar with. Drinking: 2025-2035.