



DISCOVER THE WINES OF

La Bella Italia

Meandering streets lined with dazzling architecture. Country vistas worthy of Renaissance masterpieces. Crisp white wines served at picnics in the Alps. Bold reds shimmering in carafes on trattoria tables. Gastronomic delights served with robust hospitality. Come join us in discovering Italy.

With this booklet we invite you to begin your discovery of this magnificent Mediterranean peninsula. We've selected **Roberto Dante Martella**, Toronto restaurateur and unofficial Italian Ambassador to Canada, to be your tour guide. From the cool, foggy Alps to sun-drenched Sicily, Roberto will introduce you to the cities, culture and curiosities of the birthplace of his ancestors. And of course the best part – a sampling of delectable wines, robust spirits and epicurean treats of La Bella Italia.

Discover Italy at the LCBO throughout February 2004.

'WELCOME' Z'Talian style

There are few things that give me more pleasure than introducing new friends to the country I love so much. One of my favourite aspects of daily life in Italy is the after dinner stroll. It's called a **passeggiata** (pa-SEJ-gi-a-ta).

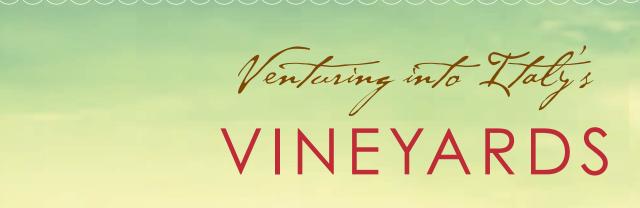
A passeggiata is a relaxed wander to savour the sights and sounds that one encounters along the way. Like all the best things in life, this promenade is best shared.

Think of this booklet as our passeggiata. So together, let's stroll, relax, linger, and enjoy. **Ah la dolce vita** – the good life.



LUCIA & ROBERTO MARTELLA





WHAT MAKES ITALIAN WINES SO GOOD?

Several factors combine to make Italy the largest exporter of wine in the world: climate, topography, experience and passion.





Elimate

From north to south, Italy is blessed with the seasons and sunshine that nurture and sustain vines.

Topography

Italy is graced with a wide range of sites ideal for vineyards

– sloping terrain with good drainage and excellent exposure
to the sun.

Experience

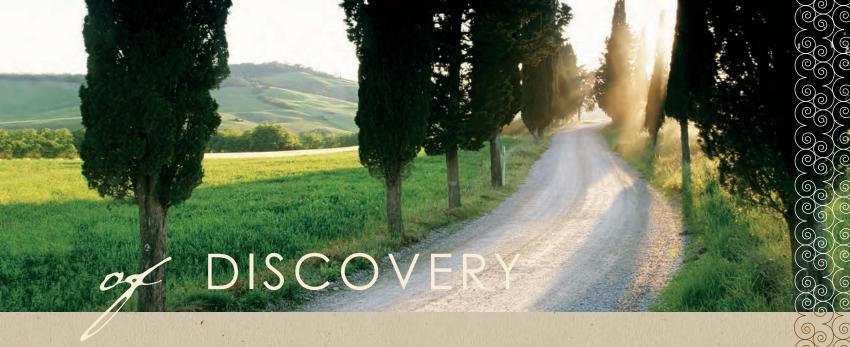
Each variety of grape has its favourite type of soil and site. Winemaking has been practiced on the peninsula for over 4000 years. This knowledge has been cultivated and passed from generation to generation. Italian vintners draw upon this experience to select just the right vine from over 2000 indigenous and introduced varieties grown in Italy.

Passion

In true Italian style, the passion Italian vintners have for their craft has raised the quality of their wines to international standards. In fact, many new-age Italian vintners have embraced modern techniques and famous international varietals such as Cabernet Sauvignon to create awardwinning vintages.







Politically, Italy is comprised of 20 regions. However, to simplify your tour, it's easier to divide the country by climate. This way, one ends up with the **continental north**, **temperate centre** and **hot Mediterranean south**.

For eons visitors have been lured by this magnificent Mediterranean peninsula. However, **once charmed by its pleasures, many were reluctant to leave**. Ancient Greeks, Phoenicians, Gauls, Carthaginians, Goths and more all fought to extend their stay. Without a doubt, wine played a part in their love affair with the land. The colonizing Greeks called Italy 'Oenotria', wine country. Graced with untold sun-drenched hills and excellent soils, vines can be cultivated in practically every region of the land.





LIGURIA ~ PIEDMONT ~ VALLE D'AOSTA ~
LOMBARDY ~ ALTO ADIGE-TRENTINO ~ VENETO ~
FRUILI-VENEZIA GUILIA

Our discovery of Italy begins in the **North**: from Turin just steps from France, to Trieste neighbouring Slovenia in the east. Across this terrain, cradled by the white peaked Alps and Dolomites, trellises blanket hillsides; their vines stretching to greet the sunlight. Their cornucopia of wines – sweet sparkling Asti Moscatos, delicious reds like Valpolicellas, Amarones, Barolos, and chic white favourites like Soaves and Pinot Grigios – are savoured by visitors and locals alike in the jewels of the North: **Milan** and **Venice**.



Refined get RELAXED

WINES FROM THE CONTINENTAL NORTH

Many people I meet believe that wine is only for special occasions too precious and finicky for everyday meals. In Italy wine is food. And like food, there are wines for casual enjoyment, and those to complement special occasions. I counsel my friends that the wine they choose should match the moment. When enjoying a modest, tasty dinner, pair it with a reasonably-priced wine. Here are some good-value Northern Italian wines that would nicely suit casual dining.



MARTINI & ROSSI ASTI



This fresh, fruity and fragrant sparkling wine from Piedmont is great for toasting the start of a special evening – or serve it after dinner along with fresh fruit or other desserts.



BOLLA SOAVE CLASSICO D.O.C.



This very delicious wine with its delicate aroma of apricot and citrus is from Veneto. Light-bodied with a dry, soft aftertaste, it makes an ideal aperitif or accompaniment to finger foods.







Veneto

A dry Northern Italian white wine from the Veneto region. Its bouquet is delicately fruity. On the palate, it is crisp and fresh with a hint of almond on the finish. It goes nicely with antipasto, fish, shellfish, veal or chicken.



COLLAVINI DEI SASSI CAVI CHARDONNAY D.O.C.

Venezia

This Venezia grown Chardonnay has a bouquet of golden delicious apples and freshly baked bread. On the palate, it suggests flavours of vanilla and honey. Ideally served as an aperitif or with grilled fish.



COLLAVINI PINOT GRIGIO

Frieli

This white wine from Fruili has an ample bouquet -- its aromas of hay, fresh walnuts and toasted almonds are penetrating.

On the palate it is dry, full and persistent. Enjoy it with pasta in seafood sauce.

507384 1500 mL \$12.95

161034 750 mL \$12.95

33340 750 mL \$13.95





PLACES TO SEE IN THE CONTINENTAL NORTH

Milan

Since ancient times, Milan has been a powerful trading centre. Its prominence as a leader in fashion, business and finance still continues today. Milan is arguably the fashion capital of the world. Mavens of couture like Armani, Prada, Ferre and many more call it home. The city's position of longstanding wealth is unmistakable – powerful dynasties, patrons of great architecture and art, have left their indelible mark on the cityscape.



The **Duomo** is a must see. This magnificent church is one of the largest gothic cathedrals in the world. Begun in the 14th century it took over 500 years to complete.

Just steps from the Duomo, is another landmark I recommend to my Ontario friends. The **Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II** is a shopping arcade without equal. Its most spectacular feature is its arched metal and glass roof that spans the pedestrian space. Anyone who has been to Toronto's Eaton Centre will immediately realize the inspiration behind its vaulted glass ceilings.



WINE GUIDE

VALPOLICELLA

Valpolicella ranks just after Chianti for total D.O.C. (see page 48 for an explanation of this term) red-wine production in Italy. This dry red wine is grown in the hills north of Verona in the region of Veneto. The standard version of Valpolicella is made from a blend of red grape varieties and is **intended to be enjoyed young** to best appreciate its fragrant aromas and **refreshing light cherry fruit flavours**. Amarone, a full-bodied version of this wine, is produced using a special process. (see below)

AMARONE CLASSICO

Grown in Veneto, this ruby red wine is also known as Recitio della Valpolicella Amarone. Dry and rich in flavour, it is made principally from the Corvina grape. An Amarone, which literally means 'strongly bitter', goes through a special process to achieve its desired character. In this process, the grapes' sugars and flavours are concentrated by air-drying for up to 4 months. They are then fermented until the wine has a very low sugar content (dry). Amarones have a fuller, richer flavour than standard Valpolicellas; this makes them excellent wines to accompany red meat and game.

SOAVE (see page 12)

Soave (SWAH-veh), Italy's most popular dry white wine, is born of the northern town bearing its name. This wine is made of Garganega and Trebbiano grapes. Garganega is the principal grape and is known for its almond character. Trebbiano lends a citrusy crispness to the wine. Combined, they become a medium-bodied wine that is straw-yellow or greenish-yellow, with a delicate scent, balanced yet slightly bitter almond flavour and refreshingly crisp finish.

WINES FROM THE CONTINENTAL NORTH



BOLLA VALPOLICELLA CLASSICO D.O.C.

Veneto

A red typical of Veneto in Northern Italy: dry, medium-bodied and well balanced. Its structure is reminiscent of cherries, berries and other dark fruits. A wonderful casual wine to serve with olives or seasoned cheeses.

16840 750 mL S11.95

Regined ze/ RELAXED



MASI AMARONE DELLA VALPOLICELLA

Veneto

A majestic full-bodied Veneto red with cedar, berry, chocolate and coffee flavours. Enjoy it with red meats, game, and tasty piquant cheeses, like Parmesan.



FOLONARI MERLOT CABERNET SAUVIGNON IGT

Venezia

A ruby-red wine from Venezia. To the taste, it is intense, fruity and slightly herbaceous. It is a classic match for medium cheeses and veal chops.



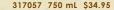
CESARI MARA VINO DI RIPASSO VALPOLICELLA SUPERIORE

Veneto

This Northern Italian wine has a sensual bouquet of vanilla, plum-cherry, leather and oak. It is intense, smooth and generous, with a long lingering finish. Its character will complement flavourful meat dishes.

5065

506519 750 mL \$14.95



384495 750 mL \$10.95

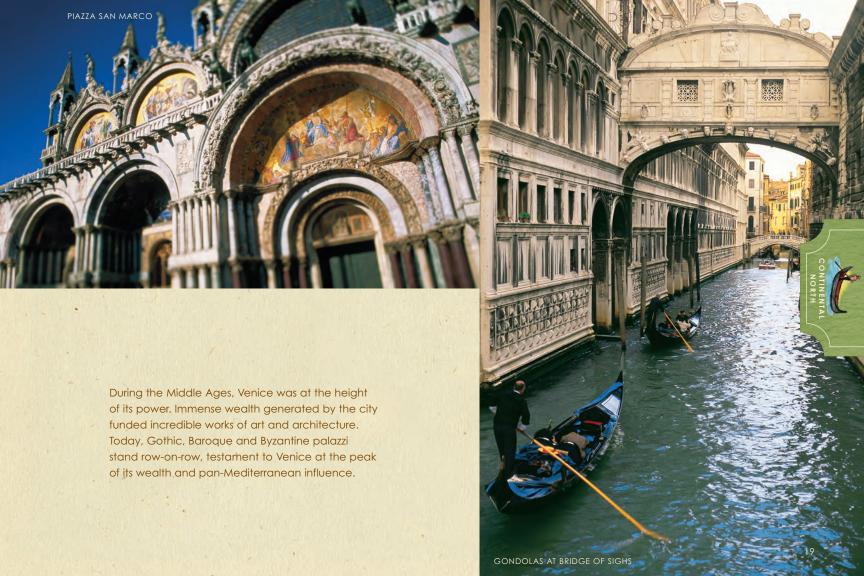
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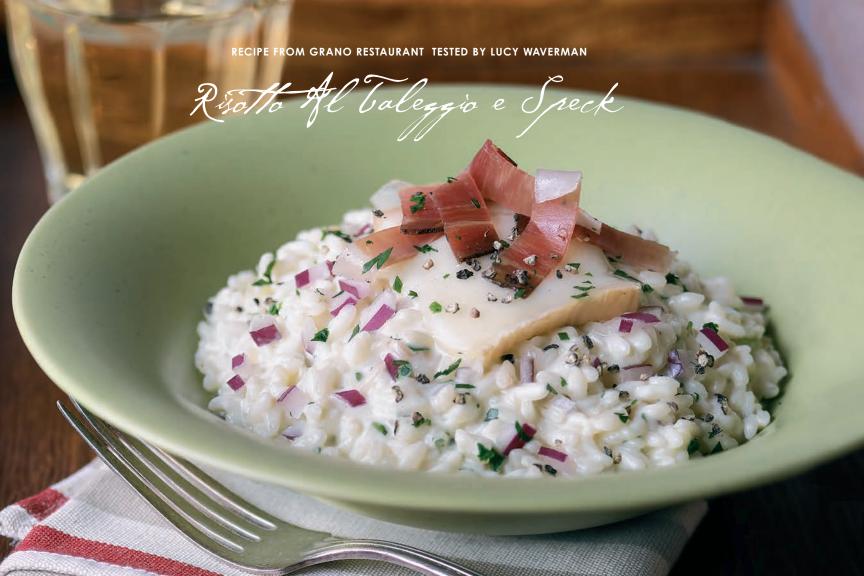


PLACES TO SEE IN THE CONTINENTAL NORTH

Venice

Venice is the most **romantic** city in the world. I may be bold, perhaps biased in saying so, but I'm in good company. Giovanni Giacomo Casanova, the famous lover of 18th century, found Venezia's sensual delights alluring – he called it home. I am certain that for him, as for me, love comes alive with the thrill of the colossal Renaissance square Piazza San Marco, the coziness of quiet narrow streets and the dulcet serenades of gondoliers.





WHICH RICE IS BEST FOR RISOTTO?

There are several rices to consider when preparing this Italian dish. Carnaroli is my favourite as it holds its texture best. However, it takes a little longer to cook, 18 – 20 minutes. Arborio and Vialone cook somewhat faster, 15 and 12 minutes respectively. However, they must be watched carefully to avoid over-cooking. Vialone is best suited for fish and vegetable risotto where it well matches the cooking time of the other ingredients.

RISOTTO AL TALEGGIO E SPECK

In this recipe, we used speck, a kind of smoked prosciutto, but you could substitute equal amounts of regular prosciutto or cooked ham, if desired.

4 cups (1 L) chicken or vegetable stock
2 tbsp (25 mL) butter
1/2 cup (125 mL) finely diced red onion
1 cup (250 mL) carnaroli rice
2 tbsp (25 mL) whipping cream
2 oz (60 g) diced taleggio cheese
1 oz (28 g) speck (smoked prosciutto), cut into 1/4-inch (5 mm) strips
2 tbsp (30 mL) finely chopped fresh parsley

Makes 4 appetizer servings

Salt and freshly ground pepper

- 1. Heat the stock in a small pot over mediumlow heat, and keep it on low simmer during the cooking of the risotto.
- Heat butter in a heavy-bottomed skillet over medium heat. Add onion and cook
 to 3 minutes or until softened. Add raw rice and toast it in melted butter for about
 minutes, stirring often.
- Reduce heat to medium-low. Add stock 1/2 cup (125 mL) at a time, stirring constantly until liquid is absorbed before adding more stock. This process should take about 20 minutes.
- 4. When the rice is al dente, add cream and taleggio. Stir until cheese has melted. Remove from heat and stir in speck and parsley. Season with salt and pepper. Spoon onto serving plates and top with freshly ground black pepper, a piece of taleggio and a few strips of speck. Serve immediately.



WINE PAIRING SUGGESTIONS

VALPOLICELLA (see p.16) OR PINOT GRIGIO (see p.13)







Beauty is never in short supply in Italy. But the central regions' cup runneth over. From **Tuscany's** verdant hills to the romantic isle of **Capri**, the natural beauty can leave one breathless. From **Pisa's** Leaning Tower to **Rome's** looming Coliseum, the ancient architectural endeavours are astonishing.



Inspired & ARTFUL

WINES FROM THE TEMPERATE CENTRE

For eons, artisans have been inspired by the surroundings of **central Italy** in working their magic. Today, inspired local vintners from the northern reaches of Emilia-Romagna, to the southern tip of Campania, craft the **liquid gift of grapes** to create artful wines. The rewards of their artisanal efforts are Chianti, Montecarlo, Sangiovese, Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi, Rosso Piceno, Cesanese, Montepulciano D'Abruzzo – to name a few.



FARNESE CASALE VECCHIO ABRUZZO

Abrazzo

Abruzzo is home to this reserve-quality Montepulciano. It has a deep colour and intense aromas of wild berries, plums and vanilla. Extremely smooth and silky on the palate, it would be delicious with yeal chops.

612788 750 mL \$12.80



CITRA MONTEPULCIANO D'ABRUZZO D.O.C

Abruzzo

This dry, medium bodied and slightly tannic wine is from Abruzzo. A great value, it would be ideal with a mid-week, home-cooked dinner of spaghetti.

446633 750 mL \$6.75

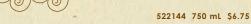














CITRA TREBBIANO D'ABRUZZO D.O.C.

Abrazzo

This white wine from Abruzzo offers a fresh, pleasant bouquet with lingering citrus notes. Full, crisp, dry and harmonious in flavour, it will complement cold appetizers and hors d'oeuvre or, veal and pork entrees.



FONTANA DI PAPA COLLI ALBANI D.O.C.

fatium

The fertile hills of Latium are behind the fresh fruit and hint of apple in this white's bouquet. Dry, smooth and easy-drinking, it pairs well with antipasto dishes, prosciutto, light pasta dishes, grilled chicken salads and baked snapper or sole.

1511 1500 mL \$12.20



FAZI BATTAGLIA SANGIOVESE DELLE MARCHE

The Marches

The bouquet of this Sangiovese from The Marches is fresh and fruity. On the palate it is rich in fruit flavours yet with a pleasant tartness. It is a great wine to serve with appetizers, grilled chicken or pizza.

326306 750 mL \$10.65



PLACES TO SEE IN THE TEMPERATE CENTRE

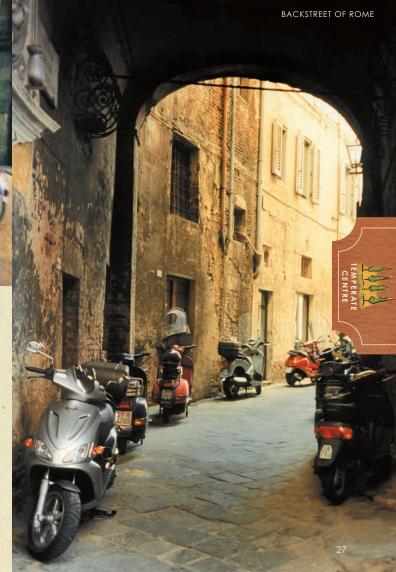


Rome is a living museum; at every turn antiquities trace its history from 8th century B.C. Etruscan, Greek, Roman, Renaissance, and Baroque architecture, monuments, staircases and fountains tell the story of its varied past. The best way to see the city is on foot – but watch your step. Rome is now a modern metropolis brimming with 3.6 million inhabitants; each hurriedly on his or her way somewhere.



TRASTEVERE: ROME'S NEWEST HOT SPOT

Once the residential area of Rome's working class, it's now the up-market bastion of well-heeled artists, intellectuals and professionals. Set foot in it for just a few minutes and you'll understand why. This quaint area of serpentine cobbled streets and ivy-covered walls will transport you back four centuries. This enticing niche of Rome, alive with cool cafés, hip bars, artist's studios, novel shops and antique stores, lies on the west side of the Tiber River about 1.5 km south of Vatican City.



WINE GUIDE

MONTEPULCIANO D'ABRUZZO (see page 24)

This medium-bodied, dry red wine is made in the Abruzzo region of Central Italy. It derives its name from the Montepulciano grape that is 85% of the vintage – the balance is Sangiovese. With a vintner's care, its apple and plum characteristics can be crafted into a full-bodied wine that will age well. 'Vecchio' denotes that the wine has been aged at least 2 years. Generally, Montepulciano D'Abruzzo goes well with pasta or meat dishes.

CHIANTI

Chianti is one of Italy's best-known red wines. Hailing from Tuscany, the predominant grape variety used to produce Chianti is Sangiovese. Traditionally this wine was made with the addition of white grape varieties that softened the Sangiovese's structure and lightened the intensity of its hue. Today, with the advent of improved viticultural and vinification techniques, the trend is to phase out the white grapes and increase the percentage of red, thus making current Chiantis more substantial wines.

WINES FROM THE TEMPERATE CENTRE



FAZI BATTAGLIA VERDICCHIO DEI CASTELLI DI JES

The Marches

The Marches brings us this Verdicchio's intense perfume of peaches, apples and roses that is enhanced by a slight mineral character. It complements shellfish, sushi and poultry.

24422 750 mL \$10.65



RUFFINO CHIANTI D.O.C.G.

Tuscany

Intriguing aromas of violets greet the nose from this red. A classic Chianti, it is dry, medium-bodied, with wonderful cherry fruit flavours. It would pleasantly match pastas, veal and medium strength cheeses.

1743 750 mL \$14.45

Inspired & ARTFUL



FRESCOBALDI CHIANTI NIPPOZANO RISERVA

Tuscany

This Chianti Riserva is aged in oak barrels for two years to produce a rich, round and vigorous wine. A wonderful wine to serve with a flavourful main course or to cellar for up to 15 years.



UMANI RONCHI ROSSO CONERO

The Marches

This blend of Montepulciano and Sangiovese grapes from The Marches produces an intense fruity wine with a long finish. A natural pair to pastas, roasts, cured meats and cheeses.



COLTIVA TREBBIANO PINOT BIANCO

Emila-Romagna

This fresh and fruity white wine hails from Emilia-Romagna. Try it with cold cuts, olives, cheeses and other antipasto dishes.

107276 750 mL \$18.95

521096 750 mL \$10.15

572420 750 mL 6.80





PLACES TO SEE IN THE TEMPERATE CENTRE

Florence

Florence is radiant, alluring and captivating. At the height of the Renaissance, it was the cultural and intellectual nexus of Europe. Here, limitless wealth of noble families fuelled the work of exceptional artists and architects. Mementos of the time abound: marble, paint and bricks, all brought to life in the hands of masters like Michelangelo, Botticelli and Brunelleschi.





PONTE VECCHIO: A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

If you love to shop for jewellery, there's nothing quite like Florence's oldest bridge, Ponte Vecchio. Since a decree by Cosimo I in the 14th century, the bridge has been lined with jewellery stores. Wander the booths and stores; you'll find a dazzling array of local and international designs. Should you find something you like, don't forget to haggle – it's half the fun.





Tuscany at large

For a true sampling of Central Italy's beauty, there's nothing like an afternoon excursion through the wine country of Chianti and Montalcino. Along the way one traverses a rolling patchwork of wheat fields, sunflowers, vineyards, olive groves and the ever-present cypress trees.

Today's itinerary: San Gimignano and Montepulciano.



San Gimignano delle Belle Torri (of the beautiful towers). As one approaches the city, 13 medieval towers trumpet its presence. A climb of the Torre Grosso is in order – the view from the top is wondrous.

The walled town of **Montepulciano** perches on a hill. As one of Tuscany's highest hill-towns it provides an excellent vantage point overlooking Umbria and Southern Tuscany. I like to park then wander streets that are flanked by architecture of Gothic and Renaissance periods.

SAMBUCA'S SECRET INGREDIENT

This sweet, aromatic, licorice-flavoured liqueur has a history in Italy. For over 130 years an exotic elixir bearing its name has been made in Civitavecchia, a port city near Rome.

Sambuca owes its unique flavour to an infusion of Witch Elder, anise seeds and other ingredients. Witch Elder, a tree that grows abundantly in Italy, gives more than its flavourful oils and blossoms to the liqueur – it also inspired its name. The scientific name of Witch Elder is 'Sambuca Nigra'. This popular Italian liqueur is excellent on its own, on the rocks, or as part of a cocktail.





RAMAZZOTTI SAMBUCA 323972 750 mL \$18.95



BEEF TENDERLOIN FILLED WITH MUSHROOMS, WRAPPED WITH PROSCIUTTO AND BRAISED IN RED WINE

Ideally, this dish should be cooked in a cast iron roasting pan with a lid, but any heavy oven-proof dish will do. Serve with pan-fried parsnips and green beans tossed with garlic and extra virgin olive oil.

3 tbsp (45 mL)	olive oil
1/2 cup (125 mL)	diced Portobello mushrooms
1/4 cup (50 mL)	diced oyster mushrooms
2 tsp (10 mL)	lemon juice
1 tbsp (15 mL)	chopped fresh parsley
Salt and freshly ground pepper	
sait and tresnly	ground pepper
1 1/2 lb (750 g)	pround pepper beef filet, 2 inches (5 cm) thick, trimmed
· · ·	beef filet, 2 inches (5 cm)
1 1/2 lb (750 g)	beef filet, 2 inches (5 cm) thick, trimmed Gorgonzola

1/2 cup (125 mL) diced carrot

1/2 cup (125 mL) diced celery

veal stock

1 cup (250 mL) red wine

1 cup (250 mL) beef or

Serves 4

- Heat 1 tbsp (15 mL) oil in a small skillet over medium-high heat. Add all mushrooms and lemon juice and cook 5 minutes or until softened. Remove from heat, stir in parsley, season with salt and pepper and cool.
- Butterfly beef filet by slicing it horizontally, three quarters of the way through. Fill with cooled mushroom mixture and cubed Gorgonzola. Wrap fillet with prosciutto, slightly overlapping slices. Tie up the roast with twine at 1-inch (2.5 cm) intervals.
- 3. Preheat oven to 425° F (220° C).
- 4. Heat 1 tbsp (15 mL) olive oil in a heavy roasting pan over medium-high heat. Add roast and sear 1 minute per side or until prosciutto is lightly golden. Remove from pot and reserve.
- 5. Reduce heat to medium. Add 1 tbsp (15 mL) olive oil, onion, carrot and celery. Cook 5 minutes or until softened. Place reserved roast on top of vegetables, pour wine into pan, cover and bake 20 to 25 minutes or until internal temperature reaches 130° F (54° C) for rare. Remove roast to a platter and keep warm.
- 6. Heat pan over high heat until liquid comes to a boil. Boil vigorously for 7 to 10 minutes or until liquid is reduced to 1/4 cup (50 mL). Add beef stock and boil again. Boil until slightly reduced, about 3 to 5 minutes. Strain sauce. Slice roast and serve with jus.





WINE PAIRING SUGGESTIONS

SANGIOVESE (see p.25) OR MONTEPULCIANO D'ABRUZZO (see p.24)





APULIA ~ BASILICATA ~ CALABRIA ~ SICILY ~ SARDINIA

For thousands of years Southern Italy has richly rewarded the adventurous traveler. The spoils of the South include year-round good weather, sparkling blue waters, breathtaking scenery, friendly people and delicious local dishes. Where modern thrill-seekers can scuba dive off the island of Ustica or schuss the slopes of Mount Etna, ancient explorers came to stake their claim to the beauty and bounty of sea, sun and soil. Today, the South harbours mementos of a rich history such as **Lecce**, the Florence of the South and **Syracuse**, once considered the most beautiful Greek city in the world.



ROBUST Reds

WINES FROM THE HOT MEDITERRANEAN SOUTH

The Greeks weren't the only ones to leave a mark on this region. Phoenicians, expert sailors and merchants, cultivated wine and olive oil here more than a thousand years before the Greeks. They identified that topography was key to southern winemaking - cooler uplands provided excellent sites to capture the sun's nurturing rays, yet avoid its scorching heat. These climes do produce some notable whites but predominantly yield full, ripe and rich red wines.



PASQUA TERRE DEL SOLE PRIMITIVO

A rulia

This deep ruby-red wine from Apulia has a warm earthy aroma. Its intense berry and fresh fruit flavours make it a stunning match to grilled meats and seasoned cheeses.

561928 750 mL \$9.60



35TH PARALLEL ZINFANDEL PRIMITIVO
DI MANDURIA

A ruli

This Apulian red displays a fruity fragrance and intense ruby hue. Its great structure delivers a full-bodied, harmonious taste. Pair it with spicy-sauced pastas and braised or grilled meats.

612754 750 mL \$9.15





PASQUA NERO D'AVOLA

Sicily

This Sicilian red is 100% Nero D'Avola. Elegant hints of blueberry, prune with spicy wafts of vanilla grace its aroma. On the palate, it is velvety and buttery. Perfect serving partners are roast meats, pork chops, barbecue dishes and aged or spicy cheeses.

565952 750 mL \$9.95



MEZZOMONDO NEGROAMARO ROSSO SALENTO

A ruli

This wine is produced from a grape native to the Italian south. Its flavour is intense, full-bodied and mildly spicy from partial wood-ageing. It is a superb match to rich, spicy, red sauce pasta dishes, cured sausage and hard cheeses.

588962 750 mL \$7.95



PRIMITIVO, THE FIRST ZINFANDEL?

Primitivo is closely related to the New World's Zinfandel. In Italy, Primitivo is principally cultivated in the heel of Italy's boot, Apulia. An adaptable varietal, it may be vinified to create midweight fruity wines or complex, rich reds.





PLACES TO SEE IN THE HOT MEDITERRANEAN SOUTH

Lecce

Lecce, the Florence of the South, lies between the Adriatic and Ionian seas in the heel of the Italian boot. The town earned this nickname for a unique architectural style developed in its environs during the 16th century. Lecce Baroque characteristically displays compact geometric architectural embellishments carved from locally mined limestone. The city's historical centre boasts picturesque twisting lanes, a Roman amphitheatre, the church of Santa Croce (one of the most important examples of Lecce Baroque), the 17th century façade Palazzo del Governo and 2 kms away the excavations at Rudiae (a Messapica and Roman town).





Syracuse

Sicily's history is a unique tapestry woven of colourful cultures and textured by tumultuous change. Its location in the middle of the Mediterranean made it an irresistible strategic crossroads at a time when trade was conducted by water. Originally called Ortigia, the small port city swelled to the mainland, as it became Syracuse, the most powerful Greek city from the 5th to 3rd centuries B.C. To this day, much of Ortigia and its beautiful harbour still remain. Piazza Archimede, its main square, is flanked with cafés and bars where one can sit and absorb traces of cultures past.



GRANO TOMATO SAUCE

This fresh tasting sauce is wonderful on its own, or with additions such as mushrooms, zucchini and peppers, or sausage and rapini, as pictured with orecchiette pasta.

4 sprigs	fresh parsley
2 sprigs	fresh basil
2 sprigs	fresh oregano (optional)
1/4 cup (50 mL)	extra virgin olive oil
1	large stalk celery cut into 2-inch (5 cm) lengths
1	onion, cut into wedges
2	28 oz cans (796 mL) puréed Italian plum tomatoes
2	medium carrots, peeled and cut into 2-inch (5 cm) lengths
1	baking potato, unpeeled and cut in half
1	5 1/2 oz can (156 mL) Italian tomato paste
4	cloves garlic, peeled and cut in half
Salt and freshly	ground pepper

- Divide parsley, basil and oregano in half and tie into two separate bundles with kitchen twine. Reserve.
- 2. Heat 2 tbsp (25 mL) olive oil over medium heat in a heavybottomed pot. Add celery and onion. Sauté for 4 minutes or until slightly wilted.
- Add tomatoes, carrots, potato, tomato paste, garlic and one bouquet of herbs.
- 4. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer over medium to medium-low heat for about 40 minutes, stirring regularly.
- Add remaining olive oil. Cook an additional 10 minutes or until a fork easily pierces the potato and the sauce has reduced by about one-third. The sauce should be silky, aromatic and thick, not watery.
- 6. Pass sauce through fine mesh strainer, pressing down on solids with the back of a wooden spoon. Season to taste with salt and pepper and add the second bouquet of herbs. When cooled, remove herbs. Use immediately or freeze for future use.





WINE PAIRING SUGGESTIONS

PRIMITIVO (see p.38)

Makes 4 cups





CAPPUCCINO

With the worldwide boom in café culture, Cappuccino has been welcomed into dialects everywhere. Made with coffee and frothed milk, it's believed the beverage's name is derived from the fashion of **Capuchin monks**. These Franciscan Friars wear brown cloaks (the coffee) that hood their white faces (the milk).

BISCOTTI

Italy's famous cookie gets its extra crunch by being baked not once, but **twice**. In fact, bis-cotti, literally means twice-cooked. This practice is believed to have started long ago as a way to preserve the tasty treat's freshness.

Food for thought

INTERESTING ITALIAN FACTS





MAKING OF BALSAMIC VINEGAR

The balsamic vinegar available in Ontario's grocery stores, while tasty and a good value, just doesn't compare to its inspiration: Aceto Balsamico Tradizionale di Modena. Traditional Balsamico romances one's palate; sweet and sour, rich and robust, it dances together on your tongue, twirling, lingering in an unforgettable way. If you do get a chance to taste some, seize the opportunity.

The making of this elixir **takes at least 25 years**. As such, it is almost as precious as gold. Traditional balsamic vinegar starts as unfermented juice of Trebbiano grapes. This juice caramelizes as it is boiled in copper cauldrons over open

flames. Once reduced to one third its original volume, it is placed in wooden barrels with an older balsamic vinegar to assist in the acetification. Each year the maturing vinegar is moved to a different type of barrel – typically oak, chestnut, cherry, ash, juniper, acacia and mulberry. Each wood imparts some of its character to the complexity of this delicious condiment.

VIRGIN VERSUS EXTRA-VIRGIN

The primary difference between virgin and extra-virgin olive oil is their acidity level: the higher the acidity, the poorer the quality.

Extra-virgin is the highest quality grade; its acidity is less than 1 percent.

Virgin is a high quality grade of oil; its acidity level may range between 1 and 3 percent.



Deciphering Italian Wine labels

One doesn't have to speak Italian to discover the wines of Italy at the LCBO. But being able to read a little can't hurt. Listed below are a few common words and phrases you're likely to come across in your exploration of Italy's liquid riches.

ABBOCCATO	lightly sweet
AMABILE	semi-sweet
AMARO	very dry or bitter
ANNATA	vintage year
BIANCO	white
BOTTIGLIA	bottle
CANTINA SOCIALE	cooperative winery
CANTINE	cellars
CASA VINICOLA	winery
CHIARETTO	very light red
CLASSICO	a geographic term applied to D.O.C. or D.O.C.G.
	wine; refers to the central area of a production zone
CONSORZIO	consortium of producers
СОТТО	cooked or concentrated
DOLCE	sweet
D.O.C.	Denominazione di Origine Controllata signifies
	the wine is of a type recognized and regulated
	by Italy's federal government.
D.O.C.G.	similar to D.O.C. above, the added G stands
	for Garantita or Guaranteed which means a
	wine passes even more stringent taste and
	quality regulations.
FATTORIA	farm or estate

FRIZZANTE	
OR FRIZZANTINO	fizzy or faintly fizzy
IGT	Inicazione Geografica Tipica (similar to France's
	Vin de Pays designation)
IMBOTTIGLIATO	
ALL'ORIGINE	estate bottled
INVECCHIATO	aged
LIQUOROSO	fortified
NERO	very dark red
PASSITO/PASSITA	
OR RECIOTO	wine made from semi-dried grapes
RISERVA	extra cask aging (usually 3 years)
ROSATO	rosé
ROSSO	red
SECCO	dry
SEMISECCO	medium-sweet
SPUMANTE	sparkling
SUPERIORE	a higher alcohol style of D.O.C. wine
VECCHIO	old, aged D.O.C. wines
VENDEMMIA	vintage year
VIGNA OR VIGNETO) vineyard
VINO NOVELLO	new wine, usually red
VIVACE	lightly bubbly





Ciao in Italian means both 'Hello' and 'Goodbye'.

So let's say Ciao with the hope that we'll soon be saying it again. Please come and continue your discovery of the pleasures of Italy at your local **LCBO**. You'll be sure to find some delicious Italian wines and spirits that will go perfectly with your next meal. Until then, Ciao. Roberto.









Per favore, drink responsibly. Prices subject to change without notice.