



**FORTEMASSO**

**JAMESSUCKLING.COM** 

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## WHAT WE TASTED LAST WEEK #14

Bibi Graetz makes a big splash in this wrapup of the top wines we tasted last week with a stunning 2018 Colore (99 points) leading the highlights. Graetz has delivered yet another show-stopper from its ancient vines in Lamole in Chianti Classico, some more than a century old. James described this as “really full and powerful” with “wonderful length and intensity” and suggested that this is perhaps the best ever Colore.

Graetz also impressed with his Toscana Testamatta 2018 (97 points) which is a very powerful and “extremely structured” red that needs time to develop in bottle. James praised the “full-bodied, yet very tight ... mineral structure” and, along with the 2018 Colore, should both be high on the buy list of all fans and collectors of great Tuscan reds.

Likewise the cellar-worthy Castello dei Rampolla Toscana Sammarco 2017 (98 points), which has “such beautiful balance and refinement” with “wonderful, creamy tannins and a persistent and complete finish”, yet really demands time in the cellar. James recommends at least three to four years for this to reveal its full personality. The Castello dei Rampolla Toscana d’Alceo 2016 (97 points) impressed with balance and focused blackberry and chocolate character with hazelnut undertones, “tight and focused at the end.” It has the measured quality of the best 2016s.

The Fattoria Le Pupille Maremma Toscana Saffredi 2018 (97 points) is a very deep and complex blend of cabernet sauvignon (60 percent), merlot (32 percent) and petite verdot (8 percent) and shows a “fantastic nose .. with currant, sage, rosemary and rose-petal character. Sweet tobacco and spicy chocolate, too.” James loved the “racy and refined” palate with fine tannins and recommends two to three years to rest before drinking.

One of Italy’s most legendary whites, Jermann’s Vintage Tunina, really delivers well with a mineral and intense 2018 (97 points). “One of the best I have tasted in a long time,” remarked James, admiring the racy and dynamic phenolic tension. Sealed under screw cap, it will hold this attractive, exciting edge well into the future.

Nick Stock swirls his way through some McLaren Vale high scorers.

From Barbaresco, the Bruno Giacosa Falletto Barbaresco Rabajà 2016 (97 points) is the bounty of an exceptional year, described by Bruna Giacosa as “a great great year .. very close to 2001.” James described this wine as a “very sexy, soft Barbaresco” with “elegant tannins” that deliver a real sense of poise and completeness. Like so many 2016s from Piedmont, this is approachable now but has more to come. Hold until 2024.



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A pure merlot, the Bertinga Toscana Volta di Bertinga 2015 (96 points) has plenty of fruit and impressive structure, fusing “ripe blackberries and sweet tobacco with some sandalwood character” in a “full-bodied ... chewy, yet pleasant and attractive” palate.

The Ca' del Bosco Franciacorta Cuvée Annamaria Clementi Riserva 2010 (96 points) is right at the apex of complexity and power with “lots of cooked-apple, cooked-pastry and pie-crust aromas and flavors.” This has power and finesse with attractive layering of flavour and texture and “delivers it all” in terms of a fresh, intense, complex and structured sparkling.

Also from 2010, I delved further into the single-site wines of d'Arenberg and the 2010 d'Arenberg Shiraz McLaren Vale J.R.O. Afflatus (96 points) showed its pedigree as one of the best vineyards in the d'Arenberg collection and the McLaren Vale region. This is from vines more than 100 years old and has “terrific, fine, supple, long and dense tannin” that equates to effortlessly powerful old vine style. An impressive wine in every way.

Giaconda's Estate Vineyard Shiraz 2018 (96 points) is a very different rendering of shiraz from Victoria's Beechworth region and has such complex and spicy style already with “ripe red plums, as well as graphite and espresso” and “sapid texture with such layered tannins.” Like the very top wines from Tuscany featured here, this too needs a three to four year rest in the cellar to settle into full stride.

Enjoy this week's collection led by powerful, cellar-worthy reds from some of Tuscany's best and most-admired producers.

– Nick Stock, executive editor

### FORTE MASSO BARBERA D'ALBA 2016

Tuesday, July 28, 2020



Country Italy  
Region Piedmont  
Vintage 2016

Score  
**92**

A barbera with some age and showing crushed-berry, chocolate, walnut and hazelnut character. Full-bodied with hints of tannins. It's long and flavorful. Just a hint of austerity at the end adds to the interest in the glass. Drink now.

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### FORTE MASSO NEBBIOLO LANGHE 2019

Tuesday, July 28, 2020



Country Italy  
Region Piedmont  
Vintage 2019

Score  
**91**

A very fine, fruity red with plums, strawberries and hints of walnuts. Light-bodied with tension and finesse. Delicious. Drink now or hold.

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