

REFLECTIONS ON WINE

VIEWS ON WINES FROM ITALY, CALIFORNIA, CHILE, ARGENTINA AND OTHER GREAT REGIONS OF THE WORLD FROM A FREELANCE WRITER AND PHOTOGRAPHER

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Tre Bicchieri in Chicago



Text and photos ©Tom Hyland

Gambero Rosso wrapped up their annual *Tre Bicchieri* tastings last week with a glorious event in Chicago, the first such occurrence of its kind for my hometown. The organizers wisely selected the historic Union Station, just west of the Loop, and the old train station never looked so beautiful. Most vintners I spoke with that had participated in the two previous tastings in New York and San Francisco earlier in the week, offered their opinions that this was the best venue of the three.

This is an exciting tasting for the obvious reason that many of the best wines in Italy are available for tasting; Sassicaia, Bruno Giacosa Barolo and Barbaresco and Planeta Cometa are only a few examples of this. But going beyond the most famous offerings, this is an opportunity to sample wines that the magazine's staff rated on an equal level (*Tre Bicchieri*) with those famous bottlings. These included wines made from Vermentino, Sylvaner and Grechetto for white and Corvina, Garganega and Pignitello for red. Being able to taste a selection such as this is quite special and it gives one a sense of the variety of the Italian wine scene. The vintners of Italy have always prided themselves on the singularity of their products, so while a tasting of only Brunello, Barolo and Amarone would be thrilling, it wouldn't give one a proper overview of contemporary Italian viticulture. **Gambero Rosso** is to be congratulated not only for organizing these tastings in the United States (and other countries), but also for including wines made from dozens of different varieties from every corner of the Italian peninsula.

Elvio Cagno

2004 Barolo Vigna Elena

This is a special Barolo from Cagno produced solely from the rosé clone that few producers bother with anymore. As the clone's name might suggest, this is a perfumed offering with sensual notes of red roses and red cherries with a long, graceful finish, excellent concentration and lively acidity. If a wine is to age for decades, it must be in equilibrium when it is released; this is a textbook example of perfect balance.