

## La Spinetta One Liter Club, for the real wine lover...



Newsletter October 2009

### 100th One Liter Club member

Andrew Dobbing, who lives half the time in London and the other in Oslo, came to visit La Spinetta in 2005. Andrew loves Barolo Campe and sent us an e-mail on October 15<sup>th</sup>, that he would like to become a member of the Club. We are proud to welcome Andrew as La Spinetta's One liter Club member 100!

### A word from Giorgio

Many of you have probably already heard me speak about the importance of the work in the vineyards. Vineyard work is the essential ingredient for making great wine. I believe, that the vineyards are more important than the winemaker, something that unfortunately lately has not been acknowledged.

At times of recession, where most industries are suffering and people are insecure about their wealth, future income and consumer behavior, it is even more important that the wine world stops with celebrating winemakers as they were movie stars. Wine is not about movies and not about actors who call themselves winemakers. Great wine is about great fruit that comes from great exposure, old vine vineyards and farmers who take care of their plants and the yields.



In today's economy it is essential that great wines are really great. If somebody today spends 100,00 Euro, 50,00 Euro or even 20,00 Euro on a bottle of wine bought at a local wine shop, the wine has to be excellent and give pure pleasure from the first sip to the last drop in the bottle. The pleasure when drinking it should be something that one will remember. It should not matter whether this wine will be opened today or in five years. Great wines are great from the day they are put in the bottle and for many years to come.

I, however, think great wines should not function as investments. The only motivation to buy a great bottle of wine should be to drink it and to enjoy it, today or whenever one desires.

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### Interview speaking with Carlo Petrini, President and Founder of Slow Food

***What made you start the Slow Food movement in 1986? What was your primary goal?***



I felt the “need” to fight against the growing globalization that eliminated agriculture diversity, the traditional way of eating and socializing while sharing a meal. My aim was to maintain real taste and tradition. By rediscovering true taste we learned how to better understand our environment and to appreciate again local foods and traditions, which provide ample recipes, that are based on local inexpensive ingredients. Going back to local foods we go against a mass consumption and production, that literally is consuming and destroying our earth, including ourselves.

***Do you think, that even today communication and information are very important tools?***

I absolutely agree. One just has to have a look, what somebody like Silvio Berlusconi was able to achieve. Communication and information are fundamental tools, that combined with today's technology allow an even grander spread. These modern communication tools do carry risks, but at the same time an advantage. Today's communication can offer to a project like Terra Madre great possibilities. The members of Terra Madre, some of the farmers, are located in the smallest corners of the world, today can communicate with the rest of the world and make sure that they are being heard, which finally increases their political influence.

***How much in your opinion do people know about the food, that they eat every day? And in what way can the Slow Food movement help to improve their knowledge?***

People still know little, because there is a certain tendency in the food industry to disguise information. But from my observation, the urge of wanting to know what one eats is increasing. The Slow Food movement certainly contributed to this development. At the end there is only one way, to really know what you eat, and that is to buy local produce and food from local farmers. These people are your best guarantee.

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***Unfortunately in today's wine world the following is becoming more and more common:***

*Mass production in the vineyards, use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers*

*Reduction of manual work and increase in the use of machinery (e.g. use of harvest machines)*

*The use of wood chips for aging instead of using barrique or other wood barrels, manipulations of the most and the finished wine by adding chemical substance or using concentrators, use of artificial flavors, etc.*

***What do you think about this situation and what can we do to go against it?***

None of the above methods I can agree to. To make good quality wines one has to work as much as possible in a traditional way, yet taking advantage of modern technology that can help to prevent human errors.

No to mass production in the vineyards, as any mass production can only be achieved by using chemical fertilizers. Manual work and the use of machines have to have balance. A grape harvest should be done by hand. Naturally the producers that make wine on an industrial level have to use harvest machines in order to keep their costs as low as possible, but this has nothing to do with the quality wine making that small producers aim for, by maintaining the traditions and the culture of their land.

In the cellar as well as in the vineyard one should not take any shortcuts. All the manipulations mentioned above shouldn't be done. Barriques and wood barrels should never be replaced by wood chips, no matter how "natural" the wood chips might be.

The use of modern technology in the cellar should be done with respect to traditions. The wines have to always express the terroir that the grapes came from.

What to do: working seriously without manipulating the production, being true to your own philosophy without telling "stories" about how the wine is being made. Who decides to make wine industrially has to say so and the same goes to the producers who make wine with a small traditional production. Reduce your production in difficult vintages and don't manipulate the production to make up for lower yields. If one works in a traditional way, one has to have respect.

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***Do you think it is necessary to increase the information the consumer can obtain from a wine label? At the moment, most labels just tell you about the sulfite and alcohol content. The labels could state much more information, which is already common practice for most food items. Do you think it is necessary to pass new laws?***

Certainly labels should be easy to read. Therefore they have to state the essential information clearly. I would not put a lot of information on the label, however there have to be laws that the producers follow 100%. If the law says that a Barolo has to be 100% Nebbiolo, no one should add 15% Merlot in order to make the wine more appealing to an international taste. There is always the possibility to call such a wine Langhe Rosso. I am completely against adding tannins and flavors as well as using wood chips, etc. It would be much easier, if the law were to make sure, that there was no space for such manipulation. The consumer then would not have to face complicated and misleading labels.

***We can all imagine that somebody like Carlo Petrini is a very busy man. But if one evening Carlo is alone at home and would like to open a bottle of wine for himself, which wine were he to open?***

A bottle of Barolo without hesitation.

Bernard Claude from Trinidad just finished his studies at the University of Gastronomic Science in Pollenzo, Italy. He will be answering our questions in the next newsletter.

### Barolo Campe Vine, work in the vineyard – harvest

This year's harvest at La Spinetta started with Moscato on August 21<sup>st</sup>, one week earlier than normal. All Moscato, Barbera and Nebbiolo grapes were picked in fine weather and were in the winery by the middle of October.

In 2009, the season, right from the budding was late, because of a strong winter, that had brought massive snow and a late arrival of spring. The dry and hot conditions that Piedmont faced through the summer, starting in June however caused the vine and grape development

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to speed up. In 2009 it was essential to work with low yields. Who did not reduce yields in June by green harvesting, had shriveled and dried up fruit by August due to the hot and dry summer.

For La Spinetta the 2009 vintage resulted in excellent Moscato, Barbera and Nebbiolo fruit and gave especially Nebbiolo a great structure, elegance and balance. For Giorgio the 2009 vintage is similar to 1997 and 1998, as it has the power of 1997 and the finesse of 1998.

### What means harvest at La Spinetta:



Giorgio Rivetti is the one who decides, when we harvest which vineyard. At harvest time Giorgio every day visits the vineyards, measures sugar levels and tastes grapes, seeds and stems. Certainly the grapes have to have the right amount of sugar, but whether or not the tannins are ripe, Giorgio evaluates from his personal taste and experience.

When it is time to harvest a vineyard, we spread out the little red harvest baskets throughout the row of vines. We use our own vineyard workers and only further personal when weather conditions require it.

For the whole year we have been carefully taking care of the vineyard.

We always make huge manual investments and therefore at harvest time it is crucial not to ruin any of this precious work.



At La Spinetta the vineyard workers cut the fruit without any leaves, they lay the fruit in the baskets and they make sure that the baskets are not filled up with grapes all the way, because one basket gets stacked on top of the next. This process might already crush the fruit in the vineyard and one of

the key factors at harvest time, is to prevent any oxidation by having whole fruit arrive to the winery.

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When the cases of fruit arrive to the winery, the grapes will be immediately crushed and destemmed.

The empty cases are run through a washing machine to avoid that ground being stuck to the bottom and ultimately will be reused. When the grapes are being crushed, La Spinetta has already finished 90% of the work that makes our wine.



## One Liter Club Event, the first concrete ideas

With our Club growing so quickly, we have started to plan the first "member only" event for July 2010. Everything is still in a "rough" planning stage, but we are thinking about organizing a "One Day Hands On at La Spinetta".

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Starting in the morning with a small verbal introduction by Giorgio Rivetti, followed by a vineyard workshop (groups split into smaller groups), where you can learn how to do "green harvest". Giovanna and Marco Rivetti will show you how we achieve our low yields.

Afterwards, we will have a picnic in the vineyard with local antipasti and La Spinetta wines from Tuscany.

Afternoon cellar workshop (groups split again into smaller groups), where you again will be able to get your hands dirty learning how to rack wine. Andrea Rivetti and Stephano Mazetta will be showing insights of their work.

Evening dinner at Campe winery. Giovanna Rivetti will cook local Piedmont dishes accompanied by La Spinetta Piedmont wines. During the second half of the dinner, wines (not only La Spinetta) will be served blind for a more objective opinion.

Participation will be free of charge. Members only. Minimum number of participants: 15, maximum 30. La Spinetta will arrange for special room rates at a very nice local hotel and also offer assistance to further program your visit, if you decide to spend a couple of days in the area. Reservations are accepted on a first come first serve basis. We however require a reservation deposit of 200,00 Euro per person to confirm your participation, that will be returned to each participant on the day of the event. With this requirement we hope to avoid cancellations. Further details will follow shortly.

## Christmas is down the road, we have some ideas for presents...

Are you one of the lucky people, who's wife/husband or girlfriend/boyfriend loves to cook? Or you yourself even enjoy to prepare a meal at home? Our Tuscan olive oil, might be an ideal X-mas gift, for the person that cares for highest quality when refining a meal:

We make our olive oil with the same philosophy, that we make our wine. The quality of the fruit matters above all. Respecting nature and our environment, we do not use any chemical products, pesticides or herbicides to grow our olives. We want to make a great, healthy olive oil, using traditional methods and always placing quality over quantity. After an early harvest,

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we take our olives immediately to the winery, where we do our very own cold pressing at 25 to 27 degrees. The moment of harvest is essential to the quality of the oil. The later one picks the olives, the riper the olives will be. With ripe olives one can produce more olive oil, while gradually losing quality of the fruit. This is why we pick our olives as early as possible.

### ***Interested?***

For Europe:

Price per bottle (0,5l) 20.00 Euro including tax, plus shipping. Price per bottle for a cases x 6 is 17.50 Euro including tax, plus shipping. Please contact Anja at La Spinetta [acramer@la-spinetta.com](mailto:acramer@la-spinetta.com)

For USA:

Price per bottle (0,5l) 25.00 \$ plus tax, plus shipping. Price per bottle for a cases x 6 is 22.00 \$ plus tax, plus shipping. Please contact Steve at Giuliana Imports, Colorado: [steve@giulianaimports.com](mailto:steve@giulianaimports.com)

In less than 6 months, we will finally be releasing the first 3 Liter wines:

Pin Monferrato Rosso Doc 2007, Barbera d'Alba Gallina Docg 2007, and Barbera d'Asti Bionzo Superiore 2007

(Whoever would like to buy a couple of bottles and has not made a reservation yet, should do so quickly.)



### **Why not give away for X-Mas a La Spinetta One Liter Voucher?**

We will be delighted to send a personalized voucher to you or directly to the person, you are wanting to give the present to. Price: 105,00 Euro (including tax and voucher) plus fed-ex costs, payment and shipment in April 2010.

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## Cooking Piemontese with Giovanna Rivetti



Giovanna Rivetti was born in 1947. She is our "vineyard manager" and our "in house chef". She learned the work in the vineyard from her father and the work in the kitchen from her mother. Both parents taught Giovanna skills, which, still today, are great assets to La Spinetta. In each newsletter Giovanna shares one of her secret recipes with us. Today she is teaching us how to make an antipastio called "Insalata Russa". (Russian Salad – which, despite the misleading name, has a very long tradition in Piedmont).

You will need the following ingredients (portion to serve 6 people):

200gr potatoes (2-3 ), 100 gr carrots, 100 gr peas, 200 gr tuna fish canned, 2 hard boiled eggs, juice of half a lemon, 100 gr mayonnaise, 2 tablespoons of olive oil and salt and pepper



This is another very simple recipe. "I love Insalata Russa, because it is easily made, very inexpensive and absolutely stunningly delicious and refreshing", says Giovanna. All vegetables need to be cut in little cubes (0,5 cm) then boiled separately in water according to cooking time of each vegetable. Please don't overcook the vegetables. One can also steam them, even better for maintaining the vitamins. After cooking, dry vegetables on a clean kitchen towel. The eggs need to be cooked for 7 minutes. Giovanna uses the eggs from her very own chicken, but if you are reading this recipe, while sitting in your NYC penthouse apartment, this option might be obsolete.

Mix the vegetables, the tuna fish and the boiled eggs, that you also need to cut into cubes and add the lemon juice as well as 2 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil, salt and pepper.

Traditionally Piedmont never had any fresh fish. The Piemontese traded wine and hazelnuts for olive oil, canned tuna, anchovies, and stock fish. The traditional Insalata Russa is therefore made with tuna from the can. Giovanna suggest though, that if you love fresh tuna, you can also grill the fresh fish, cut it in smaller pieces and exchange it for his brother in the can.

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Finally add the mayonnaise and leave everything in the refrigerator for a **minimum of 6 hours** before serving. Another recipe, where Giovanna makes us wait a long time for our food.

Buon appetito!

## Events

**November - La Spinetta in Asia:** Giorgio Rivetti will be touring Asia in November:

November 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Singapore, please contact Audrey [audrey.lee@cmwines.com.sg](mailto:audrey.lee@cmwines.com.sg) for further information

November 13<sup>th</sup> Seoul, Grand Hyatt Winemaker Dinner, please contact Vicki [vk@vintagekorea.co.kr](mailto:vk@vintagekorea.co.kr) for further information

November 14<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> Japan, Tokyo Winemaker dinner at IL RISTORANTE Bulgari (Nov. 14<sup>th</sup>), Osaka and Nagoya, please contact Mari [mari\\_sato@montebussan.co.jp](mailto:mari_sato@montebussan.co.jp) for further information

November 21<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> Hong Kong, wine maker dinner at Domani restaurant, please contact Attilio [attilio@netvigator.com](mailto:attilio@netvigator.com) for further information

**November La Spinetta in Vancouver and Montreal:** □□ November 25th and 26th Vancouver, Wine & Dine Bluewater Café, please contact Nick [n.kosick@cru-emg.com](mailto:n.kosick@cru-emg.com) for further information

November 26<sup>th</sup> Montreal, Vintages store tasting, please contact Francois [flebrasseur@elixirs.ca](mailto:flebrasseur@elixirs.ca) for further information.

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### **Gambero Rosso Road Show**

Manuela Rivetti will be showing our wines at the Gambero Rosso Road Show:

November 30<sup>th</sup> in Zurich

December 2<sup>nd</sup> in Moscow

January 19<sup>th</sup> in Copenhagen

January 20<sup>th</sup> in Berlin

please contact [Anja acramer@la-spinetta.com](mailto:Anja.acramer@la-spinetta.com) for further information

### **December La Spinetta and Giorgio in Florida**

December 7<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> Giorgio Rivetti will be traveling to Atlanta and Northern Florida. Please contact [Anja acramer@la-spinetta.com](mailto:Anja.acramer@la-spinetta.com) for further information.

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### New at la Spinetta

Moscato labels:



After about 24 years of label time, the moment came to say good bye to the old La Spinetta Moscato labels. We felt the need to update and upscale our oldest labels, but we tried to maintain the identity of the Crus, the Biancospino flower and the Bricco quail.

### New Barbaresco Bordini:

VIGNETO BORDINI

In 2006 La Spinetta purchased a Barbaresco vineyard, Bordini Cru, located in Neive.



Barbaresco 2006

L A S P I N E T T A

As the vines were relatively young, we originally had planned to blend this Nebbiolo into our Langhe Nebbiolo. Half into the winemaking though, we were surprised and amazed by the high quality of that Nebbiolo. A quality that was much higher than the quality of our Langhe Nebbiolo and that asked for its own bottling as Barbaresco DOCG.

Today we are proud to present you this new Barbaresco, that unveils a floral and fruity note with roses, violet, cherry and mint. The palate entices with bright red fruit, fine tannins and a **stunning elegance**.

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### Your opinion on...

On most food items, that we can buy today, we find a detailed list of ingredients. With wines we only get the information of alcohol percentage and the content of sulfites (not even the amount). What is your opinion? Should wine labels state further information? If yes, which information would you be looking for? Should this be part of our laws?

If you like to share your thoughts and opinion with us and would like to have them published in our next newsletter, please write to [myopinion@la-spinetta.com](mailto:myopinion@la-spinetta.com)

Your comments to our question in July's Newsletter:

### **What do you think of scores and in how much do they influence your buying decision?**

*I admit to reading wine reviews--but for different reasons. Only a few reviewers influence me to buy a wine; most of the popular American reviewers influence what I don't buy--that is, by now I know I probably won't like what some reviewers rate highly. □ For all wines, I want to enjoy the passion and commitment of wine makers who respect their land, their grapes, and their craft. I grow tired of some globalized standard of generic "excellence" that is disrespectful to soil, culture, and heritage of a vineyard. □ To me, trust in the palate of the reviewer is critical. For Italian wines, I consider Gambero Rosso and the American writers Tom Hyland and Matt Kramer. After that, I trust the palates of three sets of friends: one who operates an enoteca in Firenze and two in the wine business in the USA. I want a reviewer whose priority is the wine maker as an artisan rather than a chaser of scores. After gaining a sense of the reviewer's palate, I can be swayed to purchase based on the judgments of a few trusted reviewers. **James R. Biddle Dayton, Ohio USA***

*My experience in regards to points given by the most famous wine critics is the following: Generally people, who care about scores, are only interested in wines, that have received points higher than 95/100. These people go crazy for points, but usually they have no passion for wine.*

*It has happened to me, that a customer tries a wine and tells me, that he does not like the wine. After I told this customer, that the wine received 95/100 points by so and so, he makes an order of 6 bottles.*

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*Fortunately this is rather the exception. Most of our customers listen to their taste. They do pay attention to what the wine critics say, but only to see, if those give correct scores. My customers tell me when they don't agree with a score and wonder why the journalist for example gave low scores to a wine, that in their eyes is excellent. The wine critics have to watch out, because the consumers start to evaluate their work. **Pino Sassano, Stuttgart, Germany, works for Fischer & Trezza Wine Imports***