

Aperitif with canapes:

VINA VENTISQUERO - Sauvignon Blanc 'Tara Atacama' 2021
(Chile) from Kontrada Wine Merchants

The Tara estate is located in the North of Chile in an extreme area considered as one of the driest places on earth, the Atacama desert. Tara produces the only commercial wines from this place. In this area the vintage variation is virtually non-existent. Year after year, the harvest dates are more or less the same with the grapes being picked in early March. In this part of the Huasco Valley the dense fog known as "camanchaca" blankets the land each day and the moisture from this daily fog provides the vine leaves with a small but important increase in humidity.

This very special climate combined with the chalky and saline soil and low alcohol content (13%) gives birth to wines with a strong influence of the terroir. The grapes are pressed by feet and bottled by hand. Even the wax covering the cork is done manually. They are bottled unfiltered and unfined and other than a small amount of sulphur, nothing is added to the wines. The volumes are very low year after year with no more than a few thousand bottles produced for each cuvée. All are numbered.

This is a 100% Sauvignon Blanc single varietal wine and feels extremely mineral, quite green and flinty with almost no fruit notes and what there is reminiscent of lemon juice. It is firm in body with a tense and juicy acidity and a long finish. It went well with the canapes served. Critical reviews 94/100



Starter and Entrée:

Les Héritiers du Comte Lafon Pouilly-Fuisse 2022 (Burgundy, France)
from Martinet Fine Wines

This wine is considered the pinnacle of the Lafon wines in the Mâconnais. Domaine des Comtes Lafon is a producer in Burgundy making some of the most praised and highly priced white wines from Chardonnay in the region. After some decades of inconsistency, the ending of the old sharecropping agreements in the early '90s permitted Domaine des Comtes Lafon to reach its full potential. In 1995 it adopted organic practices and since 1998 has been entirely biodynamic.

Comte Lafon's stand-out wine is its single grand cru Montrachet, which has consistently been listed as one of the most expensive wines in the world. In 1999 they expanded into the Mâcon in southern Burgundy with a second label: Les Héritiers du Comtes Lafon. The wines are vinified partly in stainless steel, partly in large wooden foudres (ovals) and partly in demi-muids - barrels of 600 litres, depending on the cuvée.

On the nose this wine offered a bouquet of apple, white peach, almond and a discreet foundation of buttery oak. On the palate the wine was full-bodied, with good acidity and a core of fruit, excellent minerality and a long, complex finish. Critical reviews 91/100



Main course:

Benjamin Leroux 1er Cru La Pièce Sous le Bois Blagny 2020 (Burgundy, France) from Martinet Fine Wines

Benjamin Leroux is a small negociant established in Beaune in 2007 by the former manager of the famous Pommard estate Domaine du Comte Armand. A prodigy who began his academic winemaking studies at 13 years old, Leroux is regarded as one of the most exciting producers in Burgundy. Leroux shares a modern winery in the heart of Beaune with Dominique Lafon. Unlike other negociants he never buys juice or wine, instead managing his own vineyards and working closely with growers.

La Pièce Sous le Bois is an unusual Premier Cru-rated vineyard in the Côte de Beaune region of Burgundy. It is covered by both the Blagny and Meursault appellations for its red and white wines respectively. The Chardonnay-based wines tend to take the glory. However La Pièce Sous le Bois red wines, made from Pinot Noir, are excellent as well, being medium bodied and spicy, taking on earthier notes as they age.

These Pinot Noir vines grow in thin clay and limestone soils and following a hot 2020, the result was even better than usual, with rich plummy fruit, floral notes and a hint of mineral to give depth, along with a texture that is ripe and supple, but still vibrantly fresh. The grapes are destemmed and carefully fermented before ageing in used casks. Critical reviews 93/100



Dessert:

Roberto Anselmi - I CAPITELLI (Recioto di Soave) Verona, Italy from Kontrada Wine Merchants

Cantine Anselmi is a wine producer of the Veneto region, in the northeast Italy. Although the estate is situated at Monteforte d'Alpone in the Soave Classico zone and its wines are based largely on Garganega, Anselmi's wines are labelled as Veneto IGT, as proprietor Roberto Anselmi was dissatisfied with the bureaucracy and regulations in Soave that he felt focused more on quantity than quality. Since 2000, all of Anselmi's wines have been labelled as Veneto IGT instead of using the DOC, Anselmi pioneered single-vineyard wines in the area after he took over his family estate in the late 1970s. The modern winery uses cold macerations for extra body and low temperature fermentation, then extended ageing before release.

I CAPITELLI, previously known as Recioto di Soave, is a passito wine made from selected late harvest ripe Garganega grapes that go through a drying process, either naturally by 'raisining' the grapes on the vine or by laying them on straw mats to desiccate in a well-ventilated drying room. It can also be a combination of the two methods. After drying, they are fermented in small Allier oak barrels, before spending another eight months there maturing. The result is a sweet, smooth dessert wine rich in alcohol. Usually, some 30-40 percent of the grapes are botrytis-affected, adding complex aromas and flavours to its primary ones of tangerine, apricots, and citrus. It is powerful, complex, dense, sweet and perfectly balanced with a lengthy and non-cloying conclusion. Critical reviews 92/100

