When a Pizzeria promotes Italian wines

scritto da Roberto Nicolli | 10 Ottobre 2013



1. Could you tell me more about your restaurant?

Nicli is an amazing place to work at. I love coming in and smelling the baking dough and the fresh basil. It's pretty stylish, but also casual and we got enough awards to rank as best in its class for traditional pizza in Vancouver. We were first to get the official VPN certification (Verace Pizza Napoletana) in the city too!

2. How would you describe your average customer?

We see a wide variety of people during the day, from families with young children to business people, couples on a date, friends celebrating something, tourists of course but lots of locals also. Indeed everyone loves pizza, but I would say all our customers share a particular love of the quality ingredients we use and the attentive service we provide.

3. How do you structure your wine list?

The list is meant to be a test of discovery. There are some known grapes, but a lot are indigenous to Italy. There is only one BC winery represented and all the rest is Italian. The reserve list is ordered by region, from North to South of Italy. The other lists (red, white, rose and sparkling) are ordered from more or less lighter/fresher wines to fuller/richer ones.

4. What type of wine is preferred in your restaurant?

As a pizzeria, red wines come first, with the usual suspects of Montepulciano and Chianti at the front, but red wines from Puglia are also very popular with their earthy, spicy, juicy characters, as much as for their affordable price.

5. Could you tell me a story about wine that happened in your restaurant?

It's always fun when we get people who are open-minded and ready to be tempted by an unusual grape on the menu, but it's even more fun when they end up ordering a grape they thought they knew, but we have in an unusual style. Like a biodynamic Prosecco we have that's unfiltered and tastes much more like Champagne because of the lees contact. Or a 5-year old Pinot Grigio that started to oxidize (in a good way!) So once in a while, we have a table that sends it back, because it's not what they expected, but then some other times, it's an amazing discovery for them!

6. Do you prefer a certain Italian Region and if Yes, which one?

Italy has such a wealth of fascinating indigenous varieties -as well as a history dating back millennia!- that it makes it hard to pick a favourite. If I had to say though, I might pick a region that constantly surprises me: Campania. Not only for the powerful Aglianico but also the intriguing Pallagrello Nero, the ancient Casavecchia, the meaty Piedirosso, and then whites just as curious: Falanghina (thought to be at the origin of the Falernum wine drank in Roman times), Greco di Tufo, Fiano di Avellino…

7. What is your favorite Italian wine?

That is much too hard to say, but I can tell you why Italian wines are my favourite: the earthiness, the dusty tannins, the acidity that permeate all Italian wines and make them not separate from food, but just a part of the entire meal experience. Italian wines are for food lovers.

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