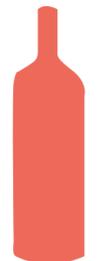


WINE / LOMBARDY

Bank on these bottles

Wine from Lombardy may lack recognition outside of Italy but there are plenty of winemakers whose work is worthy of discovery. Perhaps Lombard wines are overlooked because of the stiff competition from Piemonte to the west (with its Barolo and Barbera d'Alba) and Veneto to the east, (with its Bardolino and Prosecco). In any case, we've pressed on with 10 fine wines of various prices and styles to try, buy and enjoy.

1. **SPARKLING WHITE**
Ca' del Bosco Prestige Cuvée Brut
This is a top sparkling wine made by the proper champagne method in Franciacorta: wines from here can be spectacular and this is one of them. The cognoscenti know about Franciacorta; others should push aside branded champagnes and have a go.
2. **WHITE**
I Frati, Cà dei Frati, Lugana
A lovely fruity, fragrant white of medium body with a crisp finish, made near Lake Garda. One of the best of the Lugana wines. Drink it young, over lunch with fish.
3. **WHITE**
Cascina Felicina "Torfel" Bianco San Martino della Battaglia
White wine from an area south of Lake Garda that's lively and made from the pungent Friulano grape, which is more usually found in Veneto. Drink the youngest available.
4. **ROSE**
Maim Garda Classico, Valtinesi, Costaripa 2017
A dry, crisp, summery rosé with cherry and strawberry flavours. If the price seems a bit high for a rosé, try Costaripa's Castelline instead.
5. **RED**
Mamete Prevostini Albareda Sforzato di Valtellina 2013
Made from Nebbiolo – a grape better known for its use in Barolo – this wine comes from the hilly Valtellina region and is more delicate than those made in Piemonte. It is a *sforzato* (intensely concentrated) tippale and hovers around 16 per cent ABV – so mind how you go.
6. **RED**
Valtellina Superiore Valgella Cà Moré 2015 Sandro Fay
Also made from Nebbiolo, this is softer than the *sforzato*. It's a delicate but rich wine with notes of berries and chocolate.
7. **RED**
Nino Negri, Le Tense Sassello Valtellina Superiore 2013
This wine offers notes of raspberry jam on the nose, curiously, but it's elegant, balanced, fruity and full-flavoured.
8. **RED**
Cà del Vént, Cellatica 2016
Mystifyingly labelled "funky" by one wine critic, this is actually an earthy, savoury and spicy tippale. Getting all of those elements into one bottle is an achievement worth toasting.
9. **RED**
Tenuto Massolino Terrazze Pinot Nero 2015
A fragrant pinot noir with an intense nose of strawberry and menthol, which makes for very easy drinking.
10. **WHITE**
Tenuta Castello di Grumello Valcalepio Moscato Passito 2009
A sweet wine that's lush and balanced. Italy's contribution to the *dolce* vintner is not just about Vin Santo, you know.



CATERING / MILAN

A TASTE FOR THE THEATRICAL

It takes a special talent to cater to the crowds descending on Milan during Salone del Mobile. We join the set-up team behind Barbieri, a favourite with design brands when it comes to bringing together the big bashers.

WRITER *Laura Rysman* PHOTOGRAPHER *xxxx*

"Catering is 100 per cent stress but it's a business built on transforming [that] stress into smiles," says Serena Barbieri, head of the Milanese catering company that bears her name and which, after 15 years of business, now stages 150 events annually, with as many as 3,000 guests at a time for high fashion clients that include Hermès, Valextra and Zegna among others.

Some caterers are expanding on an existing restaurant business but many gourmets take to catering because it's a low-risk, low-overhead path into the world of food. For Barbieri, a literature major enraptured by the kitchen, it was a business launched as a lark. To mark the 80th birthday of her grandmother, whom she describes as "a great snob", she cooked a celebratory dinner for her eighty guests, the home-style dishes from her native Cremona earning high praise from the discerning crowd.

Hers is an industry full of eleventh hour emergencies. "I plan 12 different back-up plans for every event," she says sportingly. Later in the evening, she'll serve dinner to fifty top clients of a jewellery company in the soaring Sala degli Otto Colonne (Hall of the Eight Columns) inside Palazzo Reale, Milan's sprawling former royal palace.

The dinner, like most of her events, actually began weeks ago. The firm requested a 1960s-inspired banquet to chime with the decade it was founded. After the client's brief, "everything is a collaboration": Barbieri turns to her long-time confederates – the Fasten Seat Belt event-planning agency, Bollettini florists and Luca Sacchi, a designer of interiors and installations. Together they formulate a vision to bring the request to life.

For new patrons, Barbieri prepares the entire meal in miniature for two or three people, tweaking details



Clockwise from top left: An uplifting flower display; Close ties help the Barbieri team weather the stresses of service; Much of the food is cooked in advance;... While some must be freshly prepared; Inch-perfect table setting; Tumblers on a terrazzo floor (kept from the crumb by dedicated holders); Setting the table for success



according to tastes. There's wine to order a week ahead of the event and food a few days before; then on the day a regimented schedule from 09.00 to the end of the night, slating in surplus time for the inevitable "human errors and disasters" along the way. This said, Barbieri thrives on the theatre of banquets. "Artists express themselves by making their art," she says. "I express myself by making my dinners."

The evening of the Pomellato affair, the courses of the meal are stacked in a tower of Tupperware in the makeshift kitchen. An erstwhile palace closet, it's now host to a folding table and four portable induction burners. Messy-haired boys in backpacks and sneakers arrive – the male-only waiting staff for the evening, as per the client's wish. All are students at local universities who wait at events throughout their school years, passing on their positions to someone else as they graduate into professional jobs. "I'm on my fifth generation of students," Barbieri says of her crew. "They're not models and they're not experts in the art of service like at some other agencies, but they're nice kids who make guests feel at home."

Between the dining room's double row of stone columns, spot-lit neoclassical paintings of Roman gods flank the walls. A white-linen-topped table running the length of the hall is encircled by waiters who adjust crystal goblets, calligraphy-lettered place cards, initial-embroidered napkins, and gold charger plates laid squarely with pink tasselled sheaths of the evening's menu.

A jazz singer, still in her daytime sweater and jeans, belts out rehearsal songs accompanied by an acoustic guitarist and a saxophone player. "Cosa m'importa delle

stelle," she wails but one waiter smiles contentedly as he sings along, happy for the distraction from the task of arranging Sixties-esque flowers (gladiolas, carnations, and bird-of-paradise blooms) at even intervals along the table.

The young men troop backstage and throng around Barbieri; she hooks a ready-made bow tie over each of their starched white shirt collars. "Food from the right, drinks from the left," the headwaiter reminds his fellow servers. He's one of several delegates managing the operations for Barbieri, all of them culled from the student corps of her waiters. "I'm the conductor of the orchestra," she says, now nervously rocking one foot as she speaks, the evening's performance growing near. "No matter how many people there are working for me, these events in the end are very personal reflections on myself and my business."

A co-ordinator pokes her head backstage, gasping that they're missing an English-version menu. A last-minute foreign guest is arriving. "Does anyone know how to do calligraphy?" Barbieri gulps, a blank place card in hand. A small assembly of the earliest guests are already just beyond the door, dallying to greet each other and take celebrity-style photos in front of the Pomellato placard. The stillness of the dining hall's candle-lit tableau will endure for few moments yet. Hidden behind a tall velvet curtain, the waiters in their bow ties and linen aprons circumscribe small, fidgety orbits around Barbieri, as the first corks pop and flutes of prosecco are lined up on waiting trays, everyone listening anxiously for the footfalls of guests to signal the beginning of the show.

"I'm the conductor of the orchestra. No matter how many people there are working for me, these events in the end are very personal reflections on myself and my business"



EATING AND DRINKING / MILAN

Time to say 'chow' to Milan

Design-minded types flock to Salone del Mobile for business, pleasure and the sheer enjoyment of discovering new pieces. But it would be a shame to miss out on the culinary delights Milan has to offer beyond the fair, which is why we've put together a tasteful tour to take you from morning coffee to elegant, old-style dinner. Tuck in.

FOR THE BEST COFFEE IN TOWN

Orsonero Coffee in Porta Venezia

Canadian Brent Jopson opened Orsonero with his Milanese wife, pastry chef Giulia Gasperini, after spying a gap in the market for specialist roasts. "We still sell more espressos than anything else but customers are starting to cotton on to the flat white," he says playfully. Visit the pared-back space in the afternoon for a relaxed vibe. *15 Via Giuseppe Broggi, 20129*



FOR A SWEET TREAT

Taveggia Milano 1909 in Monforte

Taveggia first opened its doors in the year of Marinetti's *Manifesto del Futurismo*, when power lines were springing up across Milan. For more than a century since the café has lured visitors with its legendary rice pudding and 30 different types of brioche. Gather under the crystal chandeliers and order an Americano with a savoury pastry. *taveggiamilano1909.com*



FOR A LIGHT LUNCH

Pastamadre in Porta Romana

Chef Francesco Costanzo focuses on his native Sicily's best-loved flavours, from tuna and octopus to pork and wild fennel. But the island is really an excuse to serve fresh pasta, fish and desserts such as *cassatina* (a creamy ricotta cake in green marzipan). These are dishes with a story and Costanzo will happily play the raconteur. *8 Via Bernardino Ciofi, 20135*



FOR A TASTE OF FOOD AT ITS FINEST

A Santa Lucia in San Babila

A Santa Lucia opened in 1929 and since 1957 has been at this San Babila location, where jacketed waiters are watched over by photos of the restaurant's starry clientele. The fare is Neapolitan, with exemplary pizza and a mean steak. Under owner Alberto Cortesi this Milanese institution retains its quintessential *vecchio ristorante* chic. *asantalucia.it*



SUBSCRIBE

Monocle's usual menu of food, drink and hospitality coverage is, by popular demand, upping its helpings this summer. May sees the release of our *Drinking & Dining Directory*, while June heralds our latest book, *The Monocle Guide to Hotels, Inns and Hideaways*. You can also listen in to our dedicated weekly radio show *The Menu*, which airs Fridays at 19.00 London time. Consider yourself served.