

Alto Adige, Chianti Classico Wines Make the Mark

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The first spring wine tasting of the Mill City Mass Media Oenophiles Club was a study in contrast: three whites from Italy's Trentino-Alto Adige region and three reds from Tuscany's Chianti Classico zone.

The seven tasters- five women, two men- showed a preference for the Lamole di Lamole Chianti Classico bottlings. They were probably influenced as much by the Sangiovese-based wine as the Wine Goddess's meal: spinach lasagna with meat sauce on the side, tossed salad, and crusty bread sprinkled with olive oil and parmesan cheese.

In the first session, the "cool" climate whites from Kettmeir Estate posed an interesting varietal mix of Pinot Bianco, Pinot Grigio and Müller-Thurgau.

First, some background.

Trentino-Alto Adige is Italy's northernmost wine-growing region. The Swiss Alps and the Dolomites lend protection to what is traditionally a harsh climate zone, allowing white grapes to ripen fully in the best vintage seasons. Unlike the Italian-influenced Trentino province, the northern Alto Adige adheres to its Austrian-German roots. Some of Italy's best white wines are made here.



First Session: Whites

- **Kettmeir Pinot Bianco 2014**

This ranked No. 2 among the whites with an average score of 17.1 points out of 25, it scored best in color (pale straw), texture and taste (apple). It featured good acidity and carried the majority as a good end-of-day, cool pre-dinner wine.

- **Kettmeir Pinot Grigio 2014**

The group wanted more expressive apple and pear expressions from this golden-colored, light-bodied wine. It was slow to gain momentum, yet had a nice finishing kick. Scored 16.1 points.

- **Kettmeir Müller-Thurgau 2014**

A pale-straw colored standout with intense floral aromas. Hit the palate with sweet peach flavors and evolved nicely with nutty traits into a spicy finish. Appealing vibrancy and smooth. Scored an impressive 22.3 points. The Alto-Adige at its best.

Chianti Classico is a special region in central Tuscany where variations in landscape and geology provide some of Italy's most structured wines. Chianti Classico has three tiers of classification. Basic Chianti Classico must be aged for at least a year, and contain at least 80 percent Sangiovese. The remaining 20 percent can be canaiolo, colorino, Cabernet Sauvignon or Merlot. The second tier Riserva is only made in the best vintage years and is aged longer- two years in wood casks and three months in bottle. The top quality tier, Gran Selezione, is produced from estate-grown grapes only and aged for 30 months. With Chianti Classico, the longer the aging, the more elegant and savory the result.



Second Session: Reds

- **Lamole di Lamole Blue Label Chianti Classico 2012**

For entry level, this Super Tuscan-like blend- Sangiovese-Cabernet Sauvignon-Merlot- was well-received and posted an overall score of 17.6 points. It showed best for its mouth-filling texture, cherry orchard aromatics and berry flavors. Persistent, "dusty" tannins made their presence felt sparking a mix of reactions. Some liked the bitterness; others didn't.

- **Lamole di Lamole Chianti Classico Riserva 2011**

An extra year of aging and what a difference. The traditional Sangiovese-Canaiolo mix produced concentrated dark berry traits and more herbal spices. The wine took on an elegant air. Tasters noted complexity in the core fruit flavors and "outdoorsy" aromatics. It scored a solid 21.4 points.

- **Lamole di Lamole Chianti Classico Gran Selezione Vigneto di Campolungo 2011**

The best hand-picked estate Sangiovese and Cabernet Sauvignon grapes go into this fabulous wine. Two judges gave it a perfect 25-point score. It rated high across the board, and excelled for its color (dark ruby), velvety mouthfeel, and rich flavors. The dry, extended finish had tasters rolling their eyes. Undertones of tobacco, mint and mushroom were detected. A 22.4-point gem.

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