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Swirl, sniff and sip a taste of Italy

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Taste the terror of Chianti Classico and picturesque Lamole di Lamole in the 2012 Riserva, and, at least for a moment, live out your Tuscan dream.

Sometimes mini vacations pour into a glass. An aroma, color or flavor immediately transports to you to past experiences and travels.

I especially feel this way about Italian wines. Be it bright, dry and effervescent Prosecco, mineral whites, or food-friendly Sangiovese-based reds, I feel like I'm on holiday when we pour them at parties and look back on a few sublime weeks we spent there years ago during the pre-kids era.

We keep a large painting of Portofino in our home as a reminder, along with a full complement of Italian bottles in the wine fridge.

The wines come in handy when the mercury spikes in Arizona, too, as they hold up well to heat and offer good acidity for chilling and food pairing.

Listed below are a few recent Italian finds. All are widely available at fine area retailers and grocers like BevMo, Total Wine and More, AJ's Fine Foods, Cost Plus World Market, Safeway, Bashas' and Fry's Food Stores. Salutii!

- **Torresella Prosecco NV, Veneto, Italy.** Pale, straw yellow in color with lovely mirco bubbles, this sparkler from the northeast portion of the country shows delicate aromatics, nice balance and bright freshness. Good as starter wine or with dessert. \$16.
- **Kettmeir Muller-Thurgau 2014, Alto Adige, Italy.** Influences from neighboring Austria come through in this thoughtful, full bodied white wine full of nutmeg and peach on the nose through to the palate. Excellent with seafood, perhaps a seafood risotto. \$22.
- **Lamole di Lamole Chianti Classico Riserva 2012.** This is the wine of your Tuscan fantasy; deep ruby red with a perfumy nose of flowers and spice. On the palate is typical Chianti tannic bite accompanied by warm red fruit. Grill steaks and veggies with this one. \$32.
- **Sassoregale Sangiovese 2013, Maremma Toscana, Italy.** With a name like Sassoregale you may expect some sassiness with this wine. And you would be correct. It's full-bodied and assertive from start to finish. Ideal with grilled red meats or salty Prosciutto. \$18.
- **Feudo Zirtari Nero D'Avola 2013, Sicily, Italy.** Hailing from the southern island region where the warmer grow season influences the wine, amounts of Syrah are added which brings added fruit to the glass. Make a zesty seafood linguine or paella for this fun wine. \$14.

<http://www.examiner.com/article/swirl-sniff-and-sip-a-taste-of-italy>