

Salumi, Pizza and Clavesana Dolcetto

Michele Scicolone (May 25, 2011)



Friends from the Piedmont winery Clavesana were in New York City recently to introduce their wines.

I had the best time last Sunday. Some friends from the Clavesana Winery in Piedmont in Northern Italy were in town, and we decided to have a few people in to taste some of their wines. There were 4 variations on Dolcetto, red wines made from the local dolcetto variety of grapes. These wines go with a wide variety of foods and are well priced. Problem was, I had had a really busy week and not much time to prepare. So Charles and I decided to keep it simple.

First we had an assortment of salumi. There was coppa made from pork shoulder; lardo and



pancetta, both made from the belly; and hard and soft salami. Then we had an assortment of Piemontese cheeses, including 2 kinds of robiola--one with 3 milks: goat, sheep and cow--and the other with 2 milks: sheep and cow. Both were creamy and mushroomy with a soft texture like brie. There was Testun made from cow and goat's milk and aged in the must (the squeezed out grapes) used to make Barolo wine; Braciuk, similar to Testun but not as aged and made only from cow's milk; Castelmagno DOP a firm, sharp cow's milk cheese; Bra Duro Stravecchio, an "extra-old" cow's milk cheese aged a minimum of 1 year; and Toma Piemonte, an unpasteurized cow's milk cheese aged 60 days.

Some fresh fava beans in the shell went great with the sharp cheeses, plus we had breadsticks, bread and a platter of fresh fruit and raw vegetables. I cooked only one thing: a homestyle pan pizza, a recipe from my book *Pizza Anyway You Slice It*. It's a good pizza for a party because it makes a large pie, tastes good hot or cold, and cuts into neat slices so it's easy to eat.

The pizzas were a big hit and everybody loved trying the different cheeses, salumi with the wine. The improbably named D'OH (long story, but makes sense when they explain it) was the lightest, a very easy to drink red that we will enjoy with summer meals like grilled tuna. Then there was the Dolcetto di Dogliani 2009, which was a bit richer -- a perfect wine with roast chicken. Il Clou, with more body still, would be good grilled sausages or chops. Finally there was the 174 Dolcetto di Dogliani, a wine made with grapes from a single vineyard. This wine has big flavors and will only improve with age.

For dessert, we had Nocciolina, a crackly-topped hazelnut sponge cake that Anna had managed to carry to New York intact all the way from Piedmont. The region is famous for its superb hazelnuts and the simple, nutty cake was a delicious treat with a cup of coffee.

Thanks to Anna, Tessa, Mario and Marinella for taking time out from their busy travel schedule to visit us.

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