

The Star-Ledger

Go for the gusto with hearty Italian red

Wednesday, January 02, 2008

Get the New Year off to a good start with a delicious, good-value red wine like the 2004 Lungarotti Rubesco. My first introduction to Lungarotti wines was in the mid-1980s when I traveled to Torgiano, an Umbrian town near Perugia, Italy, to be a wine judge.

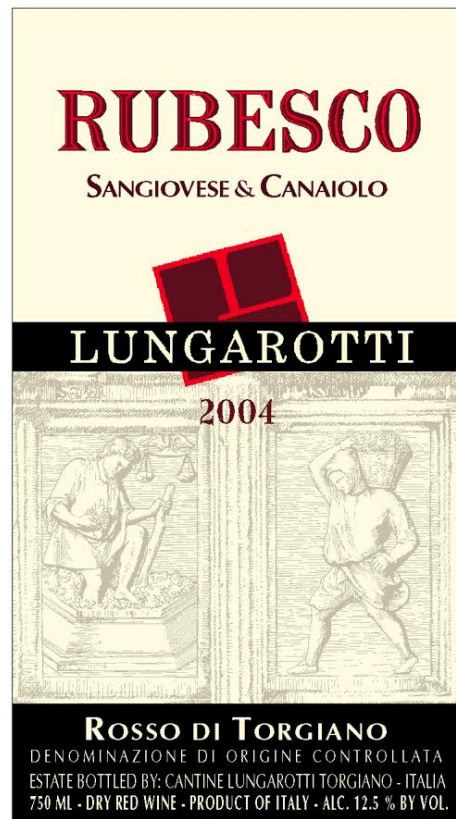
The event was titled Le Tre Vaselle, named for the beautiful hotel where it was held. Owned by Giorgio Lungarotti, Le Tre Vaselle brought wine writers from around the world for a three-day tasting of Italian wines. It was during this event that I encountered Rubesco, an Umbrian wine of flavor and grace. It was a natural vote-getter. Since Giorgio Lungarotti's death in 1999, the winery and estate have been in the very capable hands of his wife, Maria Grazia, and his two professionally educated and trained winemaker daughters, Chiara and Teresa.

Recently, Chiara Lungarotti visited our area, showing the most recent vintages of her family's wines. With their agricultural and winemaking expertise, the two sisters have maintained the high standards set by their father as I witnessed in the 2004 Lungarotti Rubesco.

It is made from a blend of 70-percent sangiovese and 30-percent canaiolo, both indigenous red wine grapes. After fermentation, the wine is aged for nearly a year in large oak casks and then for a second year in bottle. This winemaking process preserves the natural eye-appealing cherry and purplish color. Its aroma of fresh black cherry and roses is as pleasing as the black cherry and blueberry-like flavors. Combined with the soft, round tannins and gentle acidity, these qualities make the 2004 Lungarotti Rubesco immediately drinkable.

Chiara Lungarotti selected a plate of orecchiette pasta with sausage and broccoli di rape to compliment her 2004 Rubesco. It got my vote. This well-made, delicious wine would also be wonderful with polenta and wild mushrooms; roasted chicken and pork; roasted root vegetables; and grilled tuna or salmon with black olives and eggplant.

Along with its excellence, the 2004 Lungarotti Rubesco offers wine consumers a very reasonable price. Something we need as the holiday credit card charges arrive in the mail. The 2004 Lungarotti Rubesco is distributed by the Allied Beverage Group in Carlstadt. It retails for approximately \$16.



*A Glass of Wine by John Foy appears every other week in Savor
John Foy may be reached at savor@starledger.com*

www.winesfrombedford.com