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# ANTHONY GISMONDI

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## INSIDE THE INTERNATIONAL TASTING ROOM

BY: ANTHONY GISMONDI

*Wines to look for at the 45th  
Vancouver International Wine  
Festival*

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PUBLIC EVENTS

# The Vancouver International Wine Festival turns 45 next week.

If you traditionally define generations as the time between the birth of parents and their offspring, the annual festival of the grape is moving into its third generation. You could tag it Generation Nine on the theory that most wine drinkers reshape their palates every five years. Consider where we have come from since 1979. We have gone from Old World to New World wines, then back to Old World wines with New World influence and New World wines with Old World influence and now what we like to call Next World wines. Remember varietal wines versus blends? Country-wide mixes versus specific terroir-based appellations wines? We have sipped valley wines versus hillside wines, and there was all-new oak, no oak, French oak versus American oak debates and now neutral oak, concrete and ancient amphora—big tannins, supple tannins, organic versus biodynamic, and now sustainable wines. Remember cool climates versus warm? Cult wines, the Yellow Tail phenomenon, and the phenomenal growth of local wines? It's been quite a ride.

Year 45 illustrates the learning curve as tasters wade into the high-acid, dry tannins of Northern Italy's "food" wines: Barolo, Barbaresco, and Chianti. Throw in the Apulia, Sicilia, Sardegna, and over 1,000 grape varieties, and explore another world.

This Insider's Guide is designed to get you around the room, touching on some of the many highlights, but in the end, we can only scratch the surface. Use it to start your tour and perhaps keep you focused when your palate fatigues. As always, expect the unexpected. Stop at a winery you have never heard of and give them a chance to tell their story. You never really know what will be in that glass until you taste it, and whether you taste what will soon become an eternal favourite or discover something new, sharing your experience with friends is what wine appreciation is all about. [DOWNLOAD THE GOW GUIDE AS A PDF](#)

## SEEK OUT SPARKLERS

Experienced and eagle-eyed festival goers will notice no Champagne producers present this year, which is a shame. However, it leaves the door open to explore other sparkling styles, grapes, and regions. With the focus on Italy, Prosecco is a natural, though be sure to ask producers about special cuvées and villages within the appellation. Here are a few of the fizzes to find on the festival floor. Treve Ring

Cleto Chiarli Centenario Grasperossa DOC Amabile NV, Emilia-Romagna, Italy. \$26.99

Carpineto Farnito Chardonnay Brut NV, Toscana, Italy. \$36.99

Jasci & Marchesani Frizz Spumante Ancestrale Rosé Frizzante Pet Nat Organic 2022, Abruzzo, Italy. \$34.50

MGM Mondo del Vino Cuvage Nebbiolo D'Alba Brut Rosé Metodo Classico DOCG 2019, Italy. \$41.99

Medici Ermete Querciogli Lambrusco Grasperossa Amabile NV, Emilia-Romagna, Italy. \$19.99

Michele Chiarlo Moscato D'Asti "Nivole" DOCG 2022, Piemonte, Italy. \$28.98

Dewazakura Sake Brewery Tobiroku Nigori Sparkling 2023, Yamagata, Japan. \$39.49



Majella Wines Sparkling Shiraz 2021, Australia. \$39.99

MontRubí Penedès Sumoll L 'Ancestral Rosé Pet Nat Mont Rubi 2021, Alt-Penedès, Spain. \$36.26

Emiliana Organic Vineyards Amaluna Traditional Method Sparkling Brut NV, Chile. \$29.99

**AN ITALIAN SMORGASBORD:** So many wines are made in Italy, which is easily the country with the most diverse selection of labels globally. We encourage you to seek out some of these wines, stretch your wine palates while in the tasting room, and look to taste a wide variety of wines. Here is a list to get you started. Anthony Gismondi

Cantine Aldegheri 2022 Lugana Ca Perlar le Riserve, Veneto \$26.99

Altesino 2018 Brunello di Montalcino, Brunello \$64.99

Tenuta di Arceno 2019 Strada al Sasso Gran Selezione Chianti Classico, Tuscany \$74.99

Marchesi di Barolo 2019 Barbaresco Tradizione, Piedmont \$73.99

Bocale di Valentini 2016 Montefalco Sagrantino, Umbria \$70.00

Boscarelli 2020 Prugnolo Rosso di Montepulciano, Tuscany \$36.99

Bosio 2021 Passato Roero Arneis, Piedmont \$26.99

Bottega Gold N/V Prosecco Brut, Veneto \$34.99

Damilano 2021 Langhe Arneis, Piedmont \$29.99

Fontanafredda 2019 Serralunga d'Alba Barolo, Piedmont \$49.99

Frescobaldi 2018 CastelGiocondo Brunello di Montalcino, Brunello \$60.99

Masi 2021 Dogliani Papa Celso, Piedmont \$55.00

Masi Agricola Serego Alighieri 2015 Vaio Amarone \$95.99

Medici Ermete 2020 Concerto Lambrusco Reggiano, Emilia Romagna \$21.99

Michele Chiarlo 2022 Gavi di Gavi Rovereto, Piedmont \$38.00

Monte del Frà 2020 Custoza Ca del Magro, Bardolino \$24.99

Ricasoli 2020 Castello di Brolio Chianti Classico Gran Selezione, Tuscany \$76.99

Ridolfi 2020 Rosso di Montalcino, Montalcino \$38.99

Rocca delle Macie Tenuta Fizzano Chianti Classico Gran Selezione, Tuscany \$49.99

Tua Rita 2021 Tua Rita Redigaffi, Tuscany \$371.99

Umani Ronchi 2022 Casal di Serra Verdicchio Classico Superiore, Marche \$21.99

Vietti 2020 Langhe Nebbiolo Perbacco, Piedmont \$53.99

Cantine Volpi 2021 Colli Tortonesi Timorasso, Piedmont \$41.00

**FOR THE CHARDONNAY LOVERS:** As the reigning queen of white grapes, chardonnay's ubiquity across wine regions is no coincidence. Its enduring popularity is rooted in its classic appeal drawing enthusiasts to explore its diverse  
<https://gismondionwine.com/blog/an-insiders-guide-to-the-international-tasting-room/>

popularity is rooted in its classic appeal, allowing enthusiasts to explore its diverse styles and remarkable versatility. From its birthplace in Burgundy to the vineyards of Yarra, Oregon, Napa, and Okanagan, chardonnays from around the world await to be savoured. HJ Cha

Pio Cesare 2021 "L'Altro" Langhe Chardonnay Piedmont \$ 43.99

Rathbone Wine Group 2022 Yering Station Chardonnay, Yarra Valley \$39.00

Spearhead Winery 2022 Clone 95 Chardonnay, Okanagan Valley \$33

Unsworth Vineyards 2021 Chardonnay, Vancouver Island \$30.90

Maison Louis Jadot 2022 Bourgogne Chardonnay Couvent des Jacobins, Bourgogne \$38.99

Harvey & Harriet 2021 My Favorite Neighbor Chardonnay, Paso Robles \$74.99

Lingua Franca 2021 Estate Chardonnay 2021, Willamette Valley \$85.99

Robert Mondavi Winery 2022 Napa Valley Chardonnay, Napa Valley \$49.99

**LOCAL HEROES:** British Columbia wine producers will be under some strain in 2025, 2026 and 2027, making this year's contingent an essential part of the festival, pouring wines in very short supply while the vineyards are reset. Remember, you can buy all the wines poured at the booths at the onsite liquor store. It is also an excellent chance to speak directly with producers across the province about what you can expect in the coming months and years. Anthony Gismondi

Bench 1775 2021 Syrah, Okanagan Valley \$28.75

Black Sage Vineyard 2011 Pipe \$29.99

Blasted Church Vineyards 2022 Sauvignon Blanc / Semillon Skaha Bench \$24.49.

Blue Grouse 2022 Chardonnay, Vancouver Island \$31.99

Bordertown 2019 Cabernet Franc Reserve, Okanagan Valley \$50.00

Burrowing Owl 2021 Merlot, Okanagan Valley \$41.99

Chaberton Estate Winery, 2022 Madeline Sylvaner, Fraser Valley \$21.99

Chronos 2022 Sauvignon Blanc, Okanagan Valley \$29.99 Rosé

Church & State Wines 2019 Roussanne, Black Sage Bench, Okanagan Valley \$26.00

Culmina Family Estate 2018 Hypothesis, Okanagan Valley \$50.00

Da Silva 2019 Legado Nobreza, Naramata Bench \$105.00

Fort Berens 2021 Riesling Reserve, Lilloett \$33.99

Frind Estate Winery 2022 Regent, Okanagan Valley \$33.00

Hester Creek 2020 Garland, Okanagan Valley \$75.99

Lake Breeze 2016 MacIntyre Ardua Merlot, Naramata Bench \$80.99

Moon Curser 2022 Arneis, Osoyoos East Bench \$30.00

Moraine Estate 2022 Pinot Noir Naramata Bench, \$28.99

Nk'Mip Cellars 2022 White Mer'r'iym, Osoyoos \$35.99

Osoyoos Larose 2019 Le Grand Vin, Okanagan Valley \$57.99

Phantom Creek 2020 Petite Cuvee, Okanagan Valley \$39.99

Spearhead Winery 2022 Clone 95 Chardonnay, Kelowna \$33.00

Terralux Estate 2019 Meritage, Okanagan Valley \$35.00

Unsworth Vineyards 2022 Pinot Gris, Vancouver Island \$25.90

**ITALIAN WHITES BEYOND PINOT GRIGIO:** Italian whites are frequently misunderstood, either simplified, like with many pinot grigios or deemed too complicated. Once you step into the world of Italian whites, however, they will offer a journey of discovery, intriguing you with their enigmatic charm. Unveil the allure of classic Italian whites with hidden gems like Arneis, Gavi di Gavi, and Soave. HJ Cha

Cantine Aldegheri 2022 Lugana Ca Perlar le Riserve, Veneto \$26.99

Collefrisio Filare 2020 Trebbiano d'Abruzzo, Abruzzo \$30.00

Danimi 2022 Favella Falanghina, Campania \$29.90

Inama 2022 Vin Soave Classico, Veneto \$26.49

Michele Chiarlo 2022 Gavi di Gavi "Rovereto", Piedmont \$38.00

Villa Sandi 2022 Borgo Conventi Friulano Collio, Friuli Venezia Giulia \$35.99

Umani Ronchi 2022 Casal di Serra Verdicchio Classico Superiore Organic, Marche \$21.99

Vietti 2022 Roero Arneis, Piedmont \$46.99

**SOME OF THE HIGHEST PRICED JUICE IN THE ROOM:** It is always considered poor form to booth hop tasting only the most expensive wines in the room, but it never hurts to know where they are. Our advice: stay calm, chat up the principal and taste all the wines at the table — preferably in the order the winery suggests. Anthony Gismondi

Louis M. Martini Monte Rosso Gnarly Vine Zinfandel, 2016, Sonoma County, California, USA \$100

Michele Chiarlo Barbaresco Asili 2017, Piedmont Italy \$100

Marziano Abbona Barolo 2018, Piedmont Italy \$98

Château Monlot 2016, Saint Emilion, Bordeaux, France \$148.99

Ridolfi Brunello di Montalcino 2017, Tuscany Italy \$121.99

San Polino Brunello di Montalcino 2018, Tuscany Italy \$111.99

Thomas Allen Vineyards & Winery Fortitude Cabernet Sauvignon 2019, Napa Valley, California, USA \$154.00

Tua Rita Redigaffi 2021, Tuscany Italy \$371.99

(Ulysse Cazabonne) Château La Croix Canon 2016, Saint Emilion, Bordeaux, France \$86.99

**BEST RESTAURANT TO SPOT A WINEMAKER BEFORE & AFTER**

**HOURS:** Vancouver's authentic wine restaurants are well known to visiting

<https://gismondionwine.com/blog/an-insiders-guide-to-the-international-tasting-room/>



principals and will be busy all week. However, those closer to the Vancouver Convention Centre will likely be favoured after a busy day of talking and pouring wines. If you want to rub shoulders with the wine mob, check out the following rooms from 5 to 7 p.m. or after the tasting room closes at 10 p.m. Cheri Caleb

**Near the Convention Centre and less than a 10-minute walk:**

**Bacaro**, Fairmont Pacific Rim

**Cactus Club Coal Harbour**, Jack Poole Plaza

**Miku Waterfront**, 200 Granville St.

**Nightengale** 1017 W. Hastings St.

**Joey's Bentall One**, 507 Burrard St.

**Downtown Vancouver 10-15 minute walk or less than an 8-10 minute cab ride:**

**Hawksworth's Bar**, 801 Georgia St.

**Carlino's Restaurant & Lounge** 1115 Alberni St.

**Joe Fortes**, 777 Thurlow Street

**Italian Kitchen**, 860 Burrard St.

**Boulevard** 845 Burrard St.

**CinCin Restaurant & Bar** 1154 Robson Street

**Earl's Test Kitchen**, 905 Hornby

**Mott 32**, 1161 W. Georgia St.

**H Tasting Lounge, Westin Bayshore**

**Yaletown (3 Skytrain Stations, 10-12 minute cab ride or 20-25 minute walk)**

**Blue Water Café** 1095 Hamilton Street

**Elisa Steak**, 1109 Hamilton St.

**Cioppino's Mediterranean Grill**, 1133 Hamilton Street

**La Terrazza**, 1088 Cambie Street

**The Victor** 39 Smithe St.

**5 Skytrain Stations or 15-minute cab ride:**

**Vij's**, 1480 West 11th Avenue

That's it. Have fun, and don't forget: no perfume. Whatever you do, don't even think about driving home. Take advantage of the Free Ride Home program available onsite.

WRITTEN BY: AG



**ANTHONY GISMONDI**

Anthony Gismondi is a Canadian wine journalist and one of North America's most influential voices in wine. For over 30 years, he has been the wine columnist for The Vancouver Sun. The twice-weekly column is distributed across Canada through the Postmedia Network to millions of readers. In addition, Anthony hosts the BC Food & Wine Radio Show, broadcast in 25 markets across B.C. and available as a podcast on major platforms. He launched Gismondionwine.com in 1997, attracting one million monthly users from 114 countries. It continues to be a valuable resource full of tasting notes, intelligent wine stories and videos for the trade and consumers. Conversations with wine personalities are available on his [YouTube Channel](#).

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