

TASTING REPORT: MOUNTAIN HIGH PINOTS FROM ITALY



I did a quick tasting over the weekend of a dozen pinot noirs - blauburgunder - from Alto Adige, Italy, and it was one of the most fun tastings I did this summer, so far. It wasn't because they were the best wines or the most powerful or structured. I regularly drink top Burgundy and just the other night I had a 1999 Domaine de la Romanée-Conti Echezeaux at a dinner with friends from Hong Kong. But it was a fascinating tasting, reviewing a dozen pinots from Italy's mountainous wine regions.



The 13 pinots I tasted blind on Saturday were a whole different thing compared to top Burgundy, and that's why they were delicious and satisfying. Some had a more minerally or dried fruit character that suggests that they used different clones from Burgundy as well as the unique minerally and mountainous soils of Alto Adige. Others were more fruit-forward and structured like pinots from places such as California's Russian River. Even others were slatey and intense like pinots from New Zealand's Central Otago. Anyway, I enjoyed the diversity and precision of the wines and they were so drinkable.



"Our pinot noirs have a unique style because of our unique vine growing area," admitted Andi Punter of Franz Haas Wines. "No one makes pinots like ours."

Indeed, below are the wines I tasted including one from Trentino.

Photos from top to bottom: a bottle of Tiefenbrunner Pinot Nero Süditrol Linticlarus Riserva 2013, a bottle of Franz Haas Pinot Noir Alto Adige; and two bottles of pinot noirs

-James Suckling, CEO

TASTING NOTES

S. MICHAEL-EPPAN PINOT NERO SÜDTIROL 2015

Country Italy	Score	90	Bright and fruity, more like a cru Beaujolais with strawberry and lemon aromas and flavors. Medium body, crisp finish. Drink now.
Region Northeast			
Vintage 2015			

CANTINA SAN PAOLO PINOT NERO SÜDTIROL 2015

Country Italy	Score	92	Very ripe strawberry aromas with hints of orange peel. Medium to full body, firm and silky tannins and a fruity finish. Drink or hold.
Region Northeast			
Vintage 2015			

ABBZIA DI NOVACELLA PINOT NERO SÜDTIROL 2015

Country Italy	Score	91	Lots of spice, dried meat and berry aromas follow through to a full body, velvety tannins and a long and flavorful finish of tar and berry. Drink now.
Region Northeast			
Vintage 2015			

TIEFENBRUNNER PINOT NERO SÜDTIROL TURMHOF 2014

Country Italy	Score	93	A tight and lively pinot noir with strawberry and floral aromas and flavors. Medium body, delicate tannins and a fresh and clean finish. Very bright and precise. Drink now.
Region Northeast			
Vintage 2014			

FRANZ HAAS PINOT NOIR ALTO ADIGE 2013

Country Italy	Score	93	Aromas of dried strawberry, graphite and rust follow through to a medium body, ultra-fine tannins and a citrusy acidity. It is long and linear. Lots of purple fruit and green tea character at the finish. Complex wine. Drink or hold.
Region Northeast			
Vintage 2013			

COLTERENZIO PINOT NERO SÜDTIROL ST. DANIEL RISERVA 2013

Country Italy	Score	92	Aromas of leather, dried berry, and plum follow through to a full body, velvety tannins and a tea, strawberry and sandalwood aftertaste. Delicious wine.
Region Northeast			
Vintage 2013			

BOLLINI PINOT NERO TRENINO RISERVA 2013

Country Italy
Region Northeast
Vintage 2013

Score
90

A pinot with pretty coffee, berry and light walnut character. Medium body, fresh finish. Real pinot. Drink now.

CANTINA ANDRIAN PINOT NERO SÜDTIROL ANRAR RISERVA 2013

Country Italy
Region Northeast
Vintage 2013

Score
92

Lots of fresh plum and peach aromas follow through to a full body, velvety tannins and lots of smoky, fruity and spice character in the aftertaste. Fresh and lively young pinot. Drink or hold.

CANTINA TERLAN PINOT NERO SÜDTIROL MONTIGL RISERVA 2013

Country Italy
Region Northeast
Vintage 2013

Score
93

Aromas of rich strawberry and smoked meat follow through to a full body, firm and silky tannins and a dense and flavorful finish. I like the soft almost oily texture to it. Drink now.

TIEFENBRUNNER PINOT NERO SÜDTIROL LINTICLARUS RISERVA 2013

Country Italy
Region Northeast
Vintage 2013

Score
94

Beautiful wine now with dried strawberry, floral and light coffee aromas and flavors. Medium to full body, firm and silk tannins and a fresh and bright finish. Solid core of fruit in the center palate. Drink now.

ALOIS LAGEDER PINOT NERO SÜDTIROL KRAFUSS 2012

Country Italy
Region Northeast
Vintage 2012

Score
93

A pinot with a stone, dried berry, chocolate and light walnut character. Full to medium body, firm and silky tannins and a flavorful finish. Fascinating pinot. Drink now.

S. MICHAEL-EPPAN PINOT NERO SÜDTIROL SANCT VALENTIN 2012

Country Italy
Region Northeast
Vintage 2012

Score
92

Fascinating aromas of dried strawberry, cinnamon stick and nutmeg follow through to a full to medium body, firm and silky tannins and a flavorful finish. A wine with tension and structure. Drink now.

ABBAZIA DI NOVACELLA PINOT NERO SÜDTIROL PRAEPOSITUS RISERVA 2012

Country Italy

Region Northeast

Vintage 2012

Score

92

Lots of dried strawberry, white pepper and cherry aromas follow through to a full body, round and velvety tannins and a flavorful finish. Rich and intense. Like the earthy, funk on the finish. Drink now.
