

WINEHAZARD

ERIC HAZARD'S TAKE ON THE GRAPES OF THE WORLD AND THE FRUIT OF THEIR LABOR.

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Fubbiano I Pampini, Sangiovese/Teroldego, 2003 (Tuscany, Italy)

By Eric Hazard

Loyal WineHazard readers may recall the '99 Quintarelli Valpolicella we tasted on Valentine's Day this year.

It was a wonderful wine drinking experience, but it was also a wonderful wine buying experience. We purchased the wine at Italian Wine Merchants, based solely on the recommendation of the associate who helped us. He listened to my planned menu, asked about the type of wine we typically enjoy and made this recommendation. I was impressed with his professionalism, so at the time, I asked our helpful vinombre for another recommendation. This time, something a little less, that would be a good, versatile bottle.

He pointed me to the Fubbiano I Pampini.

And he was right.



Winery: Fubbiano I Pampini

Grape: 90% Sangiovese/10% Teroldego

Region: Tuscany, Italy

Year: 2003

Source: Italian Wine Merchants (www.italianwinemerchant.com)

Price: \$39

Color: Dark Purple

Nose: Classic "cigar box" Tuscan nose, replete with cedar, leather, black pepper, chocolate and raspberry.

Taste: The wine is characterized by a big cherry flavor, present throughout the tasting. First though, medium-bodied wine's entry is with cinnamon. Mid-palate brings forth plum, allspice, licorice and clove notes, with just a touch of lime zest. The long lingering finish is a medley of cherry and oak. Tannins are definitely present, though they tend to soften as the wine opens up.

What I like: Buying wine at Italian Wine Merchants. I'm not going to lie; it isn't the cheapest place to procure your vino. But the staff is knowledgeable and they are going to point you to the right bottle for the occasion.

What I don't like: Like a lot of big Italian reds, this one is tightly wound out of the bottle. It needs time to breathe to be properly appreciated. I'd give it at least an hour in a decanter before enjoying.