

July 5, 2008

Wine by the Book!

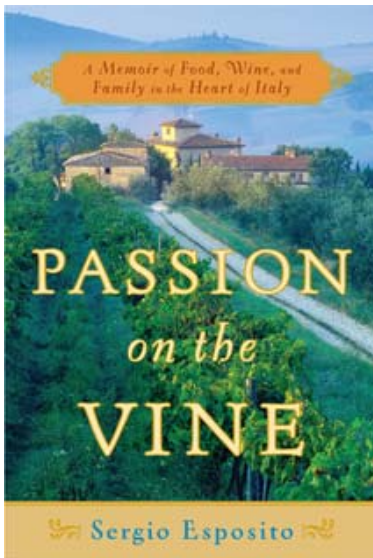
A pairing of wine and words just for book groups!

In *Wine by the Book!*, Laurie Forster, The Wine Coach® and author of “The Sipping Point: A Crash Course in Wine,” pairs words and wine just for book groups. Laurie explores wines from regions found in book group picks—and she gives general tips on wine essentials, including how to order wine at dinner, simplify food pairings, handle awkward wine moments, and even bounce back the morning after!

For your next gathering, why not pair a book selection from Reading Group Choices with a wine choice from *Wine by the Book!*

“Over a bottle of wine many a friend is found” —Old Jewish proverb

Cheers!



This month, Laurie suggests some wine pairings for your discussion of **“Passion on the Vine: A Memoir of Food, Wine, and Family in the Heart of Italy”** by Sergio Esposito.

Even though the Piedmont region of Italy (covered in Chapter 8) is relatively unknown to most, it is arguably one of the world’s most important wine regions. Never heard of Piedmont

till now? If you watched the Torino Olympics, you got a glimpse of Piedmont. Torino happens to be the capital of the prestigious Piedmont wine region, home to the legendary red wines of Barolo and Barbaresco. There is an old adage from this region, “Wine is red,” and with an estimated 70% of the vineyards planted with red grapes, this is a region that knows about making world class red wines. There are some great white wines coming from this region as well.

Here are my suggested pairings to accompany your book club discussion of “Passion on the Vine” by Sergio Esposito.

Villa Sparina Gavi di Gavi (Retail about \$18)

The Cortese grape is one of the few whites that garner attention in a region where red wines rule. Villa Sparina is considered one of the finest producers of Gavi, which is light, crisp with wonderful flavors of citrus fruits, almonds and sometimes hints of grassiness. Villa Sparina makes a sparkling version of this wine, and if you can find it you just might think you are drinking Champagne!

Elio Altare Barbera d’Alba (Retail about \$26)

Once the most planted grape in Italy, Barbera continues to flourish in Piedmont. This red grape is full of red fruit, relatively high in acid, but low in tannin making Barbera (bar-BAE-rah) popular with a wide variety of wine lovers. Due to its acidity, Barbera pairs well with tomato based dishes, as well as having the structure to accompany chicken and meats. While Barolo is said to be a wine of meditation for special occasions, Barbera is great for everyday too.

Ceretto “Zonchera” Barolo (Retail about \$36)

Known as the “wine of kings,” Barolo is the most famed wine of the Piedmont region. Powerful flavors like tar, roses, and white truffles are trademark for Barolo. Firm tannins give these wines longevity, to which other wines can’t hold a candle. Traditionally, Barolos needed many years of aging before they were ready for consumption; however, modern winemakers, like Ceretto, are changing that tradition.

Cascina La Ghersa “Giorgia” Moscato d’Asti NV (Retail about \$15)

Moscato is a semi-sparkling dessert wine made from the Moscato Bianco grape in the Asti region of Piedmont. Fizzy and sweet, it is the perfect complement to fruit based desserts, as well as Italian specialties like Zabaglione. If you remember the days of Asti Spumante then you have already tasted wines from Asti!