



Wine Club Tasting Notes

July 2007

2005 Allegrini Valpolicella Classico Veneto, Italy

In the first half of the notes, I was a little harsh on the wine firm Bolla. When I first started drinking wine, I, like many, initially preferred whites over reds. I started ‘forcing’ myself to drink reds purely out of greed. You see, I had my first fine-dining waitressing position and I didn’t know a thing about wine, period. I decided if I was going to keep up with the rest of the staff, let alone keep my job, I better ‘git to learnin’.’ I was waaayy too intimidated to set foot in a wine shop, so I made most of my wine purchases at the grocery store. And the very first red wine I purchased and actually *liked* was Bolla Valpolicella. Oh, and it came in 1.5L bottles. (Hey, I was still young and quantity was still more important than quality.) Ever since then, I have a soft spot in my heart for a well-made Valpolicella.

As I stated in the previous notes, many Italian wines are made from indigenous grapes and are often blends of two or more grapes. This wine is no exception. Valpolicella – loosely translated into ‘valley of many cellars’ – is a blend of three red grapes, Corvina, Rondinella and Molinara. Here’s an interesting fact: there are three red wines which come from Veneto – Bardolino, Valpolicella and Amarone – and all three wines are made from these same three grapes. Bardolino is the lightest in style, Valpolicella is the mid-tier (if you will) and Amarone is the big-dog of the bunch. Another interesting fact is that the Valpolicella region of Verona actually ranks just after Chianti for Italy’s red wine production. (So I guess you could say there’s a lot of productive drinking going on around here...) Now for a word on the term “Classico.” If a wine region in Italy has “Classico” attached to it, the territory is usually the oldest in terms of grape cultivation and wine production, often having the best wines within the larger region. In short, the Valpolicella Classico region, located within the larger Valpolicella region, is such an area. Enough of the technical stuff. Let’s get down to brass tacks and talk about what the wine actually *tastes* like.

As I said earlier, I’m not about to drink a big, heavy red this time of year. But sometimes my meal or mood calls for a red wine, so in this case I usually reach for something light, fruity and not too tannic. Valpolicella fits the bill perfectly! This fruity Valpolicella offers luscious aromas of cherry, herbs,

chocolate and mocha, with a medium body and balanced acidity. Lively and easy to drink, with moderate tannins and a bright, vivacious color, this wine is best enjoyed young to appreciate the exuberant and intense fruitiness. This versatile red goes well with antipasti, duck, pork and even seafood such as tuna, salmon and swordfish. It IS the perfect SC summer-time red quaffer.