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WINE

From tip to toe, Italy beyond chianti

Driving through Italy, it seems that every farm has its own little vineyard and tiny winery. From the Alps in the north to the tip of Italy's boot, hundreds of varieties abound.

While, chianti, made of the sangiovese grape and others in a designated area of Tuscany, is the country's flagship wine, Italy's finest contribution to the art of wine is variety.

In the northern Piedmont area, the Vietti family makes barberas and barolos from the powerful, cold-weather nebbiolo grape. The family also has rescued from obscurity an old white grape, arneis, that is so hard to grow its name means "a difficult person" in

• TURN TO WINE, 2E

the local dialect. Now it's a respected counterpart to France's viognier or pinot blanc. Light and dry, it's an excellent aperitif.

Near Soave, a village in the Veneto region around Venice, the Inama family produces a wine called Carmenere Piu. In Italian, "piu" means more, and the family adds merlot and an obscure local variety called raboso Veronese to the blend.

In the Alpine foothills around the Valdobbiadene, the grape called prosecco (sometimes glera) produces a light, crisp, simple and inexpensive sparkling wine of the same name.

In Italy's far northeastern area of Friuli, the Venica family makes a sauvignon blanc that is crisp and tart due to its northern location.

And in Tuscany, the home of chianti, the wine giant Banfi makes three very unchianti-like wines called Centine - a red, a white and

a rose.

So next time you're in Italy, visit the Chianti area to be sure. But then, keep driving.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

• **2009 Vietti Roero Arneis DOCG**, Piedmont: aromas of camellias, light, crisp and dry, with flavors of minerals, citrus and minerals; **RECOMMENDED**

• **2008 Vietti Barbera d'Asti Tre Vigne DOC**, Piedmont: crisp and medium-bodied, with tart cherry and mineral flavors and soft tannins; \$18.

• **2006 Vietti Barolo Castiglione DOCG**, Piedmont: big and muscular, with assertive acids and tannins, capable of long aging, with flavors of black cherries, minerals and earth; \$48.

• **Nonvintage Rustico Prosecco by Nino Franco**, Veneto: lightly sparkling, crisp and frothy, with flavors of lemons and limes; \$18.

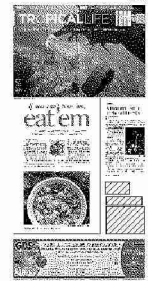
• **Nonvintage Folonari Pinot Grigio IGT**, Veneto (garganega and trebbiano grapes): light, lively and crisp, with tart peach flavors; \$20 per three-liter box (equivalent to four bottles).

• **2009 Banfi Centine Rosso** (red), Toscana (sangiovese, cabernet sauvignon and merlot): crisp and medium-bodied, with tart cherry and almond flavors; \$11.

• **2009 Banfi Centine Bianco** (white), Toscana (sauvignon blanc, chardonnay, pinot grigio): light and crisp, with white grapefruit

and mineral flavors; \$11.

• **2007 Inama Carmenere Piu**, IGT Veneto: vivid Rosé, Toscana (sangiovese, ruby color, firm tannins and cabernet sauvignon, merlot): full-bodied and dry, and bitter chocolate; \$20. with red raspberry flavors;



• **2008 Venica & Venica \$11.**
Sauvignon Blanc "Ronco del Cero," Friuli: tart and crisp, with intense grapefruit and orange flavors; \$24.

