

YEAR'S BEST ALTO ADIGE & FRIULI

Our blind panels tasted **292** new-release wines from Alto Adige and Friuli over the past 12 months. **Joshua Greene**, our critic for Italy, rated **31** as exceptional (90+) and **30** as Best Buys. Find a complete list of wines tasted and all reviews at wineandspiritsmagazine.com.

WHITE

FRIULANO

90 | Tenuta di Blasig \$30

2011 Friuli Isonzo Friulano Vermeigliano This friulano's pale varietal flavors of white cornmeal and yellow peach come across fresh and juicy, building in intensity with the chewy and nutty depth of the grape skins. Pour it with a shellfish risotto. *Massanois Imports, Washington, DC*

90 | Torre Rosazza \$20

2012 Colli Orientali del Friuli Friulano (Best Buy) Luscious and warm, this wine feels toasty and as creamy as custard, the fruit held firm as if bounded by the tight skin of a nectarine. No alcohol shows: just clean fruit with the substance to match a warm salad of octopus, prawns and cuttlefish. *Bedford Brands, NY*

88 | Merk \$18

2012 Friuli Aquileia Tàì Spìrs Friulano (Best Buy) This wine's juicy, baked pear flavors are structured by toasty lees, delivering a tight white to brighten a cauliflower custard. *Delectatio, Magnolia, TX*

87 | Scarbolo \$17

2012 Friuli Grave Friulano (Best Buy) Warm and toasty in the middle, this is firm at the edge, the alcohol held in check. It's a simple, cidery white for braised rabbit or chicken. *Dark Star Imports, NY*

GEWURZTRAMINER

92 | Kellerei Kaltern \$29

2013 Alto Adige Campaner Gewürztraminer A bold gewürztraminer with staying power, this smells like the spritz off of orange zest and tastes creamy and rich. The texture is silken, integrating the flavors into dynamic complexity. A touch of tannic grip strengthens the finish without weighing it down. The wine has lift and enough spice to take on weisswurst. *Omniwines Distributing Co., Flushing, NY*



91 | J. Hofstätter \$55

2012 Alto Adige Kolbenhof Gewürztraminer A superconcentrated vintage of Kolbenhof, this hits the precise fruit flavors of the variety without heading into pungent florals. Layers of ripe nectarine, kumquat and grape skin flavor balance the wine's smoky spice. The satin texture carries plenty of alcohol (the label reads 14.5) but the wine doesn't feel heavy or cloying. The wine should open further with a year or two in bottle, to serve with pork schnitzel and spaetzle. *Dreyfus, Ashby & Co., NY*

91 | Cantina Tramin \$22

2013 Alto Adige Gewürztraminer (Best Buy) A huge white wine, this takes time to meld the intensity of its fruit with its structure. It seems pungent at first, honeyed and dripping with fruit, but there's racy acidity underneath that keeps the wine mouthwatering and clean. The wine seems to tighten with air, its purity of fruit focused enough to take on choucroute, its slightly tannic edge prepared to handle lamb. *Winebow, NY*

90 | Cantina Tramin \$40

2012 Alto Adige Nussbaumer Gewürztraminer As fresh and clear as spring water, this has a zesty flavor of prickly-pear juice that falls in line with the green onion hints of reduction. While tightly wound, it's supple underneath, where scents of roses and cream predict the direction of the wine's development. A dry white to open in a year or two with charcuterie. *Winebow, NY*

88 | Kellerei Kaltern \$23

2013 Alto Adige Gewürztraminer (Best Buy) Floral and delicate up front, this bal-

ances crème brûlée flavors and warm sweetness of fruit with the brash texture of lemon pith in the finish. Chill it for grilled pork. *Omniwines Distributing Co., Flushing, NY*

KERNER

90 | Nals Margreid \$20

2013 Alto Adige Kerner (Best Buy) Give this wine some air and its bold, juicy peach-skin flavors develop and lengthen, completely filling the satin texture. The fruit is sweet and rich, the structure earthy with a grape-seed bitterness that lends tension. A complex young wine for roast pork. *Massanois Imports, Washington, DC*

MALVASIA



91 | Vinja Barde \$36

2011 Venezia Giulia Malvasia Istriana (Best Buy) This has the buzz of bees around peaches at harvest, a frisky white that packs a lot of rich flavor into a tight frame. Grown in Carso, near San Dorligo, where the soils are flysch, sandstone and clay, this is spicy, open and airy, ready to chill for grilled fish. *JK Imports, Pasadena, CA*

90 | Zidarich \$54

2011 Venezia Giulia Malvasia Dynamic rather than flavorful, this tastes as much of sunset colors as it does summer fruits. The subtle tannins give off a roasted fruit character of nectarines and apple, along with a potent structural strength that suggests aging will bring out the wine's depths. If you open it now, decant the bottle for something fatty, like rabbit rillettes. *A.I. Selections, Long Island City, NY*