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18 Unique Wines from Italy and Slovenia Distinctive bottlings abound from the Friuli region of Italy and its neighbor, Slovenia's Brda area

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Posted: May 30, 2014

Tasting Highlights bring the best wines from our editors' most recent tastings to WineSpectator.com members.

When it comes to wine, it's really just lines on a map that separate Slovenia's Brda area from Italy's Friuli-Venezia Giulia region. The boundaries of Friuli's most highly regarded appellations, Collio and Colli Orientali, make up a jigsaw puzzle with the western tip of Slovenia and the Brda zone. But confusing geography aside, it can sometimes be difficult to pin down wines from this neck of the woods.

While you'll find everything from sparklers to dessert wines in the region, white wines remain the area's forté, encompassing light and crisp Ribolla Giallas to aromatic Sauvignon Blancs to full-bodied Friulanos and blends. But red wines, such as Refosco, Merlot and Cabernet Franc, also excel. Though the white wines typically show more body than you might expect from a given grape variety—as in the case of Pinot Grigio, for example—the reds are typically a bit more elegant than versions from other parts of the wine world.

Adding to this variety is a range of vinification techniques that influence the end product. Temperature-controlled, stainless-steel fermentation is widespread, which helps to preserve the freshness and aromatics of these wines. And while new oak is not unheard of, don't be surprised if the added weight and richness in certain bottlings comes from extended skin contact or fermentation in amphorae—practices that gained popularity after the pioneering experimentation of leading producers in Friuli and Slovenia.

MOVIA Brda Lunar 2008 Score: 92 | \$45

Deeply golden in color, this has the floral- and yeast-laced nose of a fine Lambic beer, with more delicacy on the palate. Subtle notes of macerated apricot, ground clove, dried orange peel and toasted almond are well integrated with rapier-like acidity and light tannins. Long, saline finish. Ribolla. Drink now through 2023. 100 cases made. —A.N.

MARCO FELLUGA Collio Russiz Superiore Col Disôre 2011 Score: 91 | \$37

The racy acidity is well-integrated in this lacy white, backing a subtle mix of apricot, meringue, candied orange peel, salted almond and spiced plum notes. Shows fine drive and a long, mouthwatering finish, with hints of fleur de sel and honey. Pinot Bianco, Tocai Friulano, Sauvignon Blanc and Ribolla Gialla. Drink now through 2024. —A.N.

MARCO FELLUGA Venezia-Giulia Russiz Superiore Horus 2007 Score: 91 | \$44/375ml



Marijan Močivnik

The Kristancic family of Slovenia's Movia winery: (from left) Ela, Vesna, Ales and Lan.

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A lightly mouthwatering and creamy dessert wine, with fine, balancing acidity layered with honeyed flavors of bergamot, dried apricot, praline and white chocolate. Hints of truffle and ground spice linger on the finish. Drink now through 2022. —A.N.

MOVIA Pinot Noir Brda 2008 Score: 91 | \$40

Hints of sandalwood and rosepetal lace this creamy, delicate Pinot, accenting crushed black raspberry and cherry fruit, licorice and spicebox. Finely balanced and aromatic through to the lasting, lightly tannic finish. Modri (Pinot Noir). Drink now through 2026. 715 cases made. —A.N.

MOVIA Sauvignon Brda 2012 Score: 91 | \$30

Dry and focused, this medium-bodied white offers a broad palate of salted almond, macerated plum, orange peel and clove underscored by smoky mineral and framed by well-knit but bracing acidity. Intriguing. Drink now through 2024. 400 cases made. —A.N.

MARCO FELLUGA Collio Molamatta 2012 Score: 90 | \$23

The almond, floral and honey notes are layered with orange peel and dried apricot accents in this dry, mouthwatering white. Shows fine focus and balance through to the saline-tinged finish. Pinot Bianco, Tocai Friulano and Ribolla Gialla. Drink now through 2020. —A.N.

POGGIOBELLO Friulano Friuli Colli Orientali 2013 Score: 90 | \$20

Fresh and lithe, here's a balanced Friulano that offers a subtle mesh of white peach, chalk, ground ginger and blanched almond. Lasting finish, juicy and floral. Drink now through 2019. 1,250 cases made. —A.N.

ZUANI Collio Zuani Riserva 2011 Score: 90 | \$37

Silky and layered, this elegant white offers flavors of creamed pear, salted almond, pastry and ground ginger and cardamom, accented by green hints of rhubarb and freshly chopped herbs. Expressive and finely balanced, presenting a long, creamy finish. Friulano, Chardonnay, Sauvignon and Pinot Grigio. Drink now through 2021. 300 cases imported. —A.N.

MARCO FELLUGA Cabernet Franc Collio Russiz Superiore 2011 Score: 89 | \$28

This shows varietal notes of herb, tobacco and spice without being overt, fleshed out by poached plum and brambly berry fruit. Lightly chewy tannins emerge on the juicy finish. Drink now through 2019. —A.N.

TORRE ROSAZZA Friulano Friuli Colli Orientali 2013 Score: 89 | \$20

Creamy and harmonious, with subtle yet juicy acidity that plumps up the flavors of melon, apricot, lemon meringue and grapefruit sorbet. Offers a zesty, mouthwatering finish. Drink now through 2018. 1,500 cases made. —A.N.

TORRE ROSAZZA Pinot Grigio Friuli Colli Orientali 2013 Score: 89 | \$20

Fresh and expressive, with zippy acidity driving the creamy palate of green melon, guava, stony mineral and creamed apple. Lightly spiced, aromatic finish. Drink now through 2019. 3,500 cases made. —A.N.

TORRE ROSAZZA Sauvignon Friuli Colli Orientali 2013 Score: 89 | \$20

There's a lot of personality to this juicy Sauvignon and its flavors of Thai basil, white peach, lime zest and lemongrass, and a subtle streak of aromatic mineral and bright acidity takes it through to the lasting finish. Drink now through 2019. 2,000 cases made. —A.N.

BORGO MAGREDO Pinot Noir Friuli Grave 2013 Score: 88 | \$15

Lightly smoky and well-balanced, this medium-bodied red offers plump black cherry and plum fruit, with black licorice and ground spice notes. Supple tannins show on the finish. Drink now through 2020. 2,500 cases made. —A.N.

FERNANDA CAPPELLO Sauvignon Friuli Grave 2012 Score: 88 | \$12

Tangerine, guava and pineapple fruit mix with ground spice, orchard blossom and honey notes in this dry and tangy white with a stony finish. Drink now through 2018. 3,000 cases made. —A.N.

POGGIOBELLO Pinot Grigio Friuli Colli Orientali 2013 Score: 88 | \$20

A juicy white, with ripe pear and white peach fruit, and hints of paraffin, lemon zest and hot stone. Balanced and creamy. Drink now through 2018. 1,665 cases made. —A.N.

POGGIOBELLO Ribolla Gialla Friuli Colli Orientali 2013 Score: 88 | \$20

A tangy white with a stony base, and lively notes of apricot, chive blossom, ground ginger and citrus. Mouthwatering finish. Drink now through 2019. 830 cases made. —A.N.

RONCHI SAN GIUSEPPE Refosco dal Peduncolo Rosso Friuli Colli Orientali Ronchi di Pietro 2012

Score: 88 | \$18

Dark berry and cherry fruit flavors mix with hints of mocha and ground anise in this juicy red, with light, supple tannins. Drink now through 2019. 1,000 cases made. —A.N.

BORGIO MAGREDO Pinot Grigio Friuli Grave 2013 Score: 87 | \$13

A bright and juicy white, with a hint of wax underscoring the lemon curd, apricot and stone notes. Drink now. 8,500 cases made. —A.N.