

ITALY

Aglianico del Vulture is regarded by many as the “Barolo of the South” – in recent years, the quality of the wines has drawn a lot of attention from the specialised press.

SWITZERLAND

GASTHOF EMMENHOF Werner

Schürch Inhaber, Kirchbergstrasse,

Burgdorf, +41 34 422 22 75,

www.emmenhofburgdorf.ch.

The medieval, walled town of Burgdorf, near Bern, is known locally as the gateway to the Emmenthal region. Here Werner and Margrit Schürch have elevated his family restaurant to cult status. Revered throughout Europe for their innovative food and personalised service in a rustic, country-style atmosphere, they have a superb wine list, full of outstanding but affordable wines. The selection of Swiss wines is exemplary and includes native grape varieties like petite arvine, rêze, and heida, and offers some of Switzerland’s regional curios such as Ticino’s white merlot. France, Italy, Spain and the US are well represented, and if you get homesick you can even order a bottle of Jim Barry’s Armagh. **FRANZ SCHEURER**

The spectacular Winelands around Cape Town offers a light which intensifies the green of the vines.

SOUTH AFRICA

THE WINELANDS RESTAURANT

Zandberg Farm, 96 Winery Rd,

Helderberg, +27 21 842 2020,

www.96wineryroad.co.za.

The Winelands region around Cape Town offers truly spectacular scenery – a backdrop of craggy mountains and light which intensifies the green of the vines. This thatched, brick-paved cottage is set in the heart of Helderberg, a subregion of the more famous Stellenbosch. With a grape grower and a winemaker as owners, the list of some 250 wines is a serious, and educational, read. It is classified by variety and by wines from Helderberg and those from the “Rest of the World”, which means largely other South African regions, although Meursault gets a look in, as does Grange, and there’s a fair selection of Bordeaux and Burgundy. Chef Natasha Harris uses local and organic produce where possible in South African specialties such as seared ostrich carpaccio – perfect with co-owner Ken Forrester’s Petit Pinotage. **ROBERTA MUIR**

ITALY

MATRICIANELLA Via del Leone 4,

Rome, +39 066 83 21 00.

When in Rome, eat like the Romans do. Even though only a few steps away from the Via del Corso, this upmarket trattoria has got nothing to do with the many tourist traps that crowd the town centre. The menu includes both meat and fish dishes, although meat ones are generally better, but the traditional Roman pastas are absolutely not to be missed. The wine list is quite extensive (about 700 labels) and features examples from all over the country, with a particular focus on Tuscany. This is one of the very rare places in the Eternal City where you can still find a bottle of 1993 Flaccianello as well as a great choice of famous labels from the 1997 vintage. Don’t worry about the horribly thick wine glasses that you’ll find on your table: as soon as you order a proper bottle, good old Riedel will magically appear. **ANDREA STURNIOLO**

CASTELLO DI SPALTENNA Pieve di

Spaltenna, 53013 Gaiole In Chianti,

+39 057 774 94 83, www.spaltenna.it.

Castello di Spaltenna provides luxurious accommodation in a complex with a castle, church and bell tower dating back to the beginning of the second millennium and fabulous views of the Tuscan countryside. The restaurant’s easy-to-read leather-bound wine list is predominantly Tuscan (and therefore overwhelmingly red), though there are Champagnes as well as white wines from cooler Italian regions such as the Veneto and Alto Adige. The local Chianti subregions are well represented with Capannelle and San Giusto a Rentennano from Gaiole; Querciabella and Villa Vignamaggio from Greve. There is also a sizeable range of other Chianti Classicos, a good representation of Brunello di Montalcino, Rosso di Montalcino, Nobile di Montepulciano and Supertuscans (Ornellaia, Isole e Olena “Cepparello”, several vintages of Capannelle and the local Querciabella’s “Camartina”), plus “Il Bosco” Syrah – an outstanding wine from Tenimenti Luigi d’Alessandro in nearby Cortona. **PF**

RISTORANTE MONFERRATO

Via Monferrato 6, Turin,

+39 011 819 06 61.

For all those of you heading to the Winter Olympic Games in Turin, this is definitely an address to write down. This restaurant, serving traditional Piedmontese cuisine, boasts a 1000-label wine list that could quite easily transform you into a nebbiolo freak. The Barolos and Barbarescos from the biggest names in the Langhe are all there: you can finally decide for yourself whether it is the traditional or the modern style that does it for you. Ask the patron/sommelier, Daniele Gilli, to assist you in your choice, possibly helping you in discovering some of the new producers, which are unfortunately years away from reaching Australia. If you are feeling more adventurous, Gilli can guide you through unheard-of wines produced from obscure grapes such as timorasso, freisa, gamba di pernice or ruchè; many of them are unknown just because they are produced in tiny, not exportable quantities. **AS**

LA LOCANDA DEL PALAZZO

Piazza Caracciolo 7, Barile,

+39 097 277 10 51.

Head off the beaten track and journey south to Basilicata. This is the small region that separates “heel-shaped” Apulia from “toe-shaped” Calabria. In the historic building of the Locanda del Palazzo, located in Barile, you are guaranteed to discover Michelin-standard food and the greatest Aglianico del Vulture list around. Aglianico del Vulture is regarded by many as “the Barolo of the South”, for its amazing complexity, its full body and the long ageing potential. In recent years, the excellent quality of the wines produced in the area has drawn considerable attention from the guides and the specialised press. Try 2001 Vigna della Corona from Tenuta le Querce – an absolute blockbuster – or 2001 Titolo from Elena Fucci for outstanding elegance, and remember that if you feel homesick, they also produce Aglianico in a sparkling, gutsy version. **AS**