

By Jeffrey Alexander

WINE SELECT OF KENTUCKY WELCOMES FULVIO BRESSAN TO LEXINGTON

On Thursday, November 20th WineSelect of Kentucky welcomed Italian winemaker Fulvio Bressan, of



l to r: Fulvio Bressan and Livia Theodoli at the Lexington Club.

"Bressan Winery", to Lexington for a showcase of his exceptional wines. WineSelect of Kentucky, the local distributor of Bressan Wines, held a press luncheon and wine tasting at the Lexington Club where Mr. Bressan shared some of the history that has gone into the making of his wines. Later that evening, Bellini's Italian restaurant hosted a gourmet six-course meal accompanied by wines from the Bressan Winery.

WineSelect of Kentucky offers wines, specially selected from the major wine producing areas of Italy, which have limited prior export distribution. Richard A. Getty, the owner of WineSelect and also a partner in the law firm Getty & Mayo, came up with this idea while in Italy on business eighteen months ago. Getty, a wine lover of Italian descent, enjoyed discovering new wines during his frequent travels to Italy. Over time, he and Mike Cappy, a business client and friend, came to know many of the area's cantina and vineyard owners. Richard would routinely buy cases of wine directly from them to ship home for his personal enjoyment. One evening, as

they returned from a local cantina's wine cellar with a carload of wine purchases, Richard turned to Mike and suggested that they go into business for themselves. Mike Cappy, now owner of WineSource Italia, SRL, took Richard's idea and ran with it. He put together a tasting panel headed by Nicholas Belfrage, noted wine author and one of the first Masters of Wine. They actively travel throughout Italy in search of outstanding "undiscovered wines". "They have gone through about a thousand wines to find probably less than fifty," Getty

said. "Every wine they have chosen has been spectacular. They are all from small, family-owned and operated vineyards. We only want vineyards like these." The wines selected are extremely limited in case-per-producer production, with many falling well below 500 cases per year for the entire world. This wine is now available from WineSelect of Kentucky in Lexington, Louisville, Nicholasville, Pikeville and Midway. Among their offerings are wines of the Bressan Winery.

The Bressan Vineyards consist of 25 hectares (approximately 62 acres) in the Northeast region of Italy. Located in Corona, a hamlet within the town of Mariano del Friuli, Gorizia province, Italy, the vineyard is framed by the Julian Alps to the North and the Adriatic Sea to the South. The rare geographical elements of this extraordinary location create a microclimate ideal for the production of high quality wines. Giacomo Bressan started winemaking on this land in 1726. Seven generations

later Nereo Bressan, Fulvio's father, purchased additional land and began replanting and modernizing the Bressan Winery.

Fulvio Bressan joined his father in the family vineyards in 1994, after a brief career as a psychiatrist. Today Nereo, Fulvio, and his wife Jelena, all work together to create the award winning wines of the Bressan vineyards. "My father and grandfather taught me the respect for nature, which is the first thing learned when you want to produce high quality wine," said Fulvio. "We are all too small to confront nature. Through the love of nature we can try to understand and work with it."

At the luncheon and wine tasting Mr. Bressan's passion for winemaking was clearly displayed as he described the meticulous manner in which the



Bressan Wines are created. "One of the keys to winemaking is knowing when to harvest the grapes. Every year is a different story. The sugars in the grapes are determined each year by many factors such as the season, the rains, the temperatures. The sugars are checked on the vine with gas chromatography, then climate chromatography to help choose the right moment for harvest. When you have harvest, you have harvest, you can't go back," he remarked. Only a little over a pound of grapes per vine is harvested. Each grape is hand

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picked at just the right moment and then transferred to dry ice to begin the winemaking process. "After the harvest, you must understand the maturation curves in order to balance the acidity



Fulvio Bressan at the Lexington Club Pass Luncheon and Wine Tasting.

levels and arrive at the right evolution of the grapes." Using an eclectic method of controlled temperature, frequent decanting and battonage, Fulvio brings out the best characteristics of each wine he creates. No additives are used in his winemaking process. "It is nature that must take its course, you don't need to add anything (chemicals)," says Fulvio. "You have to know how to deal with nature to just work with what you have."

"We have intentionally chosen, not as mere producers but rather as wine artisans, to specifically focus our attention to vineyards whose intense concentration and density result in an extremely limited yield of wines of rare quality. Remember that quality and quantity never stay together. You either produce quality or you produce quantity."

"Only a small percentage of people

understand the world of wines. It is important for people to know the difference between good wine and bad. I want people to drink one bottle of good wine rather than six bottles of bad wine. You should drink wine for pleasure. The mass producers are not good publicity for Italian wine."

"WineSource was my choice because most big distributors are only interested in sell, sell, sell, not the customer. I wanted to go with somebody that could give me and the customers personal attention. Selling my wine in a supermarket is not an option. I prefer my wine to be sold in really good specialty liquor stores, where the owner has a rapport with his customers."

Bill Jacobs owns such a store, The Wine Shop Vintages & Spirits in Nicholasville, and agrees with Fulvio's philosophy. "The customer should be able to tell the owner what occasion the wine is for and have the owner direct them to the right choices. In a supermarket, there are rows and rows of wine and this information is not readily available. We are so easily compromised into settling for wines today," says Bill. In order to get people more comfortable and knowledgeable about the wine selection process, Bill holds regular wine tastings. The Wine Shop Vintages & Spirits carry some of the Bressan wines, for more information call 859-887-1793.

WineSelect of Kentucky has been offering the Bressan selections for about two months and provides the personal attention Fulvio speaks of. When the WineSource tasting panel make a "discovery", they prepare a descriptive page for each selection. These color coded pages (red and white) give a brief history of the winemaker and vineyard, details about

cultivation, harvest, fermentation and ageing, as well as tasting notes and serving recommendations. Livia Theodoli, Director of Sales for WineSelect of Kentucky, distributes the pages to their clientele to familiarize them with these selections. Besides supplying many specialty wine and spirit shops, their clientele includes most of the high end restaurants in Lexington. Livia conducts informative sessions with the wait staffs of each restaurant in order to educate them about WineSelect wines. The pages she distributes are also used by the wait staffs to better serve their customers.

The wines tasted at the luncheon were Bressan Pinot Grigio, Bressan Verduzzo, Bressan Merlot, Bressan Clan Cuvee, "B.B." Bressan Blanc, Bressan Pinot Nero, and Bressan Vintage No.3. While all of the offerings were very well received, the B.B. Bressan Blanc and Vintage No. 3 were particular favorites. The white B.B. is a marriage of Pinot Grigio, Pinot Bianco



and Sauvignon, while the red No. 3 is a combination of Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Nero and Schioppettino. Fulvio refers to No. 3 as his masterpiece, his "bambino". It took him five years of trying before he came up with the blend he was looking for. "When you taste No. 3, you taste my idea about wines. It is very difficult to find the right balance in

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order for the Pinot Nero and Cabernet Sauvignon to stay together, so that they do not fight against each other." Richard Getty loves this wine and says "In the year and a half that we've been doing this, I don't think we've ever had a red wine as well received as this No. 3."

Later in the evening, WineSelect of Kentucky and Bellini's Restaurant hosted the Bressan Wine Dinner in downtown Lexington.

Bellini's is a new Italian eatery located on Main Street and its cozy, intimate setting perfectly suited the occasion. As each course was served, Fulvio Bressan introduced the accompanying wine with brief comments on the history of its making. This gustatory voyage included Crostini with white bean puree, rosemary and olive oil & Bressan, Pinot Grigio Isonzo DOC 2002. Grilled prawns on a bed of baby greens with lemon Dijon vinaigrette & Bressan, "BB" Friuli Venezia Giulia IGT 2001. Fettuccine with 3 mushroom sauce, white wine and a touch of cream & Bressan, Pinot Nero Isonzo DOC 2000.

Pan seared breast of duck with an apple reduction sauce, toasted shallot mashed potatoes and baby squash & Bressan, Merlot Isonzo DOC 2000. Grilled lamb chops with a "dried fruit-salsa mostarda", caramelized onion and gorgonzola polenta, and steamed baby asparagus & Bressan, No.3 Friuli Venezia Giulia IGT 1999. Slivers of Parmigiano Reggiano with slices of ripe pears and toasted walnuts & Bressan, "Clan Cuvee" Isonzo DOC 1999. It was a wonderful intermingling of food and drink.

As Fulvio went from table to table meeting with the diners, he was met with enthusiastic responses for his wine. And as he spoke with the crowd

he could be heard to say, "As much as I like talking about wines, the wines must speak for themselves."

Tasting notes prepared by the WineSource tasting panel are as follows:

Bressan Pinot Grigio 2002. Absolute crystalline pale straw with gold reflections. The nose is of beautiful and intense field flowers and hay followed with walnuts and toasted almonds. This is



l to r: Richard A. Getty, Bill Jacobs, Fulvio Bressan, Livia Theodoli and Wendy Miller, contributing wine writer to the Lexington Herald Leader.

the most intense and elegant Pinot Grigio you will ever taste. It is warm, soft and fresh with perfect body and an extremely long finish.

Bressan Verduzzo Friuliano 2001. In the glass Bressan Verduzzo is bright straw yellow with gold reflections. Ample fresh bouquet of vanilla, golden raisins, apples, pears, peaches, walnuts, apricots and acacia. Lightly tannic in the mouth, dry and warm with good body, balanced with a long finish and a pleasant aftertaste of almonds and wild flowers.

Bressan Merlot 1999. Deep ruby red color. Intense, rich and fine bouquet of ripe fresh blackberries, raspberries and plums, slightly herbaceous and reminiscent of smooth stones. Dry balanced

and robust on the palate with a pleasant bitter under note.

Bressan "Clan Cuvee" 1999. Fulvio Bressan's own words describe "Clan" so eloquently: "Clan" is a traditional Cuvee that knowingly unites the best qualities of the merlot grape with the aristocratic boldness of the most illustrious Cabernet, to compose a wine that is a concerto of perfumes, that are at once rotund and full bodied in its strong personality, yet velvety, almost sensual as in the tender assurance of a warm embrace, or a summer that, in its desire, lingers eternally."

Bressan "B.B." Blanc 2001. Absolute pale straw with gold reflections. Fragrant and intense melon and floral nose with a touch of bread crust. Herbs and dried fruit with forest underbrush enhance the ample bouquet. The palate is dry, soft, full bodied, elegant and crisp.

Bressan Pinot Nero 2000. Ruby red in color. The nose is ample and multi-layered, goudron and truffles, a bit of

musk, burnt wood, blackberries and raspberries followed by rich earthiness. It is elegant and ethereal in the mouth. A balanced and rounded structure with fixed acidity makes this a wonderful wine for continued aging.

Bressan "Vintage No. 3" 1999. Considered the pearl in Bressan's cellar, the full and intense bouquet is herbaceous and elegant on the nose, full of wild blackberries, blueberries and violets made complete with vanilla and oak. Full, warm and round on the palate with a long and velvety finish.

For more information about WineSelect of Kentucky contact Livia Theodoli at 859-533-3579.