



**A Wine-Infused Evening in Piedmont
with Pepperoncini Sotto
April 16, 2012
PhoenixvilleDish.com**

I was thrilled to be attending the second installment of Pepperoncini Sotto's Wine themed dinner: An Evening in the Piedmont. I was really looking forward to tasting wines from Italy's western most region, and I knew Sommelier David Greenstein and Chef Paul DiBona had a real treat in store for us.

I always enjoy David's pre-dinner talks about the wine, and I learn so much each time. He explained that grapes from the Piedmont region have a lot to offer, and often act as standalone grapes, which means only one type of grape is used to make the wine, not a blend of two or more types. Since the region is an Alps-type community, all grapes in the region are grown on hillsides that face the sun.

After the now traditional Prosecco toast, we started with the first course, which I was most excited about trying. We were served a Grilled Octopus Salad, drizzled with a grapefruit vinaigrette, and served with greens over crispy salted potatoes. Tender chunks of succulent meat blended well with the vinaigrette, and pieces of grapefruit furthered the taste combination with bursts of citrus. The salty, crispy potatoes were a welcomed alternative to croutons. The wine paired with this meal was the Araldica Gavi 2010, which was a light white wine that pairs well with seafood. It was the perfect combination, with its pleasant, mild flavor and proved to be a great introduction to the meal and the region.

Our second course was the Swordfish Involtini, stuffed with homemade Italian tuna, with capers and a citrus gremolata. With this dish, Paul flattened the swordfish cut, wrapped it around the tuna, and the flavor combination was exquisite. The gremolata was rich, and added an intense, lovely flavor, with the tart of the capers adding an extra tangy bite. The wine paired with this meal was the Damilano Arneis 2010. The Arneis was a grape originally grown to soften the Barolo, and was mostly an "in case" type of grape, and almost become extinct. Thankfully, it was saved, and utilized into a great wine, showing a beautiful almond finish, and what David called a "nutty edge."

Paul enjoyed creating a play on words with the third course, the Pizza Abbronzito spicy with pancetta, plum tomato and soft egg on top. Abbronzito roughly translates to "sun burn" in Italian, so Paul gave the pizza a real "burn" with the spice, and the egg played the role of the sun. I love eggs on top of anything, and the combo of the spice with the yellow runny yolk and flavor of the ham was divine. I know Paul has plans to revamp the menu in May of this year, and I really hope he adds this pizza to his selections!

David was really excited to see how the group reacted to the pairing selection of the Ricossa Barbera d'Asti 2010. The Barbera grape really stands alone, and Asti is known for having brighter wines than the other large Barbera producing town, Alba. This wine had a "kiss" of oak, from a pre-used oak barrel, and really allowed the fruit to shine through brightly. It paired excellent with the tomatoes and spiciness of the pizza, and proved to be an excellent everyday wine.

The fourth course, Braised Lamb Shank, with cipollini onions, and Paul's favorite (and famous) rustic brown tomato sauce was a huge hit! Paul surprised everyone by also serving it with large Tortelloni. The lamb was simply divine, and almost melted in my mouth. I devoured this rich flavorful course which was paired with an equally powerful wine, the Fontanafredda Barolo "Serralunga" 2007. David let this wine breathe for almost two hours before serving, and this award winning wine was, by far, my favorite of the night.

After being treated to such wonderful food, it was finally time for dessert. Paul and David were wise to serve a lighter dessert after the heavy, final course, and I was simply delighted with the raspberry sorbet and a fresh strawberry, drizzled with a delectable pomegranate syrup lightly poured over in delicate lines. The wine served with it was the Marengo Brachetto d'Acqui 2010, a wine that was 100% Banchetto grape, similar to a Moscado, and had a light carbonation. It wasn't as bubbly as a sparkling wine, but had just enough to tickle the nose. It delighted the palate with hints of roses and tastes of strawberry.

Paul and David did an amazing job with this dinner, and I hope that some of the dishes served end up on the new menu, launching in May. I cannot wait for the next dinner, on May 8th, where the guests will be exploring the Campania region of southern Italy!

For more information on Pepperoncini's upcoming wine dinners and events, click [here](#). Call 484-924-8429 for reservations. Pepperoncini Sotto is located at 184 Bridge Street in Phoenixville.

