



CORTI BROTHERS

TO OUR CUSTOMERS:

We are heading into spring, a time of renewal and warmer weather. Hopefully, you will find some interesting items on this newsletter. Please enjoy yourselves.

Darrell Corti

COLOMBA and VENEZIANA

Foods are symbolizers of different times and of special times. The Italian baked sweet bread with candied fruit peels and raisins called **COLOMBA**, baked in the shape of a flying dove, is the one used in Italy as the Easter bread. It is similar to the Christmas bread, raised, buttery bread called Panettone, but Colomba is not a panettone. It has a drier consistency with a less buttery crumb, but with a softer and more almondy character. It also is seasonal and is found throughout the spring, but primarily enjoyed at Easter.

Another traditional Northern Italian bread found in the Venice region of northern Italy is the Veneziana. It is a slightly dry textured, yeast raised bread with citrus peel and raisins, which is usually found all year long on Italian tables. It shows the long arm of the Venetian Republic since it was gently spiced and flavored with dry fruits, and eaten all year long. It is the symbol of Venice's wealth and exotic style. Another raised dough bread, the Focaccia, here a sweet, not savory bread, is similar without any fruit. In Venetian it is called "fugassa."

From that master baker in Vicenza, outside of Venice, Dario Loison, here are the Colombas and Venezianas for this Spring.

COLOMBA: All are kilo size unless noted.

REGAL CIOCCOLATO: with monocru South American chocolate, chocolate cream, boxed, \$45.29 (#5700)

CLASSICA: with candied Sicilian orange peel and almonds on top, wrapped \$32.99 (#5701)

SENZA CANDITI: without candied fruit, just almonds and sugar topping, wrapped \$32.99 (#5702)

LIMONE: with a lemon cream filling, wrapped \$36.99 (#5703)

ALLO ZABAIONE: with zabaione (sabayon) cream filling wrapped \$37.99 (#5704)

A.D. 1552: with Sicilian orange peel, almonds, boxed, 750g boxed \$35.49 (#5705)

PESCA e NOCCIOLE: with candied peach bits and hazelnut topping, boxed \$39.99 (#5706)

AL MANDARINO DI CIACULLI: with Palermo's mandarino peel, boxed \$36.19 (#5707)

CAMOMILLA e LIMONE: Roman chamomile flower, Sorrento lemon peel, boxed \$36.19 (#5708)

CLASSICA MAGNUM: cellophane wrapped, ribbon, **2 Kilo** size \$71.29 (#5709) **5 Kilo** size \$144.39 (#5710)

The **VENEZIANA**: Venice's "year-round cake" similar to the Colomba, traditional all year in the Venice area.

ALPIANE: raisins plumped with Vignalta's Alpiane, made for Corti Brothers, wrapped, kilo \$29.99 (#5711)

CLASSICA: with butter, almonds, four spices, boxed, 550g, \$29.99 (#5712)

AL MANDARINO DI CIACULLI: with Palermo's mandarino, boxed, 550g \$29.99 (#5713)

AL PISTACCHIO DI BRONTE: with Bronte pistachio cream filling, boxed, 550g \$37.99 (#5514)

FOCACCIA MANDORLATA: no candied fruit, with almond topping, wrapped, ribbon 750g \$26.29 (#5715)

PANFRUTTO AL LIMONE: loaf form with Amalfi lemon peel, hazelnut glaze, box, 500g \$19.99 (#5716)

PANFRUTTO AL MANDARINO: loaf form with the Ciaculli mandarino, hazelnut, box, 500g \$19.99 (#5717)

PANFRUTTO AL CIOCCOLATO: loaf with chocolate bits, box, 500g \$19.99 (#5718)

CORTI BROTHERS Extra Virgin Olive Oil Selection for 2023

As has been the case for several years now, Corti Brothers is pleased to present to you our selection of Extra Virgin Olive oils for 2023. We have four oils from Mill Press: two from Peru and two from Spain. Two oils from California produced by Pablo Voitzuk, and four from the Olive Truck.

MILLPRESS:

CRIOLLA or Sevillano, the first cultivar imported into Peru in the 1500s. A medium intensity oil, with distinct grassy character and medium pungency. \$24.19 500 ml (#5719) Silver medal L.A. tasting 2023

CORATINA a Pugliese cultivar grown in Peru, with high aromatics and pungency typical of the cultivar. \$24.19 500ml (#5720)

HOJIBLANCA from the family orchard of Marino Uceda who planted it and is one of Spain's foremost oil experts. \$27.99 500 ml (#5721)

PICUDO a rather rare Spanish cultivar from Andalucia Made from green fruit and with unusual fruitiness and balance. Seldom available as a single cultivar oil. \$27.99 500ml (#5722)

CORTI BROTHERS produced by Pablo Voitzuk:

TAGGIASCA a Ligurian cultivar making light fruity oil. This was picked rather ripe and has more of the typical soft, ripe Taggiasca flavor. \$21.99 500ml (#5723) Bronze medal L.A. tasting 2023.

PICUAL a Southern Spanish cultivar, finding a new home in California, early harvested with medium pungency and bitterness and green fruit flavor. \$21.99 500ml (#5724) Silver medal L.A. tasting 2023.

THE OLIVE TRUCK

TAGGIASCA from an early harvest picking with the flavor of the cultivar and more pronounced green character and flavor. More pungent than the Corti Brothers style picked later. \$25.99 500ml (#5725)

FAVOLOSA is a new Italian cultivar about 30 years old created from Frantoio by Prof. G. Fontanazza. It appears to like California and produces a fruity, medium intensity oil with a green leaf scent and a pleasant grassiness with medium pungency that is very elegant. A real surprise in quality. \$25.99 500ml (#5726) Silver medal L.A. tasting 2023.

VIGNALTA G.E.M.O.L.A. CHARDONNAY and VIGNALTA SIRIO

VIGNALTA, our favorite winery in the Colli Euganei, outside of Padova has released two new wines, **G.E.M.O.L.A Chardonnay** and a new form of **SIRIO**, a dry muscat, from Moscato Fior d'Arancio. The Chardonnay is 2019 and the Sirio 2021. The Chardonnay comes from the site on Monte Gemola where Vignalta's leading red blend is produced and the same soil condition was tried with Chardonnay with great success. This wine has all of the mineral quality and finesse from the VOLCANIC soil type, without malolactic fermentation to retain its acidity, and give the wine a very long life. Fermented in 500 liter casks, it is a remarkable Chardonnay: Vibrant and tense. Eminently drinkable now, but with surprises to come for the future.

The new Sirio, made from Orange Muscat, has an amazing scent and is completely dry. Previous vintages were made out of white muscat, but the Fior d'Arancio has proven to be superior. This is a wine for anytime drinking, but lovely as an aperitif or with vegetable dishes. It is a revelation both for scent and flavor. Perfect for spring.

VIGNALTA G.E.M.O.L.A. CHARDONNAY 2019 13% \$34.99 750ml (#5727) \$188.00 cs/6 (#5727C)

VIGNALTA SIRIO 2021 12.5% \$19.99 750ml (#5728) \$107.00 case/6 (#5728C)

DISZNÓKÖ 1413 ÉDES SZAMORODNI 2018—A Classic

DISZNÓKÖ is the name of an estate, a single tract of land, in the Tokaj region of north-eastern Hungary. It dates from 1413 when it was first noted in a land register. The size is some 277 acres of land. At the fall of the Communist Hungarian government, the French insurance company AXA, managed to capture the property in 1992. The vineyards have been replanted and the cellar redone.

The **ÉDES SZAMORODNI 1413** is a traditional wine that used to go to Poland. "Szamorodni," in Polish, means "as it comes", wine made from the grape clusters picked and pressed, nothing really special being done to them as is done with the famous ASZU wines. There would be dry, shrivelled berries and normal grape berries all together. This sweet white wine is rich, not as rich as an ASZU, but sweet enough. ÉDES is the descriptor, meaning sweet or rich. Another SZAMORODNI, SZÁRAZ, is the dry style, with no sugar.

The 2018 vintage was one of the hottest and earliest ripening ones in Tokaji's history. The 1413 was harvested between 12 October and 7 November. The varieties are 93% Furmint and 7% Harslevelu, destemmed and given skin contact time before pressing. Fermentation was both in stainless steel and in used 225 liter casks in the traditional underground cellars. When I tasted it, I was taken by its elegance and flowery sweetness and crisp acidity. It could have been a light aszu wine. I was told that it was the declassification of 3 and 4 puttonyos Tokaji. This could be possible since the wine has 13% alcohol, 153grams of sugar and a total acidity of 7.05g/L. Bottling was in September 2021. It will live a long time and still show its richness. It is sweet enough to be used for desserts or rich enough to be used for foie gras. So, before or after dinner.

Telling you about it now is to encourage you to enjoy it with the Easter Colomba. It is very good with these sweet breads and yet can be used with other dishes as an aperitif. I find the wine delicious anytime. Once opened the bottle can be kept at least two weeks in the fridge.

DISZNÓKÖ 1413 ÉDES SZAMORODNI TOKAJI 2018 \$28.49 500ml (#5729) \$153.00 case/6 (#5729C)

NURI Portuguese tinned fish

The idea of tinned fish, you know, mainly “Blue Fish” like tuna, sardines, mackerel, has taken on a life of its own. They have found favor with consumer’s current life style, looking for different things and different flavors. In countries like Spain and Italy, they have never lost their luster. In the U.S. they have really been down played, but are now on the comeback. During the late 1800s, these fish products were so well thought of that silverware sets had special forks for them which now have become collector’s items.

The Portuguese have been producers of these products and at the head of this trend for a very long time. One of the most important producers still working is the **Pinhais** company, based at Matosinhos, at the mouth of the Douro River where it meets the Atlantic at Porto in northern Portugal. This production dates from 1920 and the identical system of production is still practiced today. With the exception of two mechanized procedures, everything is still done by hand. In this respect, it is a living historical museum of a food product. It would be a lovely visit for anyone going to Porto and the Port Country. LINK: factorytour@pinhais.pt

The brand name is “**NURI**” and the company products come wrapped by hand in colorful paper just as they did in 1935 when created. Fresh fish is purchased from local fishermen and the fish is then headed and gutted, then quickly steamed, trimmed and put into tins with olive oil or spiced olive oil--then shipped for our delectation. The spiciness is not hot, but is savory, lending a bit of piquancy to the fish, but not heat.

A very interesting things about these Nuri products is that they improve with age. It appears that tinned “blue” fish products like being immersed in olive oil, and their flavor improves with time in tin. In fact, there are sardine productions that are dated just to insure that this fact is made known to the consumer. Something to try.

Spiced Mackerel in olive oil \$4.99 each tin (#5730)

3 to 4 fish with olive oil, a chilli pod, carrot slice, peppercorn, laurel leaf. Meaty and not hot.

Sardines in Olive oil \$4.99 each tin (#5731)

About 5-6 fish, good olive oil and some salt. Mild and delicate.

Spiced Sardines in olive oil \$4.99 each tin (#5732)

The same treatment as with spiced mackerel

Sardines in tomato sauce \$4.99 each tin (#5733)

5-6 fish in a light, fresh tomato sauce with olive oil and just a bit of salt. Mild, flavorful not tomato-y

Spiced Sardines in tomato sauce \$4.99 each tin (#5734)

Spicing as for the spiced fish plus the light tomato sauce.

A mixed sample case: Two tins of each style of sardines and mackerel: 10 tins \$45.00 (#5735)

Good bread, a tin of Nuri and some wine: Dinner is served. With fresh, steamed rice, a delight.

TERMS OF SALE: This list supersedes all others. All taxable items, such as wine, beer, spirits, books will be taxed at the rate of 8.75%. This is for all sales since we sell in California. Foodstuffs are not taxable. Shipping will be charged at prevailing rates. **PLEASE NOTE:** In extreme weather, either hot or cold, please give us a shipping address where your order may be properly received and stored. Corti Brothers cannot be responsible for items left without protection.

VIGNALTA SALE ALLE ERBE (Herbed salt to us)

VIGNALTA is the name of a winery in the hills close to Padova in Italy's Veneto Region. It is in the area called the **Colli Euganei**, a thermal spring area, where the vineyards are on volcanic soils from now extinct volcanos. On the vineyards are wild growing herbs, rosemary, marjoram, thyme, which are harvested then dried with Sicilian sea salt and packaged. This **herbed salt** is probably one of the most delicious salts on the market and indispensable in the kitchen for seasoning meat of any kind. This is what I use for my roasts, turkey, and chicken when the mood strikes. For lamb or pork chops and steaks of every type, it is obligatory. In short, every well run kitchen should not be without it. It also makes a wonderful hostess gift that will be well remembered for your having brought it. Don't be caught without Vignalta salt.

VIGNALTA SALE ALLE ERBE 300g jar \$10.99 each (#5736) \$118.00 case of 12 (#5736C)

KHAZANA SMOKED BASMATI RICE

When I first wrote about this rice in our Fall 2020 newsletter, it sold out. With difficulty a new shipment has just arrived, and it is ready to supply all those customers who have been clamoring for it since the fall. Not only has the Covid pandemic made life difficult, it has made international shipping a nightmare. But we have finally received a new shipment of **KHAZANA SMOKED BASMATI**. Since 2016 Basmati has a G.I., or Geographical Indication. The word "Basmati" is from a Sanskrit word, through Hindi, meaning "Queen of Fragrance."

KHAZANA SMOKED BASMATI elongates, but does not widen. It is astoundingly pleasant in the mouth when cooked-fluffy and savory, with an impressive texture due to its elongation. Some grains elongate to 3/4 of an inch or more.

The easiest method of preparing this Basmati rice is to measure the amount you want to use, washing in a strainer until the water runs clear, and then soaking with cold water for about an hour. Drain the rice from its soaking water and put into the cooking pot. Add enough clean water to come to about the level of your index finger's first joint. Add some salt and a pat of butter. Bring to a boil and let cook until tiny craters form on the surface of the rice. Turn heat off and place the pot lid, covered with a clean cloth, to absorb the steam. Let rest for about fifteen minutes. Do not uncover! Then fluff with a fork and serve. Smoked rice is used for Persian New Year (Nurooz) observed in March, but is delicious anytime.

KHAZANA SMOKED BASMATI 2 pound re-sealable bags \$6.99 (#5737) Case of 6 \$37.00 (#5737C)

CHADO INDONESIAN SILVER NEEDLE TEA

Silver Needle tea is probably one of the most time consuming teas to produce. First the plucking must be done by knowledgeable pluckers, just the tip of the growing shoot is needed. Then the tea is withered and dried quickly to retain all the young shoot flavor; then each needle is plucked from the mass of leaves so that what you get is nothing but this pale grey, sword shaped leaf. One needs nimble fingers and good eyes to perform well in producing this tea. It is not inexpensive. Selected from the Chado Tea Co. stocks.

Produced in Bandung, West Java, Indonesia. The project started in 1861 by Mr. Eduard Julius Kerkhoven (1834-1915) from Sinagar Tea company in West Java. Production is at most 50 kilos of tea per month due to hand plucking and then hand refining. It is a wonderful looking tea leaf and a delicious pale liquor in the cup. The tea cultivar is unique: *Camelia sinensis* Gambung. Brewing can be done either short or long steeping, depending on your taste. Silver Needle is also perfect as an accompaniment to food.

CHADO INDONESIAN SILVER NEEDLE TEA 2 oz re-sealable bag \$18.99 each (#5738)

VÉGÉTAL DE LA GRANDE-CHARTREUSE

Probably one of the rarest alcoholic products made is this one. It was never for sale in the U.S. and if you were a fan of the liqueur Chartreuse, you picked it up in Europe and brought it back with you. The original name of this “liqueur,” in its cylindrical wooden box was “Elixir Végétal de la Grande-Chartreuse.” What our government didn’t like was the term “Elixir,” denoting something they didn’t like. So what has happened? The name was simply modified to be VÉGÉTAL. And it is now here.

What it is, is the original type of liqueur of Chartreuse. This is the product was originally sold by the Carthusian monks from their distillery at the monastery of the Grande Chartreuse, and which was to become the world famous green colored liqueur. Chartreuse has now taken on a different life of its own. A former Director of the marketing company of Chartreuse, Chartreuse Diffusion, once told me he had the honor of being the president of a company which sold a product, sold throughout the world, that no one drank. Things have changed a lot. Chartreuse is now the darling of bars and collectors who vie for any of the products made by the two monks who are responsible for its production. The Végétal is the product that was never available in the U.S. until now..

It comes in a 100 ml bottle, encased in its cylindrical, wooden box and is made to be enjoyed mixed. It has 69% alcohol, thus 138 proof, and is used with water and a sugar cube to make an exemplary tisane. The best way, I think, is to follow the recipe for a tisane, a tea, made with it. A few drops of Végétal are put on a sugar cube placed in a tea cup and the cup is then filled with hot water. The scent is perfectly the aroma of the Green Chartreuse. It has no caffeine and is a lovely digestif. It can also be used as a bitters element in various mixed drinks. Now produced at the new distillery of Chartreuse at Entre-Deux-Guiers, in the countryside of Voiron, on a grange owned by the Carthusian order since the 17th century, distillation has moved from the cellar in Voiron where both distillation and aging of the liqueur used to take place. It is the fifth distillery in the 400 year history of the liqueur.

What was once a fine item brought back from a European vacation is now available here. Hooray!

VÉGÉTAL de la GRANDE-CHARTREUSE 100ml \$29.99 each (#5739)

TWO BOOKS ON CHARTREUSE

Corti Brothers still has a few copies of the two indispensable works on Chartreuse, the liqueur and then on the religious order of the Carthusians, its producer. Both are in French. The “lingua franca” of food and wine is French and here you should be able to improve your French reading ability and learn something in depth about the liqueur and its producer.

Michel Steinmetz, **CHARTREUSE–HISTOIRE D’UNE LIQUEUR//
GUIDE DE L’AMATEUR** \$71.99 each (#5740)

Musee Dauphinois, **LA GRANDE CHARTREUSE–AU DELA DU SILENCE** \$103.99 each (#5741)

Then, for those not interested in improving their French, the remarkable film about this 900 year old religious order, INTO GREAT SILENCE. Look it up!

SILVER MOUNTAIN ALLOY 2013 and 2014 from Santa Cruz Mountains

Silver Mountain is a small winery in the Santa Cruz Mountain area, actually near Los Gatos, whose first wine was made in 1979. The owner Jerold O'Brien, is an old customer of Corti Brothers and a former airline pilot for Western Airlines, just like the late Joe Swan--the other ex-pilot winemaker in Sonoma County. O'Brien is from Sacramento and found his property at 2100 feet elevation in 1972 and reclaimed what had been a vineyard from 1870 to 1920. (Remember Prohibition?) He has made wines from this area either from his own vineyard or neighbors and has quietly just sold to locals and wine buyers searching the Santa Cruz area for good wine. It is now time to uncover his hidden light and show what the area can produce and how it ages. ALLOY, is his name for a Cabernet based blend coming from these historic and historical vineyards.

The Santa Cruz mountain area was a hot bed of fine grape growing and wine making that pretty much ended with Prohibition. This is the area of what was to become Ridge Vineyards, Mount Eden and others. Historically, it was the source of a lot of very fine grape material, first imported into this area before finding homes elsewhere in California. **SILVER MOUNTAIN**, the winery, was heavily damaged in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. Loma Prieta is nearby the winery. But everything has been repaired and grape growing and wine making have proceeded apace. What is unique about the Silver Mountain Alloy is that it is almost 10 years old and still for sale. We are offering two vintages: 2013 and 2014.

The bottles have never left the winery and have been developing slowly into what I think is essentially a mirror of the elegance that mountain vineyards can produce with Bordeaux varieties. It is just these kinds of nuggets of delicious wine, still affordable and still to be found for sale that make looking at small wineries for interesting and delicious drinks. I think you should be aware of the Silver Mountain Alloy wines just because they can be found; still reasonable in price; so good, and eminently enjoyable.

What they are not is over-hyped, over-oaked, over-extracted, nor over priced. Since Jerold O'Brien has never overplayed nor over-emphasized his own wine, yet is the spokesperson for the entire appellation, you should give these two Alloy wines a try. I think, as I was, you will be impressed.

SILVER MOUNTAIN ALLOY 2013 or 2014 are Cabernet dominant Santa Cruz Mountain red wines, made from de-stemmed, not crushed clusters in a whole berry ferment; punched down with air pressure, and moved by gravity. In other words, gentle wine making technology. Alcohol is lower than 13.8%. The bouquet is fine and elegant, likewise the flavor. They are a time capsule of California wine making.

SILVER MOUNTAIN ALLOY 2013 \$34.99 750ml (#5742) Case/12 \$377.00 (#5742C)

SILVER MOUNTAIN ALLOY 2014 \$34.99 750ml (#5743) Case/12 \$377.00 (#5743C)

