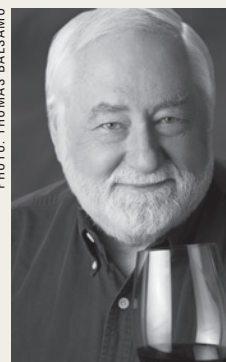




Frederica Pecorari and Jim Bryant in the Lis Neris Vineyard.

PHOTO: THOMAS BALSAMO



Barrington resident Jim Bryant is pursuing his passion and love of wine as an international wine consultant. This follows a 30-year career in senior financial and general management positions at two Fortune 100 companies. He is the owner of James R. Bryant L.L.C.; contact him at profwino@comcast.net.

In Search of Italy's Greatest Wines

FOR MANY YEARS I have been a fanatic about Italy's greatest wines. The "wine bible" for these wines is Gambero Rosso, which evolved from the Slow Food movement. Each year the results of rigorous tastings culminate in the issue of the current Gambero Rosso, which highlights the top or Tre Bicchieri (Three Glass) awards. Typically, some 375 of the 20,000 or so wines reviewed attain this distinction. One of my wine highlights each year is to attend the Chicago Tasting of Gambero Rosso. Without exception, over the past decade or longer, my favorite wine poured at this event was the Lis Neris Gris Pinot Grigio. The irony is that this is not a valued grape for my palate, but this winery performs alchemy and transforms it into one of my favorite wines bar none. Alas, the wine is almost impossible to find in the United States, so to Italy we went.

My wife and I made arrangements to spend four nights in one of Lis Neris apartments and had

a great time. Alvaro Pecorari is the owner, as well as the winemaker. He is assisted by his daughter Frederica. We ate in local restaurants, visited local wineries, and generally enjoyed our first visit to the Isonzo/Friuli region in Northeast Italy sandwiched between Austria and Slovenia. We had a visit to the Lis Neris Gris vineyard with Frederica which was beautiful and was rewarding to actually stand on the site producing one of my favorite wines.

On another late morning, we joined Frederica and her father for an extensive vertical of Lis Neris Gris, back to 2008, the personal favorite of all four of us. In addition, we tasted many other wines from different varietals and were impressed by all. We bought an autographed case of these great wines to bring back.

We asked Frederica to recommend another winery she loved. She told us that the Toros winery was very small, but excelled in producing similar wines, plus a Merlot. We left for Toros after a



Toros Friulano 2017, Chardonnay 2008, and Pinot Bianco 2017.



Toros Friulano 2017, Chardonnay 2008, and Pinto Bianco 2017.

big breakfast and were about to have one of our greatest travel experiences. It is a small farm/winery with almost no signage, but we found it. Owned by Franco Toros, a modern wine man who tends his 11 hectares of vines with old-fashioned skill, he transformed the Toros estate and nursed it to its present influential status. He and one of his three daughters led us on a short, but informative tour and then got down to business—tasting. We had several vintages of each varietal and could not believe the overall quality of the wines.

We were treated to a sumptuous smoked pork sausage made by Franco's brother. It was very good. After three hours of tasting, it became apparent we needed more food. Before we left, we bought an autographed case of these wines and a magnum of the Reserve Merlot. We hated to leave but sorely needed food. Luckily, a renown restaurant was open for a late lunch nearby. We had a very nice meal and of course some wine. When we got to our car, we decided to take a nap. We went to sleep with the front windows down, and a light misty rain falling. An hour and a half later, we awoke and headed for Lis Neris. What a day!

The most beautiful and famous winery we visited on the trip was Jermann, producer of the great wines "Dreams" and "Vintage Tunina". Unfortunately, we had camera issues and have no recorded photo memories of this estate (or Toros), but we were generously treated to many memorable and great wines. I strongly suggest visiting this area and making extra efforts to find these elixirs. A *Vôte Santé!* 🍷



The Lis Neris apartment's backyard.