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St. Anthony's Valpolicellas

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Founded in 1995, Tenuta Sant'Antonio is a relative newcomer in the Veneto, though the four Castagnedi brothers have worked their entire lives in the vineyards of Valpolicella and Soave. All the wines are made entirely from estate grapes, traditional to the region, grown in hillside vineyards that average 1,000 feet altitude. Sustainable practices include plant composting, total grass cover in the vineyards to control weeds, and natural pest control processes. French oak barriques are not employed. The three red wines considered today are a Valpolicella Superiore and Superiore Ripasso and a special selection Amarone della Valpolicella. These wines, all of which I recommend, were samples for review.

Imported by Dalla Terra Winery Direct, Napa, Calif.



The Tenuta Sant'Antonio Nanfrè 2015, Valpolicella Superiore, is a blend of 70 percent corvina grapes and 30 percent rondinella, made entirely in stainless steel. The color shades from dark to medium ruby; aromas of spiced and macerated black and red currants and cherries are woven with notes of mint and iodine, violets and cloves; it's very dry, lively on the palate and imbued with slightly loamy graphite minerality, as well as tasty black fruit flavors and a hint of velvety tannins. 13.5 percent alcohol. Nothing too complicated here, but perfect for burgers, pizzas, red-sauce pastas and such. Now through 2018. Very Good+. About \$14, representing **Real Value**.



In the *ripasso* method, a young wine is refermented — “repassed” — in the Spring on the skins (of the dried grapes) of Amarone from the same vintage, lending the wine in question more depth and a more interesting aroma and flavor profile, as well as a degree or two of alcohol. The Sant'Antonio Monti Garbi 2014, Valpolicella Superiore Ripasso, then aged a year in 500-liter oak casks, 30 percent new, 70 percent second use. The color is dark ruby-garnet; a slightly roasted and baked quality emerges in the notes of fruitcake and brandied cherries and currants, dusty plums and deep elements of cloves, cocoa powder and bitter chocolate, these factors adding a bit of astringency to the juicy black fruit flavors; a few moments in the glass bring in hints of iodine and

wood smoke. The wine is sleek, lithe and muscular but not heavy or obvious, and the finish is packed with baking spices, dried flowers, flint-like minerals and fruit compote. 14 percent alcohol. Now through 2020 to '22, accompanying pappardelle with rabbit, braised veal or lamb shanks, lamb chops grilled with garlic and rosemary; you get the point. Excellent. About \$19, another **Fine Value**.



The Sant'Antonio "Selezione Antonio Castagnedi" 2013, Amarone della Valpolicella, is a blend of 70 percent corvina grapes, 20 percent rondinella and five percent each croatina and oseleta, aged two years in new French oak casks of 500 liters. It's a deep, broadly dimensioned wine that offers a dark ruby hue and pungent aromas of spiced and macerated blackberries, currants and plums steeped in lavender and violets, iodine and oolong tea, smoke and graphite; the wine is quite dry and profoundly flavorful and savory but cushioned by soft velvety tannins that take on a peppery, woody and meadowy aspect buoyed by bright acidity. Some time in the glass brings in notes of lavender, black licorice and mocha; the finish is layered, fine-grained and chiseled. Leans more toward elegance than blockbuster status. 15 percent alcohol. Try from 2018 through 2025 to '28 with game flesh and fowl; grilled or roasted beef or pork; strong dry, mature cheeses. Excellent. About \$45.
