



Grapevine

November
2008

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Store Hours: Mon – Sat, 9am-9pm & Sun, 12pm-6pm

Keeping an Eye on Tuscany

Tuscany, Central Italy's sometimes sun-soaked, sometimes watery grey hill towns are for many the quintessential experience of Italian culture. Whether driving up narrow, twisting roads that seem to float forever upward, plucking olives from Leonardo's childhood trees in Vinci, strolling through small medieval towns like Orvieto and Pisa or sophisticated, art-strewn Florence, Tuscany is a feast for the senses. And for wine lovers, the region offers some of the greatest wines to be found anywhere in the world, rivaling – as this year's harvest attests – the French claim to the same fame.

Captivated by those very sights – cobbled streets, hilltop-perched villas dotted in the distance,



Overlooking Greve in Chianti.

endless acres of cypress and olive trees – and then bidding farewell to the statue of David in a thirst-laden quest for the best Brunello, it is easy to forget that climate plays a monumental role in just how cruelly disappointing or how thankfully spectacular the current season's harvest will be.

As travelers, we often adopt an 'all is well' attitude in spite of heavy rains or sun-baked afternoons in order to make the most of our ten-day trip. But for vineyard owners and wine makers, weather can be a breath-holding event requiring massive preparations and reparations in order to

salvage the season's sometimes precarious crop of grapes.

Throughout Italy in 2008, a cold winter, a rainy spring, and a summertime drought stunted the potential of some vineyards. Tuscany's summer conditions, however, were more favorable than in other regions, helping to make amends for any negative consequences wrought by Spring's havoc. Chianti's 2008 crop – though smaller in quantity than in the country's southern regions – is expected to produce wine of excellent quality with both structure and bouquet.

Since we can only dreamily anticipate the resulting wines from the 2008 harvest, we have

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Sangiovese grapevines in vineyards around the castle at Castello Banfi in Montalcino.

The Wisdom of Sangiovese

Considering the oft-cited maxim that red wine is good for your heart... A Tuscan pharmacist near Siena who owns one of Italy's oldest apothecary shops has been credited with extracting the anti-oxidant benefits of red wine. By using an 18th-century recipe cultivated by one of his ancestors, which he found behind a shelf during renovations, he has created a Sangiovese-based elixir for longevity. So whether you are drinking *to* or *for* your health, the beloved Sangiovese grape offers a variety of incentives to wander into your local wine store, dream about or remember Tuscan getaways, and take home that irresistible and promising bottle of Chianti or Brunello di Montalcino – or any other bottle of rosso or bianco that may have lured you into the store.

included a list of some of our favorite wines from Tuscany already on the shelves. While these wines are a natural accompaniment to Tuscan fare, rich and richly satisfying and redolent with olive oil and herbs, anything from pizza to pot roast to porcini-spiked stuffing – or any of the favorites at your Thanksgiving table – will certainly work just as well. So, to go with your next meal, Tuscan, American, or otherwise, may we recommend...

La Braccasca Sabazio Rosso di Montepulciano 2006 (Red, \$12.99)
Made mostly from Prugnolo Gentile and tinged with Merlot and Canaiolo Nero, this ruby red wine caresses the nose with red berries. It

is balanced and structured with smooth tannins.

Villa Puccini Gold Label 2001 (Red, \$15.99)
“Dry, rich, and harmonious,” this Villa Puccini goldmine is mostly Sangiovese with a little Cabernet Sauvignon. A brilliant garnet color, it is scented with berries, spices, and vanilla.

Ciacci Piccolomini d’Aragona Toscana Rosso 2005 (Red, \$9.99)
This “‘baby’ Super-Tuscan expresses the characteristic sour cherry and dusty tannins of Savgiovese, softened by the richness of Merlot and the structure of Cabernet...Perfect for

any meal or everyday drinking.”

Vernaccia di San Gimignano Vigna a Solatio D.O.C.G. 2006 (White, \$15.99)
Owing, in part, to the sandstone soils surrounding the fortified village of San Gimignano, this Vernaccia “is bright, crisply dry, with a light aroma of ripe fruit.”

Carpineto S,N.C. Dogajolo 2006 (Red, \$9.99)
Made from Sangiovese and a little Cabernet for structure, this wine’s “fruity and intense flavors, with hints of berries, coffee, vanilla and spice, are matched with a supple tannin structure and a long finish.”

Castello Banfi Brunello di Montalcino D.O.C.G. 2001 (Red, \$55.99/reg \$65.99)

“Aged for two years in barrique and two in the bottle. It possesses flavors of licorice, cherry and spices; a rich, supple, and long-aging vintage wine.”

Look for Raising a Glass to Champagne in the December 2008 issue of Grapevine.

Mix & Match (3 for \$24.99/ reg \$9.99 ea)

- Kenwood Red Table Wine, Sonoma (2005)
- Mirassou Pinot Grigio, CA (2007) — 90 Pts/WE
- Tormaresca Puglia Nèprica, Italy (2006) — 87 Pts/WS
- Hob Nob Pinot Noir, France (2007)
- Barone Fini Pinot Grigio, Italy (2007)
- McWilliam's Shiraz, Australia (2006)
- McWilliam's Cabernet Sauvignon, Australia (2006)
- Gnarly Head Old Vine Zinfandel, CA (2006)
- Banfi Collepino Sangiovese/Merlot, Tuscany (2007)
- Banfi Le Rime Chardonnay/Pinot Grigio, Tuscany (2007)
- Banfi Fumaio Sauvignon Blanc/Chardonnay, Tuscany (2007)

The 90s Club (90 or more points, under \$20)

- Brunus Carinena/Garnacha/Syrah, Spain (2005) — **90 Pts**
Bouquet of smoke, vanilla, and blackberry. Full-bodied, fruity finish. **\$14.99**
- Las Rocas Garnacha de San Alejandro, Spain (2006) — **91 Pts**
Spice box, mineral, black cherry. Smooth textured, round, no hard edges. **\$12.99**
- Pillar Box Reserve Shiraz, Australia (2006) — **92 Pts**
Smoke, vanilla, saddle leather, and blueberry. Full-bodied and plush. **\$15.99**

Top Ten Under \$10

- Chateau St. Jean Chardonnay, Sonoma (2006)
\$9.99 / reg \$12.99
- Nobilo Sauvignon Blanc, NZ (2007) — 90 Pts/WS
\$9.99 / reg \$11.99
- Urban Riesling, Germany (2006)
\$9.39 / reg \$10.99
- Martin Codax Albarino, Spain (2007) 90 Pts/WE
\$9.99 / reg \$11.99
- Blackstone Merlot, California (2006)
\$8.99 / reg \$10.99
- Banfi Centine, Tuscany (2006)
\$8.99 / reg \$11.99
- Louis M. Martini Cabernet Sauvignon, Sonoma (2005)
\$9.99 / reg \$13.99
- Michele Chiarlo Barbera d'Asti, Piedmont (2006)
\$9.99 / reg \$11.99
- Pillar Box Red, Australia (2006)
\$9.99 / reg \$11.99
- Calea Nero d'Avola, Italy (2007)
\$9.39 / reg \$11.99

From the Spirits World

- Balvenie Doublewood 12-year old Scotch, Banffshire Scotland — "Single malt with unmistakable character."
750 ML, \$45.99
- Sobieski Vodka, Poland — Rated 95 Points by Beverage Testing Institute in 2007.
1.75 Liter, \$16.99
- Hiram Walker Gingerbread Liqueur — A warm and spicy liqueur perfect for the holidays.
750 ML, \$8.99

November Staff Wine Picks

Sheila: *Taz Chardonnay, Santa Barbara (2007) \$22.99* This Chardonnay, both crisp and light, derives its beautiful balance from Santa Barbara's rustic growing conditions and the winemaker's expertise. Eschewing the typical heavy-laden oak, it is tropical, lively, and refreshing.

Damian: *Abbot's Table, Washington (2007) \$24.99, reg \$28.99* A blend of ten different red grapes, this friendly, crowd pleasing gem pairs beautifully with duck, beef, or hearty Tuscan fare. A seductively supple wine that kisses the palate with intensity and richness, it is a hallmark of Owen Roe Wines.

Seaborn: *Rombauer Vineyards Zinfandel, St. Helena, CA (2006) \$30.99* A classic California Zin in style, it is jammy, full-bodied, and assertive with black fruit. Perfect for a steak or spicy ribs — or alone, for the ultimate in hedonism — this is not a wine for the meek.

Denise: *Schug Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast (2006) \$17.99* From the Carneros Estate Winery, it's like drinking Burgundy at half the price. Tart cherry, earth, and warm spices give this wine depth and complexity. Well balanced, this Pinot dances between subtlety and unmistakable presence.

Ian: *Altos de la Hoya Monastrell, Jumilla (2006) \$11.99* A rich, full-bodied red, this Monastrell is smooth and generous with no hard edges. It sweeps you away with its coffee-tinged finish.

Wine Tastings Fridays, 4-8 & Saturdays, 2-6

Fri, 11/7: California Cabernets Sample Cabernets from California's various wine regions and experience the differences in all their unique glory.

Sat, 11/8: A Taste of Tuscany A special wine and cheese pairing with all Banfi wines from Tuscany to celebrate our 11th Anniversary.

Fri, 11/14: House of Big Reds We'll pour Cabernet, Claret, and Red Zin from Sonoma Valley's St. Francis Winery.

Sat, 11/15: Red Zin for Turkey The spicy and fruit-forward qualities of Red Zinfandel — America's oldest wine grape — make it an ideal accompaniment to turkey. Come in and find your favorite.

Thurs, 11/20: Let it Pour! Join us as we pop open and sample this year's fruity and friendly Beaujolais Nouveau, always released the Thursday before Thanksgiving. Don't miss this festive tradition.

Fri, 11/21: From the Banks of the Noble Hudson Located along the Hudson River, Brotherhood Winery will showcase hot mulled, spiced wine, Riesling, and Pinot Noir.

Sat, 11/22: Red or White and a Perfect Match We'll feature a selection of reds and whites to pair with a *traditional* Thanksgiving dinner.

Fri & Sat, 11/28—29: Wine for Thanksgiving leftovers You don't want to cook, you just want something easygoing to drink with all those leftovers. Let us do the work by making a few suggestions to taste and take home.

Wine & Spirits' Italian Adventure

Roaming through Italy this past September, a few of us from Wine & Spirits visited Tuscany's Castello Banfi, the vineyard in Montalcino that produces grapes for some of Italy's best wines. After touring the property's 11th Century castle and the vineyard's ruggedly majestic slopes, we enjoyed a traditional tasting to fully experience the range of differences between Castello Banfi's rossos and biancos and Brunellos. So, in anticipation of your upcoming trip or to whet your appetite for an Italian adventure, consider experimenting with a few of the many Tuscan wines we have here at Wine & Spirits. And keep in mind our November 8 tasting where we'll share with you a few of the culinary souvenirs from our Tuscan trek.

Check out Our Ongoing Store Specials

Case discounts — 12 bottles: 15%; six bottles: 10%

Pink pricing — 15% off discount policy on selected bottles

Two for Tuesday — 25% off

Mix & Match — Three for \$24.99 on selected bottles

The 90s Club — Wines rated 90 Pts or above for under \$20

Wine & Spirits offers custom made gift baskets and has a variety of wine bar gifts and accessories: Riedel glasses, corkscrews, Champagne and wine stoppers, decanters, and wine bags—including Green Sleeves by Leah.

Mention this newsletter, and we'll take 11% off your November tasting wine purchases to celebrate our 11th Anniversary.



WINE & SPIRITS OF SLINGERLANDS

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