



CELEBRATIONS WINE CLUB

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Italian
Winery of the Month



Marco Pallanti, owner of Castello di Ama, with Arturo, Norma and Gemma

Touring Toscana, from Chianti to Brunello



CelebrationsWineClub.com

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Castello di Ama

Castello di Ama sits 12 miles northeast of Siena in the hills of Gaiole. This is the heart of Chianti Classico, a bucolic rolling landscape of woods, vineyards and olive groves. The property is owned and operated by the husband and wife team of Marco Pallanti and Lorenza Sebasti. In 2003, prestigious wine rating journal *Gambero Rosso* named Marco Pallanti "Oenologist of the Year" and in 2005 named Castello di Ama "Winery of the year." In 1907, *Gambero Rosso* said of the winery, "If we had to pick the winery that over the past five years has impressed us the most for sustained, extraordinary quality, Castello di Ama is the obvious choice." During the last 25 years, Pallanti and Sebasti have replanted all of their vineyards and upgraded all of the winemaking capabilities to make this one of Tuscany's showcase producers. Of the 260 hectares comprising the estate, nearly 90 hectares are planted to vines and 40 to olives. The

site itself is spectacular, a rounded hill-top set 1600 feet above sea level, the vineyards planted with Sangiovese, Merlot, Chardonnay, and Pinot Noir.

La Poderina

La Poderina is located in Toscana in the Castelnuovo dell'Abate district in the southeast of Montalcino. The name of Montalcino is intrinsically linked with that of its most esteemed and prestigious wine: Brunello. Today it ranks as one of Italy's premier red wines, in both Italian and international markets. The La Poderina estate covers a total of 54 hectares with 10.5 hectares planted to Brunello, 3.5 hectares reserved for the grapes used for Rosso di Montalcino, and 4.5 hectares for the sweet, light Moscadello di Montalcino, vineyards which follow the road to the wonderful Abby of Saint Antimo. The estate also includes 2.5 hectares of olive groves and 24.5 of woodland.

See **WINERIES** inside

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WINES OF THE MONTH



ARTISAN SERIES

Luiano

2010 Rosso Toscana

This 2007 Rosso Toscana is 100% Sangiovese with ruby color and fruity aromas and flavors. A versatile fresh wine for summer menus, the Rosso pairs well with most Mediterranean cuisine from spicy seafood stews to barbecued chicken. Serve at cool room temperature.

Bigi

2009 Orvieto Classico

This Orvieto Classico is a blend with 50% Trebbiano Toscano, 20% Grechetto, 10% Verdello, 10% Malvasia Bianca Toscana, and 10% Drupeggio. At only 12.5% alcohol, you can refill your glass with this crisp and refreshing white wine without hesitation. Floral aromas of hawthorn blossom and musk dominate the nose, followed by subtle hints of almonds. On the palate, the wine shows full-bodied and fresh flavor with a distinct finish of white peach and almond. Serve chilled with appetizers, summer dinner salads, and white fish.

WINEMAKER SERIES

Castello di Ama

2009 Il Chiuso

Aged for six months in French oak barrels, this wine is an unusual blend of 50% Pinot Noir and 50% Sangiovese, made in 2009 for the first time. A vibrant and luminous ruby red, the Il Chiuso shows an array of aromas that include strawberry, cherry, and blueberry with discernable notes of both Pinot Noir and Sangiovese fruit. On the palate, the wine is balanced and complex and opens further after a bit of time in the glass. Serve at cool room temperature.

Luiano 2005

Chianti Classico Riserva

Ninety percent Sangiovese, this 2005 Riserva also includes 5% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Merlot. The wine was aged for 24 months in French oak barrels and shows floral and fruity aromas on the nose with a hint of spice, particularly cherry, white pepper, rose, and chamomile. Very easy to drink, the wine has a velvety texture that gives way to big fruit flavors and a long finish.

WINERIES from previous page

Luiano

Luiano is a Fortress whose origins lie in the Renaissance Period. The property, just 10 miles south of Florence, extends across approximately 70 acres in the Upper Chianti Classico region and has belonged to the Palombo family for the past three generations. Antonio Palombo, born and raised in Luiano, has dedicated his life to perfecting the art of vine growing and winemaking. Recently, he re-designed and re-planted the vineyards, carrying on the tradition of what he had done in his youth with his father, Alberto. The cellars, built during the Renaissance, are a true testament to the ancient tradition of winemaking at Luiano. Those same cellars served as a refuge to such notables as Machiavelli and Michelangelo.

Bigi

With the popularity of its red wines, Toscana devotes little vineyard acreage to white wine varieties. So we've crossed the border into Umbria for this month's white selection from Bigi, founded by Luigi Bigi in 1880. Located just beneath the lofty walls of ancient Orvieto, Bigi is one of Italy's busiest cellars. The winery and cellars, re-designed and modernized by renowned oenologist Giacomo Tachis, draw many visitors each year. Bigi is the leading producer of Orvieto with a thirty percent share of the total output of the zone. Bigi controls the quality of its wines from vine to bottle under the direction of enologist Francesco Bardi, one of Umbria's most innovative winemakers.

WINES OF THE MONTH

COLLECTOR SERIES

La Poderina

2006 Brunello di Montalcino

Aged for four years in Slovenian oak barrels, this Brunello shows spicy red berries, cherry, and a flinty nuance on the nose, and is silky, supple, and fruity on the palate with chewy black and red cherry flavors, typical of Sangiovese Grosso, the Sangiovese clone from which Brunello is made. The wine is not especially fleshy but offers restrained fruit flavors and finishes with soft tannins and good length. Serve at cool room temperature with grilled or roasted meats.

Castello di Ama

2007 Chianti Classico

A blend of 80% Sangiovese and 20% Malasia Nera, Merlot, and Cabernet Franc, the wine was aged for 13 months in French oak barrels. A vibrant ruby red, the 2007 Chianti Classico shows an intense bouquet of blossoms and ripe wild berry fruit with wild berry and fine spice on the palate. Overall, the wine is concentrated and powerful yet exhibits remarkable elegance.

Tuscan Landscape



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JUST RED? JUST WHITE?
JUST CALIFORNIAN?
JUST ITALIAN?
HOW ABOUT A
COMBINATION?

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Artisan Series:

\$34.50/month, a red and a white

Winemaker Series:

\$62.50/month, 2 reserve reds

Artisan red-Winemaker red:

\$48.50/month

ITALIAN WINES

Artisan Series:

\$34/month, a red and a white

Winemaker Series:

\$62/month, 2 reserve reds

Collector Series:

\$112/month, 2 collectable reds

Artisan red-Winemaker red:

\$48/month

Winemaker red-Collector red:

\$87/month

CALIFORNIA-ITALIAN COMBINATIONS

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\$35/month

CA Artisan white-IT Artisan white:

\$34/month

CA Winemaker-IT Winemaker:

\$62.50/month

Alternate CA & IT Artisan Series:

\$34.50/month

Alternate CA & IT Winemaker Series:

\$62.50/month

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REGION OF THE MONTH



TOSCANA



The name Toscana comes from the Latin *Tuscia*, which the Romans called the area to honor the Etruscans, who developed an advanced civilization there before the Romans subjugated them. The Etruscans were wine makers and were probably responsible for draping vines over trees, a practice that still exists. But the Romans preferred stronger southern wines, and the Etruscan wine trade faded until monks revived viticulture in the region. Wine became a daily beverage in the medieval cities of Florence, Siena, Pisa, Lucca, and Arezzo, and the Renaissance, which began in Florence, transported the wines of Toscana throughout Europe. In 1716, the Grand Duchy of Toscana created Europe's first official wine zones, and toward the middle of the 18th Century, the Grand Duke Cosimo III de' Medici imported 150 grape varieties to create a total of 211 in the region. But despite these advances, the French took the lead in fine wine in the 19th Century while Tuscans went for quantity instead of quality. The world came to know Toscana principally for its mass-produced Chianti in *fiasci*, the

straw flasks.

But Chianti, the dominant force in Tuscan viticulture, diminished production and improved quality in 1984 when it was elevated to *DOCG*, one of 13 regions in the nation, which the government defines geographically in its system of laws, controlling origins and protecting names of wines of "particular reputation and worth." In addition to *DOCG*, *denominazione di origine controllata e garantita*, the law specifies another 240 *DOC* regions, *denominazione di origine controllata*.

What Chianti has in common with the noble reds of Toscana is the grape variety Sangiovese. Although many clones of Sangiovese exist, the superior ones are among the world's noblest vines, such as Montalcino's Brunello, Chianti's Sangiovese, and Montepulciano's Prugnolo Gentile. Among other fine Sangiovese based wines are Rosso di Montalcino, *Vino Nobile*, and Carmignano. But the renaissance of Tuscan wines also includes the "Super Tuscans" such as *Sassicaia*, which is 100% Cabernet and Antinori's Sangiovese-Cabernet blend, *Tignanello*. *Vernaccia de San Gimignano* is the most prestigious white wine in Toscana, and *Vin Santo* is a highly prized dessert wine.

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