



Revisiting Chianti Classico

Tuesday, March 20, 2012

Reception Wine: 6:00 PM, Formal Tasting: 6:20 PM

Faculty Club, Univ of Toronto, 41 Willcocks Street, Toronto

Members' Fee: \$58; Guests'/Non-Members' Fee: \$73 (includes light appetizers)

Once associated with bottles wrapped in straw baskets, Chianti has come a long way on its evolution to the great wine it is today. Chianti is one of the most attractive territories of Italy. The landscape of forests, olive groves and vineyards, set among the hills and farm houses is a symbol of the Chianti region. Chianti has a rich history of producing wine, dating back to 1398. The original Chianti region, known as the Provincia del Chianti, was made up of Radda, Gaiole, and Castellina. However, in 1932 the area was expanded and divided into Classico, Colli Aretini, Colli Fiorentini, Colline Pisane, Colli Senesi, Montalbano and Rufina, with the original region making up just 6% of the newly expanded zone, buried within the Chianti Classico region. The newly expanded Chianti region now covered almost all of Tuscany; however the original zone would be considered the heart of the Chianti Classico region.

In the mid-nineteenth century, an Italian statesman, by the name of Bettino Ricasoli developed a recipe for Chianti that was based primarily on Sangiovese. Prior to this time, the exact composition of Chianti had been unknown. In the late 1960's, the Denominazione di origine controllata regulation established the "Ricasoli formula" for Chianti wines, consisting of a Sangiovese-based blend with 10-30% Malvasia and Trebbiano. Prior to the 1950's, Chianti developed a bad reputation, focusing on quantity over quality with very little consistency across winemakers. In the late twentieth century, Chianti staged a renaissance as winemakers began to bottle their own wine, rather than selling in bulk, turning their attention to quality. By working outside the boundaries of the DOC regulations, a small group of Chianti producers set their sights on creating a higher quality style of Chianti. This wine would later become known as the Super Tuscans. The success of these new wines led government officials to revisit the DOC regulations for Chiantis.

Chianti Classico tends to be medium-bodied wine with firm tannins and medium-high to high acidity. Floral, cherry and light nutty notes are characteristic aromas with the wines expressing more notes on the mid-palate and finish than at the front of the mouth. Each region of Chianti Classico has unique characteristics that can be exemplified and perceived in some wines from those areas.

In March, TVC will re-taste wines from the Chianti Classico region. Our inventory has received two additional years' of aging in excellent cellaring conditions so it will be interesting to see if and how these wines have developed in the bottle. In reading the tasting notes of the pros (see the next page), these wines should, in theory - be starting to peak now and showing their best.

The 2006 and 2007 vintages of Isole e Olena Classico are the standard bearers for this winery, produced by rigorous selection of Sangiovese grapes from the most outstanding vineyard parcels. The wine-makers of Antinori have been innovators in the development of Super-Tuscan blends, keen experimenters in the vineyard, and their considerable success has led to expansion in ownership of real estate and vineyards. From the eastern edge of the Classico region, in what was originally an 11th Century monastery, we'll compare the 2006 Badia a Coltibuono Riserva against their 2007 non-Riserva. The wines are made from entirely estate-grown fruit with the classic Chianti recipe of predominantly Sangiovese with Canaiolo. The 2003 versus the 2005 vintage Castello di Ama, the truest expression of Chianti Classico, is a blend of 80% Sangiovese grown in chalky clay soils, 8% Canaiolo and 12% Malvasia. Finally, from one of the oldest wineries in the region, Antinori, dating back to the 12th century, with 26 generations producing Chianti, we can compare their Riserva with the 2005 Badia a Passignano to their non-riserva Peppoli.

REGISTER/ BUY TICKETS

Register/buy tickets online at <http://www.onlineregistrations.ca/tvcevent3>. You must register online and then can pay by credit card or by cheque. **ALL ticket sales/reservations are final.** Cheques must be received by Friday, March 16th. The cheque-payment option will be disabled at midnight Tuesday, March 13th after which only credit card sales will be accepted until midnight Sunday, March 18th or earlier if the event sells out. You will be sent an email confirmation after completing your registration. If you tried to register but did not receive your confirmation, please contact torontovintners@onlineregistrations.ca before trying to register again.



Tasting Notes and Information

2006 Isole E Olena Chianti Classico \$36

"The 2006 Chianti Classico is especially round in this vintage. The wine shows gorgeous transparency in its perfumed fruit, sweet herbs and flowers, with excellent persistence and a long, refined finish. As always, this is a fresh Chianti with plenty of verve, and it will offer its most enjoyable drinking at the dinner table. Anticipated maturity: 2009-2014." 89 pts. Antonio Galloni, erobertparker.com, Aug/09.

2007 Isole E Olena Chianti Classico \$35

"The 2007 Chianti Classico is simply marvelous. A touch rounder and more generous than is typically the case, the Chianti Classico reveals intense aromatics that meld into a core of rich, expansive red fruit. The open-knit, giving quality of 2007 is on full display, while clean, mineral notes on the finish add a measure of clarity and balance. Despite the wine's ripeness, this remains one of the more understated, hushed Chiantis of the vintage. Readers who enjoy the Burgundian side of Sangiovese will flip out over this wine. Anticipated maturity: 2010-2020." 90pts. Antonio Galloni, erobertparker.com, Oct/10.

2005 Antinori Badia A Passignano Riserva \$51

"The 2005 Chianti Classico Riserva Badia a Passignano is a rich, dense wine loaded with dark fruit, new leather, tobacco, earthiness, smoke and sweet spices. This juicy, plump red reveals excellent persistence and a long finish in a surprisingly concentrated style for this vintage. The wine can be enjoyed today or cellared for a few years for readers who prefer more tertiary complexity. The Chianti Classico Badia a Passignano is Sangiovese that spends 14 months in French oak. Anticipated maturity: 2009-2015." 90pts. Antonio Galloni, erobertparker.com, Aug/09.

2003 Castello di Ama Chianti Classico \$55

"Ama's 2003 Chianti Classico is a powerful, super-ripe effort. A dark ruby, it presents sweet dark cherry and tobacco notes on an ample frame, with excellent concentration on the palate although the finish is marked by the hard tannins of the vintage. The wine did soften somewhat with air, yet my impression is that it will provide its best drinking relatively early. In 2003 Ama did not produce its single-vineyard wines and the estate's best fruit ended up in the normal bottling. Anticipated maturity: 2008-2015." 89pts. Antonio Galloni, erobertparker.com, Jun/07.

2005 Castello di Ama Chianti Classico \$45

"Purely fruited, delicate aromas of ripe cherries with wafts of black olive and forest floor. Medium+ level of very finely grained tannins and medium to high acidity. Good concentration, very refined. Long finish. Drink now to 2014." 90pts. Lisa Perrotti-Brown, erobertparker.com, Jul/09.

2007 Badia a Coltibuono Chianti Classico \$35

"The 2007 Chianti Classico is a very beautiful, expansive wine laced with high-toned red fruits, flowers and spices. This stylish, textured Chianti reveals gorgeous balance, with hints of tobacco and licorice that linger on the finish. Anticipated maturity: 2010-2015." 89 pts. Antonio Galloni, erobertparker.com, Aug/10.

2006 Badia a Coltibuono Chianti Classico Riserva \$62

"The 2006 Chianti Classico Riserva flows with dark cherries, licorice, earthiness and herbs. This is a dark style of Chianti, but the Sangiovese acidity cuts through the density of the fruit, leading to a pure, crystalline finish. Anticipated maturity: 2010-2016." 90pts. Antonio Galloni, erobertparker.com, Oct/10.

2006 Antinori Peppoli Chianti Classico \$23

"Intense red fruit aromas, especially redcurrants and raspberries, are amplified by light hints of vanilla and coffee sensations. This full-bodied wine is pleasantly lingering with soft, sweet tannins. It should be drunk while still young for full expression of the fruit." Wine maker's website (www.antinori.it).