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WINE ADVOCATE



ITALY, TUSCANY: VALUE WINES FROM CHIANTI COLLI FIORENTINI

written by

MONICA LARNER

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A few months back, I received an introductory email from Marco Ferretti, president of Tuscany's Consorzio Chianti Colli Fiorentini. He represents a wine appellation with geographic boundaries that weave in and out of the contours of neighboring high-profile regions like Chianti Classico in a rather confused manner. In fact, the very identity of this historic region is rooted in its positioning on the periphery, lost among the rolling hills on the outskirts of Florence, as its name suggests.

Mr. Ferretti's email did a beautiful job of drawing the confines of his territory that zigzags between the urban and the rural. He spoke of the vineyard exposures, the soils, the history of the appellation and the passion of its growers. He asked if I might be interested in reviewing a selection of wines. The subject line of the email caught my eye: "Why not?" was his pitch.

"Why not?" was my immediate acceptance.



Chianti Colli Fiorentini is a part of the greater Chianti territory and covers the hilly areas immediately outside the Renaissance city of Florence.

I tasted 21 samples from Chianti Colli Fiorentini representing 11 producers. What I discovered is a solid group of terrific value wines. These Sangiovese-based reds are very expressive of Tuscany, showing lean or mid-weight texture and lifted red fruit aromas that are bright and vibrant. Most of the wines are blended with the indigenous grapes Canaiolo and/or Colorino, but even the wines that are enhanced by small percentages of international grapes such as Cabernet Sauvignon and/or Merlot never feel weighed down by their fruit or too extracted.

The streamlined and accessible character of these wines serves to underline how profoundly food-friendly they are. While writing my reviews, pairing ideas immediately came to mind and I suggested a favorite dish, ranging from regional pasta dishes to grilled meats, in each of my reviews.



I scanned through my notes and selected my top five wines priced \$20 or less. They are:

San Michele a Torri 2018 Chianti Colli Fiorentini

(<https://www.robertparker.com/wines/gaGN8fccqZQZh8nW7#professional-notes>) (Organic) – RP 90, \$19

Castelvecchio 2018 Chianti Colli Fiorentini Il Castelvecchio

(<https://www.robertparker.com/wines/WC9sM6mfw4w4t642D#professional-notes>) (Organic) – RP 88+, \$16

Malenchini 2018 Chianti Colli Fiorentini

(<https://www.robertparker.com/wines/TZYt6HpozTXdi8SZA#professional-notes>) (Organic) – RP 87+, \$15

Fattoria di Fiano 2016 Chianti Colli Fiorentini Ugo Bing

(<https://www.robertparker.com/wines/QNMHXzfkJkwvyJ4kp#professional-notes>) – RP 87, \$15

Lanciola 2018 Chianti Colli Fiorentini

(<https://www.robertparker.com/wines/ZpZLHArHo4eNdXSoa#professional-notes>) – RP 87, \$14



Traditional Chianti Colli Fiorentini sees Sangiovese as the protagonist with Canaiola and Colorino in supporting roles.

Founded in 1994, the Consorzio Chianti Colli Fiorentini counts 27 members, who represent 52 percent of the production. The growers' symbol is reproduced from the rampant lion, or the "Marzocco," seen on the beautiful tower of the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence.



The "Marzocco," or heraldic lion, is a symbol of Florence and the Chianti Colli Fiorentini wine region. You see the figure throughout Florence, including on top of the Palazzo Vecchio tower on Piazza della Signoria.

The appellation includes 18 *comuni* (or villages) on the southwest and southeast of Florence from Montelupo Fiorentino up to Fiesole, passing through Lastra a Signa, Scandicci, Impruneta, Bagno a Ripoli and Rignano sull'Arno. There are three offshoots to the south covering the villages of Montespertoli, San Casciano Val di Pesa and Tavarnelle Val di Pesa; up to Certaldo and Barberino Val d'Elsa to the west; Incisa and Figline Val d'Arno to the far east; and a narrow piece of land from Pelago to Reggello even further east.



Map courtesy of www.chianti-colliflorentini.it.

This extended geography makes for a lot of variability between vineyard sites. Generally speaking, the vines are planted anywhere from a warmer 150 meters above sea level to a cooler 400 meters in elevation. Each hillside, with its unique positioning, creates enormous variation in terms of microclimates and soils, with both clay schist Galestro and limestone Alberese. Most of the vines enjoy southeast and southwest exposures (accounting for 50% of the plantings) and 30% of the plants face east or west, with the remaining sites facing north.

A high percentage of the estates reviewed here are certified organic, and I have included this information in my reviews. This was a very enjoyable report to write, and I am excited to recommend these excellent value reds from sunny Tuscany.



These are genuinely food-friendly wines with the bright flavors and freshness of Sangiovese to cut through a traditional Tuscan plate of picci con ragù di cinghiale (pasta with wild boar).

f (https://www.facebook.com/dialog/feed?app_id=1523507334639053&link=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.robertparker.com)

t (<https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.robertparker.com%2Farticles%2FMMpxnrhbyJNkxiiXC>)

Vintage	Wines	RP
2017	Fattorie Giannozzi Chianti Colli Fiorentini Riserva Villa Marcialla	91+
2017	Castelvecchio Chianti Colli Fiorentini Riserva Vigna la Quercia	90+
2017	Fattoria di Bagnolo Chianti Colli Fiorentini Riserva	90+
2018	San Michele a Torri Chianti Colli Fiorentini	90
2016	Castello di Volognano Chianti Colli Fiorentini Noi	90

[View All Wines \(/search/wines?assignment=4aaq7ZfB5PYKAZygb\)](/search/wines?assignment=4aaq7ZfB5PYKAZygb)



Selected Wines

+ Add all to Print List

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✕ Remove all in current Compare List

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2018 San Michele a Torri Chianti Colli Fiorentini

Rating

90

Drink Date

2020 - 2024

Producer

San Michele a Torri

From

Italy, Tuscany, Chianti, Colli Fiorentini

Variety

Sangiovese

Source

November 2020 Week 1, The Wine Advocate

Made with organically farmed fruit, the San Michele a Torri 2018 Chianti Colli Fiorentini offers a classic interpretation from this appellation and delivers a versatile approach that would pair with a hearty plate of fettuccine with Bolognese sauce. With an ample 150,000 bottles produced, this is a blend of 80% Sangiovese, 10% Canaiolo, 5% Merlot and 5% Colorino (aged mostly in cement with about one-third that goes into oak). The wine offers a ripe and soft fruit profile with generous layers of black cherry, plum and dried apricot. This is a terrific value buy.

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