

# Robert Parker

WINE ADVOCATE



## ITALY, CHIANTI CLASSICO: DISCOVERIES FROM SAN CASCIANO IN VAL DI PESA

written by

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Given its proximity to Florence and its bird's-eye view of the glorious red tiled roof of the oversized Duomo di Firenze, San Casciano in Val di Pesa is a world apart next to the other six *comuni* highlighted in this series of articles from Chianti Classico. More remote overall, the other villages are surrounded by woods and enclosed by hills. But San Casciano in Val di Pesa is practically a residential suburb of Italy's Renaissance capital, located 15 kilometers from the city center, and it has been since the time of Machiavelli and Michelangelo.

On the crest of a hill, looking over the southern half of Florence, San Casciano in Val di Pesa occupies one of the most beautiful spots I can think of in Tuscany. This fact did not go unnoticed in the 15th century when wealthy merchants and noble families selected these hills for their summer villas. Today, San Casciano in Val di Pesa is an open-air museum that showcases some of the most lavish and elegant architecture of the Florentine Renaissance.

The vineyards of San Casciano in Val di Pesa see abundant light, open spaces and long horizons. The land flattens north of here toward the basin that houses the city of Florence and eventually tapers out to the west in the direction of the Tyrrhenian Sea. The *comune* benefits from breezes and brisk exchange of air, with slightly lower elevations that warm up considerably during the summer months.

The parts of the *comune* that are inside the Chianti Classico production zone are criss-crossed by various streams and torrents that divide the grape growing area into smaller subzones. Generally speaking, the vines are planted between 150 and 450 meters above sea level, and the soils tend to see lots of alluvial material and gravel.



*With 141 estates (including the members of the Cantina Castelli del Grevepesa, San Casciano in Val di Pesa in Chianti is responsible for 15.3% of the appellation's total production. (Map courtesy of the Consorzio Vino Chianti Classico)*

To draw a few generalizations on the wines, San Casciano in Val di Pesa is characterized by accessible and open-knit expressions of Sangiovese that are a great choice for near- and medium-term drinking. The style prioritizes dark fruit, lots of ripe cherry and blackcurrant with earthy notes and some tarry spice. Compared to Gaiole in Chianti or Radda in Chianti that tend to display more structure, sharpness and mineral etchings, San Casciano in Val di Pesa turns out soft wines with medium-rich textural fiber and lots of sweet fruit.

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FATTORIA  
SAN  
MICHELE  
A  
TORRI  
  
TENUTA  
LA  
GABBIOLA

89

Vintage	Wine Name	Maturity	Color	Rating
2018	Luiano Chianti Classico	Early		87 RP
2018	Montesecondo Chianti Classico	Early		89 RP
2018	Podere la Villa di Ilaria Tachis Chianti Classico Pargolo	Early		88 RP
2018	Podere la Villa di Ilaria Tachis Giacomo	Early		90 RP
2018	San Michele a Torri Chianti Classico Tenuta la Gabbiola	Early		89 RP
2017	Castello di Bibbione Chianti Classico Riserva	Early		91 RP

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FATTORIA  
SAN  
MICHELE  
A  
TORRI  
  
TENUTA  
LA  
GABBIOLA  
RISERVA

91

Vintage	Wine Name	Maturity	Color	Rating
2016	Orsumella Chianti Classico Riserva Corte Rinieri	Early		88 RP
2016	Poggio Torselli Chianti Classico 1427	Early		88 RP
2016	Poggio Torselli Chianti Classico Gran Selezione 1427	Early		92 RP
2016	Poggio Torselli Chianti Classico Riserva 1427	Early		91 RP
2016	San Michele a Torri Chianti Classico Riserva Tenuta la Gabbiola	Early		91 RP

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FATTORIA  
SAN  
MICHELE  
A  
TORRI  
MURTAS

92

Vintage	Wine Name	Maturity	Color	Rating
2016	San Michele a Torri Murtas	Early		92 RP
2016	Terre di Perseto Chianti Classico Albóre	Mature		? RP
2016	Villa Montepaldi Chianti Classico Tagliafune	Early		88 RP
2015	Carus Vini Chianti Classico Gran Selezione Gaudio	Early		89 RP
2015	Conte Guicciardini Chianti Classico Gran Selezione Belvedere Campóli II Tabernacolo	Early		86? RP