

SUPER DUPER TUSCANS

April 12, 2014

American Wine Society
Red River Valley Chapter
Super Duper Tuscans

7:00 pm at the home of
Jeff and Ann Clark

\$25 members • \$30
nonmembers

<http://gregonnd.com/rrvaws>



Regulations, regulations . . .

Tuscany is a region north of Rome in central Italy bordered by the regions of Liguria to the northwest, Emilia-Romagna to the north and east, Umbria to the east and Lazio to the south. It is a region that is well known for its beautiful landscapes, rich history in art and science and is regarded as the birthplace of the Italian Renaissance. It is the home of some of the most notable wine regions in the world and produce some of the most regarded wines from Sangiovese grapes (Chianti, Brunello di Montalcino and Vino Nobile di Montepulciano). It is the third most planted region in Italy behind Sicily and Apulia but only ranks eighth in production. More than 80% of the wine production is red wine.

Forty years ago when one thought of Italian wines one could only imagine cheap light chianti in squat wicker-covered bottles. Strict regulations written in the 1960's establishing Denominazione di Origine Controllata (DOC) regions limited the ability to make quality red blends in Tuscany. Instead of insuring quality, they established the mediocre chianti made from 70% sangiovese blended with 30% white wine as the norm. In an



effort to bring better quality blends of red wines with “non-approved” grapes to the market, Tuscan producers decided to buck the DOC regulations in the 1970's and started making wines from all kinds of blends including cabernet sauvignon, merlot and other grapes. Thus, Super Tuscans were born. In 1992 Italy introduced the IGT (Indicazione Geografica Tipical = typical regional wine) designation to provide a regulated quality region (85% of grapes must be from that region) different from the DOC's. After 40 years of evolution Super Tuscans have really stepped up their game and this region produces some of the world's finest wines.

SUPER DUPER TUSCANS

Bibi Graetz Casanatta Bianco 2011 (Maremma)

France 44 (MSP) \$12.99

"The wine offers floral, citrus and tropical fruit aromas with flavors of orange blossom, honeysuckle and lime. A rich white with minerality and tangy acidity on the finish."
60% Vermentino/30% Trebbiano/10% Muscat).

Monte Antico Rosso 2009 (southeast Tuscany)

90 JS. France 44 (MSP) \$11.99

"A fruity wine with black cherry, blueberry and hints of pepper. Full and velvety with a long and delicious finish. Acidity is well-integrated with the fruit. One of the best value wines from Tuscany. A blend of Sangiovese, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Drink now." 90 JS

Tenuta La Badiola 6 42° Toscana 2009 (Maremma)

90 WS. Bridgeview \$17.99

"Squarely in the Italian camp, with a sour cherry component to the mix of flavors, including black currant and raspberry. This red also shows good acidity and firm yet well-integrated tannins, with fine length. Best from 2013 through 2020."
90 WS

"Aromas are of wild berry fruits, like blackberry and dried plum which then yield to richer impressions of candied fruit and dark chocolate. Nuances of vanilla and tobacco leaf. Rich and full-bodied in the mouth, this wine has tannins that are perfectly balanced and well integrated. A lively acidity brightens its fruit. The long-lived, delicious finish is infused with aromatic, ripe fruit." Winemaker

Tenuta Monteti Caburnio 2009 (Maremma)

91 WA. Bridgeview \$17.99; France 44 \$17.99

"Espresso, mocha, sweet grilled herbs and plums wrap around the palate in this deep, inviting wine. Hints of licorice, crushed flowers, tobacco and new leather add complexity on the striking, nuanced finish." (France 44)

"The 2009 Caburnio (65-25-10 Cabernet Sauvignon, Alicante Bouschet, and Merlot) is a full and generous wine with layers of red cherry, light spice and leather that are delivered in quick succession. Sharp freshness cuts to the back of the palate and gives this wine an incredibly vibrant feel. The menthol reinforces those sensations and peppermint-like tones also present here. At this price, this is an unbelievable steal. maturity: 2015-2022." 91 WA

Nottola Anterivo 2007 (Montepulciano area, Siena region)

WS 92; WA 90. France 44 (MSP) \$34.99

"The 2008 Anterivo is a fresh, beautifully delineated wine laced with black cherries, espresso, flowers, crushed rocks and menthol, all of which come together nicely in the glass. A persistent vein of minerality gives the wine its focus and sense of direction." maturity: 2012-18." 90 WA

Banfi BelnerO Proprietor's Reserve 2009 (Brunello region)

WS 92. Costco \$29.99

"A pure black currant flavor marks this racy red, whose supple texture and refined structure complete the package. Black cherry, herb and spice notes play supporting roles as this persists on the lingering finish. Mostly Sangiovese, with a small percentage of French varieties. Best from 2014 through 2027." 92 WS

Querciabella Mongrana 2010 (Maremma)

#80 Wine Spectator Top 100 of 2013. 90 WS. Bottle B. \$21.99; H H \$22.99; Bernie's \$23.99

"This ripe red boasts flavors of cherry, cedar and herb matched to a medium-bodied frame. The acidity and tannins are in the correct proportions, offering a lingering finish. Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot." 90 WS

Tenuta Sette Ponti Crognolo 2008 (Chianti region)

WS 92; RP 92; Bernies \$40.99

"A persistent vein of minerality frames dark, jammy fruit in a medium-bodied, impeccably refined style for this property. Over time the wine's inner perfume emerges, adding scents of roses, violets all things floral. A long, clean finish adds freshness. Crognolo is Sangiovese with a dollop of Merlot. Anticipated maturity: 2010-2016." 92 WA

Cabreo Il Borgo 2010 (Greve area of Chianti region)

WS 91; JS 91; V 93. Costco \$39.99

"The 2010 Cabreo is beautiful. In this vintage, the 2010 is defined by its weightless, gracious personality, quite a departure from previous years. An open, floral bouquet melds into dark black cherries, menthol, pine and sweet spices. With time in the glass, the wine's inner perfume becomes more present. This is one of the best recent versions of Cabreo I remember tasting." 70 Sangiovese, 30 Cabernet Sauvignon. 93 V

"Offering black currant and violet aromas and flavors, this red tastes more like Cabernet Sauvignon than Sangiovese, but remains delicious nonetheless. Rosemary and sage notes add interest, while a tobacco element graces the finish." 91 WS

"mingles scents of black cherries and herbs in a wine that contrasts plump fruit and an austere structure. Lush red fruit meets cracked green peppercorn scents in a finish that will meld with seared duck breast." 91 W&S

"a little jammy with dried fruits and blueberries on the nose and palate. Full body, with velvety tannins and a juicy finish. This is tannic and very rich...more Californian than Italian." 91 JS

Tenuta Guado al Tasso (Antinori) Bolgheri Superiore 2006 (Bolgheri)

97 WE; 95 WS; 95 JS; Bernies \$74.98 (sale price \$49.99); (\$99 wine.com)

"the 2006 expression is a study in purity, focus and excellence. This wine is impressive on all levels in terms of intensity, personality, and persistence. It's rich and luscious with smooth tannins and lasting flavors of blackberry and spice. Drink after 2015." 97 WE

"This racy and refined red shows intense aromas of blackberry, currant and dried flowers that follow through to a full body, with sleek, minerally undertones and super-polished tannins. Made for aging. A more refined, new style of Guado. Best after 2012." 95 WE

"This is very floral and pretty on the nose with violets, licorice, berries, currants, and a hint of coffee. Full bodied, soft and round with a gorgeous long finish. Incredible class and depth with a long finish. Precision." 95 JS

"The aroma is a beautifully big, floral, and spicy bouquet wafting from the vases of bottle and wine glass. The medium-plus body is velvety smooth with good acidity, is quite dry, and has a moderate blanket of tannin, but the spicy impact of the very long finish is what stands out in my memory the most, but there is a touch of heat and mint there too. Though the wine is a complex array of black and blue fruit, with hints of espresso and licorice, it also has a slightly too floral accompaniment."

Tenuta Sette Ponti Oreno 2010 (central Tuscany, Chianti region)

WS 94; JS 96. Costco \$69.99; Happy Harry's \$99.99. (\$105 on Wine.com)

"Love the aromas to this red with currants, blackberries and hints of dark truffles. Full-bodied, with beautifully crafted tannins that are creamy and seamless. Fabulous refinement and length. Leave it in your cellar for at least four or five years. But impressive to taste or drink now....One of the best Orenos ever made since its inception in 1999." 96 JS

"A full, rich red, with pure cherry, floral, licorice and spice aromas and flavors. Balanced and graceful, with a lingering aftertaste of sweet fruit and spice. Should get even better with a few years of aging. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot. Best 2014 through 2025." 94 WS

Antinori Tignanello 2010 (Teen-ya-nelo) (Chianti Classico region)

RP 94; JS 96; 96 V. Costco \$67.99; Happy Harry's \$74.99. (\$105 on Wine.com);

"One of the best Tignanellos ever made. Aromas of currants and blueberries with hints of flowers. Full body, with fine tannins and a refined finish. A red that delivers balance and beauty. Rich and gorgeous. Best Tignanello in years." 96 JS

"Antinori's 2010 Tignanello is stunning, as it has been since I started tasting the component wines in 2011. Firm yet sweet, silky tannins form the backbone for this gorgeous, vivid wine. Dark red cherries, plums, cloves, mint and sage inform a Tignanello that impresses for its delineation, nuance and power. Clean, saline notes support the mineral-drenched finish. The 2010 isn't huge, but rather is a vertical wine endowed with tremendous energy and vibrancy. I can't remember a Tignanello with this much crystalline tension and pure energy. Simply put, the 2010 Tignanello is a magnificent, towering wine from Antinori." 96 V

"Humming with energy and life from the very moment you put your nose in the glass, Marchesi Antinori's 2010 Tignanello shows magnificent aromatic layering and an enormous capacity to peel back and reveal itself in beautiful slow motion. This is an articulate wine with a long story to tell about the quality of its profound 2010 fruit. This Tignanello has the elegance of 2004 and the structure of 2007. A brief note on the structure: The mouthfeel here is not broad and big. Instead, it shows a sharp and elegantly streamlined feel with impressive persistency. Compared to 2009, the Sangiovese component is slightly higher with 80% of the noble Tuscan variety followed by 15% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Cabernet Franc. Anticipated maturity: 2016-2035." 94 WA

For an interview of Piero Antinori, who created Tignanello, by James Suckling, go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DIUKgsrDXUU>

SOME ADDITIONAL SUPER TUSCANS AVAILABLE LOCALLY

Tenuta San Guido Sassicaia 2010 (Bolgheri)

96 RP; 94 WE; 94 JS. Happy Harry's \$199.99

In 1985, Sassicaia hit 100 pts by WS, which really put super Tuscans on the map. James Suckling said in 2011 that this wine could easily go another 100 years.

"The 2010 Sassicaia Bolgheri Sassicaia brings back some of the brambly rosemary and wild Mediterranean brush that was missing in 2009. This will greatly appeal to enthusiasts of Sassicaia's trademark elegance. The wine shows extreme purity that brings its many beautiful aromas into startling focus and clarity. Lingering tones of black fruit and Oriental spice add subtle shades at the back. The wine mostly certainly shows its pedigree in the exciting and beautifully balance manner it evolves in the glass: It tells a new story each time you return to observe the bouquet. This is the harbinger of cellar longevity. maturity: 2018-2040." 96 WA
"Cedar, sandalwood and spice notes lead off, with cherry, currant and rhubarb flavors underneath. Linear in profile, with a firm base of fine-grained tannins, this lingers beautifully on the finish. Persistent from beginning to end, this just needs time to expand." 94 WS

"The 2010 Sassicaia was just released and it's an outstanding bottle. I think that people are going to love this newest Sass. The red is very aromatic with currant, dried berry, cocoa bean, and hints of wood. It's full-bodied, with intense yet very polished tannins and a long finish. It's very refined and beautiful with a tangy finish. The Cabernet Franc comes through here at the finish. Lively. Hard not to drink now." 94 JS

Antinori Solaia 2006

97 WS; 95 WE; 95 JS. Bernie's \$289.99

"Displays loads of mint, eucalyptus, currant and meat on the nose. Full-bodied, with masses of fruit, yet reserved and structured. Mouthpuckering now from all the tannins, but this will give incredible pleasure in years to come. Cabernet Sauvignon, Sangiovese and Cabernet Franc. Best after 2014." 97 WS

"Mostly Cabernet Sauvignon and Sangiovese (with a small touch of Cabernet Franc), Solaia's winning card is texture. The wine is soft, velvety and penetrating in the mouth with succulent flavors of blackberry, creamy cassis berry, chocolate and tobacco. Thick extraction and quality fruit craft a memorable wine that will last many long and happy years in your cellar." 95 WE

"Good deep purple-tinged ruby. Deeper, fresher aromas of black cherry, blackcurrant and minerals than the riper '07 shows. Still primary and brooding on the palate, with a

refined, lively texture and a floral character that carries through to the aftertaste. The red and black fruit flavors are complicated by hints of forest floor and by more apparent minerality than the '07. Quite silky in texture thanks to noble tannins. Finishes long and pure thanks to firm but well-integrated acidity. This is less soft and more austere than the excellent '07, but each will have its admirers. This 2006 will also prove longer-lived." 95 IWC

"The estate's 2006 Solaia is a big, powerful offering loaded with ripe blackberry jam, herbs, minerals and French oak. Like all of the 2006s from Antinori, the Solaia remains extraordinarily dense and primary. Readers will have to be patient with this wine and give it plenty of bottle age before the full range of its aromas and nuances blossom fully. Solaia is 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Sangiovese and 5% Cabernet Franc. Anticipated maturity: 2014-2026." 94 V

Brancaia Tre 2010 2011 (93) (Chianti Classico region)

JS 90, RP 89. Bernie's \$18.99; Happy Harry's 19.99

"A pleasing wine with juicy berry and plum character with hints of peaches and chocolate. Medium to light body, with fine tannins and a fresh finish. Savory. A blend as always of Sangiovese, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon." 90 JS

"The 2010 Tre is laced with dark red berries, flowers, licorice and a hint of smoke. This is a decidedly medium-bodied wine built on length and energy rather than the richness for which Maremma generally is known. Floral notes reappear on the finish, adding lift and a sense of harmony. The 2010 is 80% Sangiovese, 10% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon." 89 V

Antinori Villa Toscana 2010 (central Toscana)

WS 92. Costco \$19; Happy Harry's \$21.99

"This is rich and saturated with cherry, raspberry and plum flavors, accented by mineral and spice notes. Vibrant and frank, offering a long, mouthwatering finish and fine character. Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah." 92 WS

La Spinetta Il Nero di Casanova 2008

90 WA. Bernie's \$24.98; Happy Harry's

"The estate's 2008 Il Nero di Casanova (Sangiovese) presents an intriguing profile of dark cherries, leather, licorice and tobacco, all of which come together in a medium-bodied, relatively delicate frame that is typical of Sangiovese. The Nero shows lovely inner sweetness and perfume through to the long finish. Anticipated maturity: 2012-2016." 90 WA