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Best Tuscan wines? Life beyond Tignanello...

Posted on [December 7, 2009](#) by [Do Bianchi](#)

In the wake of [BrooklynGuy's post on 1990 Tignanello](#) and [my subsequent response](#), a couple of readers wrote me asking me to create a list of currently available, interesting wines from Tuscany. In turn, I asked you to submit some top recommendations. Here's what you had to say...

Top wine blogger (and dude whose musical and literary tastes always turn me on) [David McDuff's](#) pics were "nothing cutting edge; all are just old friends."

Isole e Olena Chianti Classico: Always a pure and elegant expression of Chianti (and Sangiovese).

Fattoria di Palazzo Vecchio Vino Nobile di Montepulciano: Honest vintage expression of the sun-baked Tuscan hills. (They also produce an excellent Riserva.)

Corzano e Paterno Chianti Colli Fiorentini: Proof that great farming can elevate mediocre terroir.

Sommelier to the stars [David Rosoff](#) didn't "have a bunch of time to rack my brain on this today but..."

Castell'in Villa: Has to be there.

Caprili: I'm loving Caprili a lot these days.

Salvioni: Is it trite to say Salvioni?

Wine writer and veteran Italian wine traveler and educator [Tom Hyland](#) got right to the point.

Il Poggione Brunello di Montalcino: Classic, elegant, great ageworthiness.

Rocca di Montegrossi Vin Santo: Incredibly concentrated, remarkable.

Ornellaia: Superb fruit, superb winemaking.

And he added, “3 exciting new wines from Tuscany.”

Enrico Santini Montepergoli: Bolgheri red, one of that zone’s best.

Castelvecchio Numero Otto: 100% Ciliegiolo, very sexy!

Guado al Melo Jassarte: Blend of 30 varieties combining Italian and Eastern viticulture.

[Elaine Trigiani](#) took time out from tasting and teaching olive oil in Tuscany to pen this dispatch.

Fattoria Ispoli Chianti Classico: Well-mannered combo of clarity and mighty persistence.

Podere Le Boncie Le Trame: Quiet yet profound as Giovanna herself.

Santa Maria Rosso di Castiglione d’Orcia: Fermenty.

Guitar player extraordinaire and owner of the coolest wine shop in Central Texas, [John Roenigk](#) took time out from the Christmas rush to weigh in.

Selvapiana Chianti Rufina: All the textural suppleness and tenderness I might ever have expected of Sangiovese all the while being completely flavorful and satisfying.

Antinori Chianti Classico Riserva: Fine and complex, always been a personal fave.

Fèlsina Chianti Classico Riserva Rancia: Superb Tuscan estate, really dedicated to Sangiovese. Superb wine.

Brit wine educator and Tuscanophile, author of a newly minted wine blog, [David Way](#) loves “the Sangiovese of Chianti and Montalcino as much as anyone, but rather more off the beaten track are...”

Sassotondo Maremma Toscana San Lorenzo: Sassotondo’s top Ciliegiolo, aromas of cherries and pepper, distinctive cru from the Maremma’s deep south.

Rocca di Frassinello Rosso Maremma Toscana: Elegant product of French-Italian collaboration, 60% Sangiovese, beefed up with 20% each Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, finely judged new oak above super ripe fruit. Rothschild collaboration.

Massa Vecchia Vermentino di Maremma Toscana: Hyper-natural “white” wine made as a red, i.e. 20 days maceration on the skins, orange tinge, dense herby fruit smells, orange peel, extraordinary.

The Italian Wine Guy by antonomasia [Alfonso](#) likes winemakers who are “small and live in as well as on their land and are fully grounded.”

Querciavalle Chianti Classico Riserva: They age beautifully, are fabulous values and have given me as much pleasure as Brunello or Super Tuscan wines have.

Capezzana Carmignano: The blend of Sangiovese and Cabernet (part of the appellation) make for a mouthwatering and delicious lip-smacking red.

Angelo Sassetti Brunello di Montalcino: Yes, his brother Livio is next door and has gotten better press and p.r. But my heart and soul is with Angelo, whose wine is still simple and direct and not obfuscated by modernity of success.

I was really excited to see Massa Vecchia in David Way’s contribution. I love those wines and they stink to holy heaven. I don’t think they’re available yet in this country.

I have to second David Rosoff’s pick, Castell’in Villa. As Franco likes to say, it’s one of those wines in which I always find “emotion” and “poetry.”

I’m also dying to try Tom Hyland’s “very sexy” 100% Cilieggiolo by Castelvecchio.

There are a lot of others I would add, like Sanguinetto in Montepulciano, also one of Elaine’s favorites. And I was was thrilled to see her include a wine from the Orcia River Valley. I have tasted some great wines from the Orcia river valley (outside of Montalcino), and, in my view, Orcia will be the next appellation to emerge as a producer of great wine from Tuscany (nothing I’ve tasted from Montecucco has really knocked my socks off).

Thanks, everyone, for weighing in. There are so many interesting wines from Tuscany to reach for these days. This polyglot hypertextual list is rife and ripe with trusted classics, a few surprises, and the heart and soul of Tuscany when you scrape off the patina of marketese. Nothing wrong with Tignanello, of course (BrooklynGuy’s post has inspired Alfonso to “stand upright” a bottle of 1990 Tignanello to taste with me and [Tracie B](#) when we get together next weekend). So many great bottles and so little time...