



Italy

2002

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TENUTA DI TRINORO

Location: Sarteano, Siena

Wines: IGT Le Cupole di Trinoro

(Cabernet, Merlot, others), Tenuta di Trinoro

(Cabernet, Merlot, Petit Verdot), Cincinnato

(Cesanese d'Affile)

'Cult' is over-used in wine writing today, but with Andrea Franchetti's Tenuta di Trinoro the epithet is unavoidable. Not that he gives the appearance of seeking out personal cult status – he is far too busy making wine – but he just happens to have all the features of an authentic cult producer and is rapidly acquiring a cult following. The estate is new

– 1997 was the first official vintage – but already Trinoro is traded *en primeur* in Bordeaux at blue chip prices.

Trinoro wines have a personality deriving from the geographical location of the estate. Sarteano is the last frontier of Tuscan vine growing, where the resistance of the vine is tested to its absolute limit by heat, drought and rock hard soils.

In his approach to winemaking Franchetti acknowledges the influence of the 'garagistes' of Saint Emilion: high density planting, short pruning, drastic thinning of an already meagre crop and very late harvesting result in yields of around 15 hectolitres per hectare of concentrated fruit.

The wines ferment in open vats with manual punching down of the cap. Franchetti doesn't believe in long maceration because, 'with grapes like this you don't have to worry too much about extraction', but managing the fermentation of such sugar-loaded musts is critical (he lost most of his Merlot in 2000 when the yeasts gave up). The wines are raised in 200% new oak.

The Tenuta di Trinoro Rosso is a huge, soft, mouth-filling Bordeaux blend. Le Cupole di Trinoro is a variation on the same theme which includes the southern Italian Uva di Troia and the rare Cesanese d'Affile. For the real cult buyers there is also tiny production of the dense and intriguingly exotic mono-varietal Cesanese. **D**

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OTHERS TO LOOK OUT FOR...

Tuscany is not readily associated with white wine, but the recently renovated Villa Ortaglia estate demonstrates that the largely unexploited foothills of the Apennines north of Florence have potential for classy wines with crisp length and intense fruit. New out this year is an original and very winning Chardonnay/Sauvignon blend called Bianco Capello. Maurizio Castelli is the winemaker.

On a more traditional note, Marco Ricasoni at Rocca di Montegrossi reeves an increasingly neglected genre with a superb first vintage of Vin Santo from his new estate – a rich, concentrated and beautifully made wine.

In the Maremma, the Moretti family of Bellavista fame released the first wines from their new Petra estate this year.

Although sourced from vineyards which will be replaced in the current

replanting programme, the Val di Cornia Rosso 1998 and, in particular, the racy Petra IGT 1997 both give glimpses of the huge potential of the new, no-expense spared winery at Suvereto.

In Chianti, Kendall Jackson is clearly set to join the major players with its new 1,000ha Tenuta di Arceno estate at Costafueva Berardengo. 'The most exciting thing about this project is having the opportunity to start from scratch and replant the whole property for quality,' says Jonathan Rudwell, the estate's English director/winemaker. The Californian-based multinational aims to focus on Super-Tuscans with a house style which Rudwell describes as 'big on mouthfeel' with Cabernet, Merlot and Syrah prominent in both blends and monovarietals, but there is also a very good and unexpectedly traditional Chianti Classico

Riserva. The first vintages are out now.

Among other debut releases in Chianti, Gerd Schue at the Castello di Lucignano at Gaiole got off on the right foot with a real aficionado's Chianti Classico Riserva 1997. Schue did not make a riserve in the difficult 1998 vintage, but look out for the 1999.

At Colleungo, Tony and Mira Rocca live up to expectations with another batch of very distinctive, limited production Chiantis. Seek out their fragrant, blackberry-scented Roveto 1999.

Meanwhile Gogliolo, another Castellina estate, seems to have made the definitive quality leap with the new single vineyard Pecchia, which comes out for the first time this year with a 1999 vintage to take your breath away. It is a sign of the times that this superb statement of pure Tuscan Sangiovese is made by a Swiss banker.

Castello di Lucignano, where Gerd Schue is making a name with impressive Chiantis

