

Tuscan IGT wines: panel tasting results

Given the range of vintages on display, our judges were delighted with the quality they found across the board in wines based on both Sangiovese and international varieties, praising their character and good balance.



Susan Hulme MW, Andrea Briccarello and Annette Scarfe MW tasted 74 wines with 6 Outstanding and 52 Highly Recommended.

Entry criteria: producers and UK agents were invited to submit their Tuscan red IGT wines, from the latest vintage release and priced at £8 or above in the UK

Tuscan IGT wines: panel tasting scores

74 wines tasted

Exceptional **0**

Outstanding **6**

Highly recommended **52**

Recommended **15**

Commended **0**

Fair **1**

Poor **0**

Faulty **0**

There is a great heritage to live up to for Tuscany's IGT wines. The classification (Indicazione Geografica Tipica) was established in 1992 as a solution to a particular problem: in the early 1980s, the rules for Chianti Classico enshrined some of the worst aspects of post-war traditions. White grapes were compulsory in the blend, diluting the quality, while international grape varieties such as **Cabernet Sauvignon** and **Merlot** were not permitted.

Those who wanted to create wines outside these restrictions had to label their wines as 'vino da tavola', leading to a situation in which **Tuscany's** most famous wines, such as Sassicaia and Tignanello, were under Italy's lowest wine designation.

The creation of the IGT Toscana denomination was an attempt to rectify this situation and allowed winemakers more scope to experiment. Nowadays the denomination can encompass anything from a 100% **Sangiovese** to a classic **Bordeaux** blend, or even a 100% **Syrah** or **Montepulciano**. The wines can come from anywhere in Tuscany.

Of 74 IGT Toscana reds in this tasting, we rated six Outstanding ('gold') and 52 Highly recommended ('silver'). Andrea Briccarello commented: 'The overall quality of the tasting was stunning, with some amazing wines.'

Almost half (46%) of the wines tasted featured international varieties as the single or predominant variety and they comprised 45% of the wines scoring 90pts or above – including four of the Outstandings.

More than half of the wines had Sangiovese as the main or only variety, yet by comparison they made up only 34% of the 90pt-plus wines. Of the 16 single-varietal Sangiovese wines, none was rated Outstanding – however, two of the Outstandings were Sangiovese/Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot blends.

Annette Scarfe MW remarked: 'Cabernet Sauvignon-dominant blends were the stars. Compared to the Sangiovese-led wines they showed greater purity of fruit, complexity and consistency. They also seemed most likely to age well.' Syrah- and **Cabernet Franc**-based wines were also extremely successful (see top-scorers Fabbrica Pienza and Tenuta di Arceno Arcanum).

The vintages tasted mostly reflected their characters very well: 2017 (15 wines) was hot and dry with some wines exhibiting firmer, drier tannins but still with plenty of fruit; 2018 (20) produced fresher, greener wines from a cooler vintage; 2019 (12) looks as if it will be a great vintage, with the wines expressing more harmony.

There were also individual surprises, such as the 2014 vintage (generally cooler with lots of rain in places) – all three examples from this less-than-stellar year scored well. Scarfe declared these to be 'delicious, aromatic and elegant wines that were surprisingly youthful'.

In general, oak was very well handled, even when more evident in the wine. Some alcohol levels were naturally high, but in harmony with the wine, rather than being obtrusive. Briccarello noted: 'There are no blockbuster wines, just lots of varietal typicity, and no sign of over-extraction. Even the hot vintages showed some restraint and poise.'

In terms of value for money, prices varied dramatically among similar-scoring wines. For those at 90pts or more, prices varied between £9-£80 a bottle, showing that there are some fantastic-value wines to be found under the IGT Toscana denomination.

Top-scoring wines from the Tuscan IGT panel tasting

(...)

Trinoro, Le Cupole, Toscana 2016



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Blind tasted by **Susan Hulme MW**, **Andrea Briccarello**,
Annette Scarfe MW (at London, 01 Sep 2021)
Part of **Tuscan IGT wines: panel tasting results**



Charming nose of cherry pie, violets, plums and cedary notes.
Fresh on the mid-palate with round tannins and creamy texture.

Drinking Window 2021 - 2030