



## Tuscan Wine

In Tuscany the Sangiovese is the grape of excellence. It is native of central Italy and seemingly was named by the Romans or before and translates to „blood of Jupiter“. In modern Tuscan wine making it plays a fundamental role in all quality Tuscan DOC & DOCG red wines, all of which are defined wine regions within Tuscany. It even is the base of many famous Super Tuscons.

Here as follows a list of the most important wines of Tuscany:

- Chianti Classico
- Brunello di Montalcino
- Vino Nobile di Montepulciano
- Carmignano
- Morellino di Scansano
- Vernaccia di San Gimignano (an exception as it is the only white wine region).

Further North in the area round Lucca are the wines (both red and white) of the Colline Lucchesi and of Montecarlo.

All of the nominated regions have a Consorzio that give a list of producers who offer wine-tastings and tours of their wine-cellar. It is usually a good idea to ring before going to wineries, just to make sure that they are open. If you would like more than just a taste of the products, some wineries organize visits of the vineyards and cellars and tastings with breads, cheese and cured hams.

### The different wine qualities

The complex system of the wine classifications and the naming lies in the label. The label, indeed, gives essential information about the wine and its characteristics, which are standardised by the European Community.

According to the EC-Regulations The label should show the following details:

- Name (eg. Chianti, Frascati, etc.)
- Category (Vino da Tavola, DOC etc.)
- Alcoholic content
- Volume in liters
- Furthermore, in case of a sweet wine, the label should contain the remaining sugar content indicated with a „+“ (for example 10+2% vol.)
- Moreover there are recommendations with which dishes the wine goes best.

Vino da Tavola is the lowest quality level. Here is not meant the colour of the wine, but it is a more simple wine whose grapes can even have various origins, in order to obtain a wine with a fruity-harmonious character. This quality level corresponds the English table wine.

IGT is the abbreviation for Indicazione Geografica Tipica (Geographical detail), which means the region of origin (Tuscany, Emilia Romagna and so on), the type of vine (eg. Sangiovese) and the year must be indicated. The IGT corresponds the vin ordinaire.



After that follows the DOC, which is the Italian abbreviation for Denominazione di Origine Controllata and means "Wine with controlled origin". One can find this abbreviation under the name of the wine. It is a wine of a determined area with certain characteristics, which are established and controlled by the DOC-Consortium. The consortium doesn't only establish the vine types and the quantity to produce, but also the processing of the grapes until the bottling of the wine as well as the storage.

Before the DOC-wine is put on the market it has to undergo chemical tests.

DOCG is the abbreviation for Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita, which means "Wine of controlled and guaranteed origin". This nomination is destined only for a wine of a particular good quality. In order to get the DOCG nomination, the wine should have been part for at least 5 years of the DOC-wine. The DOC and DOCG wine corresponds to the so called wine of certified origin and quality.

The DOC- and DOCG-qualification system was developed in 1963. The first wine whose place of origin was controlled was the famous Tuscan white wine Vernaccia di San Gimignano.

Afterwards followed the Chianti as well as the Brunello di Montalcino.

... more about the DOCG wine:

Four different grape varieties are used, among which the most important is the Sangiovese for the percentage employed (from 75 to 90%).

Together with the Sangiovese grapes there is a part of Canaiolo (5-10%), a red grape, and two white grapes, the Malvasia and the Trebbiano (2-5%); other red grapes, listed by the DOCG laws, can be used up to a 10%.

The DOCG statutes put important restrictions on the production, regarding the plants (not more than 3 kg. per plant), as well as on every hectare (75 quintals of grapes, more than 52,50 HL); the minimum alcohol content of the wine (12' for the young wines, 12,5' for the Riserva-reserve) and the date of introduction to consumption (1st June after the grape-harvest, 1st November for the members of the Consorzio). The Consorzio del Marchio Storico - Chianti Classico, is a co-operative established by 33 producers in Radda in Chianti in 1924; among its targets it has the qualification and the promotion of the product.

Its guarantee label distinguishes the bottles of the Chianti Classico produced by the members and the Gallo Nero, the black cockerel, the historic symbol of the military league of the Chianti, active on this territory since the XIV century. Today the members are over 600 (250 of these produce wine with their own label) and represent over 80% of the total production of Chianti Classico. To receive the Gallo Nero label the members have to follow





the technical indications of the co-operative and present their wines for evaluation to the tasting committee and the strict chemical analysis.

### **Chianti Classico**

The Chianti Classico is an hilly area with an altitude lying between the 250-600 meters above the sea level. The climate is continental without relevant variations, the yearly precipitation is around the 800-900 millimetres of rain. The land, stony and not deep, with some important slopes, is made up of sandstone on the higher grounds and of clay-limestones in the lower lands.

The particularities of the climate, the grounds and the altitude makes the Chianti Classico a region which is appropriate for the production of high quality wines: 10.000 hectares of land are dedicated to vineyards and 6.972 of these vineyards are listed in the Albo dei Vigneti (register of vineyards) for the production of the Chianti Classico DOCG (controlled and guaranteed denomination of origin).

### **Vino Nobile di Montepulciano:**

The masterpiece of Tuscany wines is certainly the Vino Nobile di Montepulciano, one of the best red wines in Italy. The production of this noble wine has ancient origins. The wine production has always ranked first in Montepulciano economy, thanks to the quality of its hills, to the

special and favourable microclimate and to the industriousness of its farmers.

The „Historical and Geographical Dictionary of Tuscany“ by Repetti mentions a document of 1350 which establishes the terms for trade and export of Montepulciano wine. The production area of Vino Nobile di Montepulciano, is limited to the boundaries of the Municipality - excluding the flat area of Valdichiana - and to the lands located between 250 and 600 meters of altitude. The modern growing and selection methods, joined with the ancient skills of master wineries, produce a wine of excellent quality.

