

SAN DONATINO
(Castellina-in-Chianti, Siena)

September 2025



With Matteo Ferré of San Donatino on the high hills of Castellina-in-Chianti in the outskirts of Siena

Chianti Classico is, well, confusing. Perhaps, not a smart marketing thing to say since I am trying to sell you some. However, the truth has to be said.

Chianti started well. The original Chianti boundaries were declared in 1716 due to their compelling quality and included three villages: *Castellina-in-Chianti*, *Gaiole-in-Chianti*, and *Radda-in-Chianti*. These three communes merely cover a two-mile stretch. Then in 1932, the Chianti boundaries were redrawn and expanded to include seven zones. Some expanded zones, including the original three Chianti villages, were renamed as Chianti Classico, while the expanded zones became Chianti. Why the original Chianti producers were forced to append “Classico” to their wines is beyond me. It is like the tail wagging the dog. It is confusing.

The Chianti areas have continued to expand since 1932 due to political and economic greed. Then starting 1996, up to 20% of international varieties, such as Merlot or Syrah, can be added and still be called Chianti Classico. There are so many beautiful Italian varietals. Why allow French varietals and dilute Chianti Classico character? Consider a reverse situation. I cannot see Burgundians adding Italian varietals and still calling their wines, for example, *Chambolle ‘Les Amoureuses’*. Fortunately, there are still some Chianti Classico producers, who keep the original intent of the region.

San Donatino is located on a hill of *Castellina-in-Chianti* in the outskirts of Siena – in one of three original Chianti villages. Matto Ferré is the *contadino* of San Donatino. The estate of San Donatino has 45 hectares, of which, only 16 hectares are planted to vines. The rest is left as natural forests with some olive trees, providing biodiversity. There are many local owls that they are represented on the labels of San Donatino. I personally have seen these owls while staying at a farm in *Castellina-in-Chianti*. San Donatino vineyards are at a high elevation of about 420 m above sea level, which give lively and fresh wines. San Donatino does not add international varieties to their Chianti Classico. To me, still to this day, the best bottles of Chianti Classico are to be found in the original three communes.

CHIANTI CLASSICO ‘POGGIO AI MORI’ 2021
SKU: 378706 SPECULATIVE 750ml 12 bottles/case
\$33.54 Wholesale / \$44.00 Retail per bottle



A hint a cherry taste with dust of earth that is anchored in the terroir of Chianti Classico. Pretty. Elegant. Balanced. Aged in neutral vats for about eighteen months, followed by another year in bottles prior to release. The vineyard sits very high at an elevation of 420 meter above sea level, which keeps temperature cool at nights during growing season, giving freshness. Matteo Ferré, the owner of San Donatino, believes it is the rocky hill at a high elevation that gives the compelling, inimitable taste of Chianti Classico. Grapes are picked by hand and fermented with ambient yeasts – like all of San Donatino wines. This is 100% *Sangiovese*. There are owls that live in and around the estate. You can see a rendering of an owl on the labels.

CHIANTI CLASSICO 'POGGIO AI MORI' 2021
SKU: 325299 SPECULATIVE 1.5 Litre 6 bottles/case
\$68.50 Wholesale / \$89.00 Retail per bottle

Comes in MAGNUMS for celebrational Italian dinners. For a reason I cannot quite explain, MAGNUMS of Chianti put me in a celebration mood. That is true for all MAGNUMS, of course, but for Chianti, even more so.

CHIANTI CLASSICO RISERVA 'POGGIO AI MORI' 2019
SKU: 378698 SPECULATIVE 750ml 12 bottles/case
\$46.83 Wholesale / \$61 Retail per bottle



Regal. Elegant. Unforced concentration. Ah, so beautiful. This Chianti Classico Riserva speaks clearly about all things that are great about old-world wines without a trace of being old-fashioned. This wine has that illusive greatness: power without weight. This Chianti Classico Riserva is only made in certain vintages when Matteo Ferré believes the vineyard gives something compelling. *Élevage* is in the traditional neutral 30 hl litre botti (3,000 litre traditional barrels) for about 2 years. Then, the bottles are aged as long as Matto Ferré thinks the Riserva deserves. There is a long tradition in Chianti Classico that the Riservas must be aged for many years prior to release to ensure the wine is at its best. Open a bottle with friends, cook some Italian dishes, and experience the beauty of Chianti Classico Riserva. This is 100% *Sangiovese*.

CAMPACCI 2024
SKU: 378701 SPECULATIVE 750ml 12 bottles/case
\$27.79 Wholesale / \$36 Retail per bottle



Fresh. Fruity. A red wine imbued with Tuscan soil and sun. This wine is made from the younger vines and it is also 100% *Sangiovese*. Maceration is intentionally kept short to bring out fruit for earlier drinking pleasures. *Élevage* is about six months with some bottle aging prior to release. A wine that is made simply but tastes anything but simple. This wine goes down the gullet easy. Attractive nose adds complexity to this wine. Ah, the beauty of Tuscany hills shining through. What a delicious wine. I feel like my Vancouver winter rain-soaked flesh is defrosting when I drink a bottle of this wine with Italian dishes. It is best slightly chilled.

BARBAGIANNI Rosato 2024
SKU: 325302 SPECULATIVE 750ml 12 bottles/case
\$28.64 Wholesale / \$37.00 Retail per bottle

This rosato is new to our market. Finding a great rosato made with Sangiovese is rare. When Ramona and I tasted this wine at the winery, it was fresh with a hint of strawberries with complex mineral notes. This rosato is 100% Sangiovese. The younger vines are picked intentionally early to make this refreshing rosato. Matteo Ferre recommends drinking this Rosato cool but not ice cold. Matteo tells me Sangiovese loses all of its beauty when served too cold.



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