



Sergio Zingarelli, chairman of the Consorzio Chianti Classico

Gran Selezione

A CONVINCING NEW DESIGNATION IN CHIANTI CLASSICO

Since 2014, when it was presented to the public, the Chianti Classico Gran Selezione has trebled in number, now exceeding 100 labels produced by 88 wineries. Grape selection and longer ageing place it at the top of the quality pyramid though Gran Selezione also promotes the concept of terroir and cru in Chianti Classico. It is proving to be a winning strategy for the whole appellation, boosting sales across-the-board.

By Irene Graziotto

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ITALY
- REGION -



Chianti Classico wine types in a controversial pyramid where Riserva and Gran Selezione are at the same level, sometimes even some producers' Chianti Classico annata. The same is true in the Barolo DOCG and for MEGA, or Menzioni Geografiche Aggiuntive

The creation of the Gran Selezione is the latest reform introduced by the Consorzio Chianti Classico to strengthen the area's brand image. Initially, the Consorzio aimed to separate the original Florentine area of Chianti Classico from the broader region where Chianti production has developed over the centuries. Yet, "despite major investments by Chianti Classico wineries, quality perception was still low" admits Sergio Zingarelli, chairman of the Consorzio and owner of Rocca delle Macie. It was high time for a second reform.

REARRANGING THE QUALITY PYRAMID

In 2013, the Gran Selezione was hesitantly approved with reservations expressed on both the name and the content of the reform. Gran Selezione is made from at least 80% Sangiovese plus other red varieties permitted in Tuscany. It can be either a selection of the estate's best grapes or



Giovanni Poggiali, whose family owns Felsina

a single vineyard wine but in both cases vineyards must belong to the winery. "Our disagreements stem from the latter specification, which is misleading for the consumer when, as is our case, all the wine bottled comes from owned vineyards," points out Giovanni Poggiali of Felsina estate, who also considers ageing to be "a bit of a stretch" – Gran Selezione has to age for at least 30 months, including three in the bottle. Despite these comments, the market seems to have fully endorsed it and according to projections, Gran Selezione will soon account for nearly 10% of total Chianti Classico production worth an estimated 70-100 million euros.

**GRAN SELEZIONE
AS A SINGLE VINEYARD WINE**

For many wineries, the new Docg has meant finding a proper hierarchy for their existing production more than creating a brand new wine. Single vineyard wine seems to



Bastignano vineyard from which Villa Calcinaia produces one of its three Gran Selezione labels.



Marco Ricasoli Firdolfi, owner of Rocca di Montegrossi



Tommaso Marrocchesi Marzi owner of Bibbiano



The Matta Family of Castello Vicchiomaggio



Francesco Ricasoli owner of the Barone Ricasoli estate

be the most common interpretation. "Gran Selezione has given us the opportunity to better define our Vigneto San Marcellino which was not precise enough under Riserva. We produce it using Sangiovese and a rare indigenous grape called Pugnitello" explains Marco Ricasoli Firidolfi of Rocca di Montegrossi.

Colonia, the Gran Selezione produced at Felsina, is a single varietal Sangiovese from a single vineyard opposite Poggio a Rancia.

"With Gran Selezione we have found the proper label for our production which has been focusing on single vineyard wines for thirty years and is now epitomised by Montornello and Vigna del Capannino" says Tommaso Marroccesi Marzi of Bibbiano estate.

"When Gran Selezione was created, La Prima Riserva had all the prerequisites for becoming a Gran Selezione from a specific cru" says John Matta of Castello di Vicchiomaggio.

The same thing happened at Castello di Brolio, adds Francesco Ricasoli of the Barone Ricasoli estate: "We have been producing it since 1997 and bottled it as a Chianti Classico to underline the potential of our terroir and that of Chianti Classico as opposed to the Super Tuscans".

PROMOTING GRAN SELEZIONE

"At Lamole di Lamole Estate we were already producing a single vineyard wine from Sangiovese and Cabernet-Sauvignon called Campolungo" explains winemaking supervisor Andrea Daldin "so we didn't have to make any changes to our communication strategy".

Conversely, Michele Contartese, marketing director at Castello di Meleto, reveals that initially there were some major hurdles to overcome: "Buyers had a small amount of, quite often, confusing information. We have worked directly with them to explain all the work behind our Gran Selezione: a selection of the finest grapes from different plots. In the beginning we used Sangiovese and Cabernet-Sauvignon and have now switched to 100% Sangiovese to better reflect the wine region".

"Whereas with our Riserva we try to offer the best rendition of the vintage, our three Gran Selezione labels - Vigna Bastignano, Vigna La Fornace and Vigna Contessa Luisa - aim to bring out the personality of our different single vineyard microclimates" says Sebastiano Capponi of Villa Calcinaia.



Andrea Daldin winemaker at Lamole di Lamole



Michele Contartese of Castello di Meleto



Ada Andrighetti, owner of Casale dello Sparviero



Sebastiano Capponi, owner of Villa Calcinaia

GRAN SELEZIONE

AS A SELECTION OF THE FINEST GRAPES

Castelli del Grevepesa offers a different interpretation of Gran Selezione with its Clemente VII from a selection of the best Sangiovese grapes ripened in the vineyards of Campoli, Montefridolfi, San Casciano and Mercatale whereas its other Gran Selezione, Lamole, conveys the personality of Sangiovese grown in the specific sub-area of Lamole.

Casale dello Sparviero has opted to use the best Sangiovese grapes from its most beautiful vineyard for Gran Selezione "Vigna Paronza" while Gran Selezione "Ada Andrighetti" is a blend of Sangiovese and 10% Pugnitello. "We chose Pugnitello", explains Marco Giacobelli, "because we are carrying out a small project to rescue some minor varieties including this one which blends perfectly with Sangiovese".

The ethos behind the Gran Selezione project and the way two different Gran Seleziones can be positioned in the market is summed up by Francesco Ricasoli: "We don't just want to produce two Gran Seleziones, we want to offer consumers two great wines".

Check out Gilbert & Gaillard's Gran Selezione selection on page ... of our 2018 Wine Guide