



THE WINES OF TENUTA DELL'
ORNELLAIA
A TASTING AT ROBERSON WINE

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 6TH 2008

ORNELLAIA THE ESTATE

TENUTA DELL' ORNELLAIA



The name 'Super-Tuscan' has become one of the most over used (and abused) in today's wine world - but for the couple of estates that inspired the phrase it still very much applies.

Ornellaia and its neighbour Sassicaia inspired a wave of copycats and demonstrated the excellence that the terroir of Bolgheri can produce.

Although Ornellaia cannot claim to be the original Super-Tuscan, it most certainly has a valid claim to being the best. The estate was founded by Lodovico Antinori in 1981 next-door to Sassicaia, where vines had been planted in 1965 using international varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot.

The Antinori family (one of Tuscany's richest and most influential in wine terms) had watched these developments closely and in 1971 they released their own 'Vino di Tavola' called Tignanello.

10 years later, Lodovico Antinori purchased a 97 hectare estate just outside the Medieval village of Bolgheri, and planted the vineyards with Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot.

Lodovico was close to Sassicaia in a number of ways. First and foremost they are neighbours and share similar terroir that is ideal for the cultivation of Bordelais varieties.

In addition to this there was a family connection - Lodovico's aunt Clarice had married Marchese Mario Incisa della Rocchetta, the owner of Tenuta San Guido (the estate where Sassicaia is made), and his brother Piero had been consulting on the production of Sassicaia for many years.

Lodovico oversaw the development of the estate from the first vintage in 1985 through to 1999, when he (somewhat controversially) sold it to the Mondavi family of California.

The Italian establishment were not at all happy about this development, even when Mondavi subsequently sold 50% of the shares to the Frescobaldi family.

In 2005 Mondavi Wines was bought by Constellation Brands, who in turn decided to sell the remaining share of Ornellaia to the Frescobaldis.

Winemaker Axel Heinz took the reins from Tibor Gal (who helped Lodovico set up the estate) and continues to work alongside Michel Rolland - the roving wine-maker and consultant from Bordeaux who has been working with Ornellaia since the very beginning.

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LE VOLTE

Le Volte is a blend of 50% Sangiovese, with the remainder being a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. In 2006 this worked out as 32% Cab and 18% Merlot. Since the inaugural vintage in 1991 it has gone on to become very popular with consumers looking to sample Ornellaia's winemaking expertise without the hefty price tags.

After vinification the wine is aged for 10 months in 2-4 year-old French oak barrels that had previously been used for Masseto and Ornellaia.

2006 Le Volte

| Available | Retail price | Tasting price |
|-----------|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| 60 | £19.95 | Btl: £17.96 Case: £16.96 |



LE SERRE NUOVE

Unlike Le Volte which uses fruit bought in from high quality growers around Bolgheri, Serre Nuove is the 'second wine' of Ornellaia and was born in 1997 with the intention of fulfilling the same role that similar wines in Bordeaux have done for many years. Once the different parcels of fruit from the Ornellaia vineyards have been vinified and selection is made of those barrels that are deemed to have the most potential for ageing. These will go into the production of the estate wine and the ones that don't quite make the cut (but are of course of a very high standard) are bottled to become Le Serre Nuove.

The blend for the 2006 vintage was 50% Merlot, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon, 9% Cabernet Franc, 6% Petit Verdot, aged for 15 months in French barriques (25% new).

2006 Le Serre Nuove

| Available | Retail price | Tasting price |
|-----------|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| 60 | £39.95 | Btl: £35.96 Case: £33.96 |

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The flagship wine of Tenuta dell' Ornellaia is this eponymous cuvee that is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot and Petit Verdot. The vines were planted in 1982 and the first release was in 1985. Since then Ornellaia has gone on to be recognised as one of the very best red wines, being voted #1 wine in the world by Wine Spectator magazine in 2001.

The blend usually comprises two thirds Cabernet Sauvignon, one third Merlot, with small amounts of Franc and Verdot used to add complexity. The exact blend changes every year, as does the % of new oak, although it is usually aged for 18 months before bottling.

| | Available | Retail price | Tasting price |
|----------------|-----------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1993 Ornellaia | 1 | £115.00 | Btl: £103.50 Case: £97.75 |
| 1998 Ornellaia | 4 | £180.00 | Btl: £162.00 Case: £153.00 |
| 1999 Ornellaia | 2 | £180.00 | Btl: £162.00 Case: £153.00 |
| 2000 Ornellaia | 1 | £165.00 | Btl: £148.50 Case: £140.25 |
| 2001 Ornellaia | 1 | £153.00 | Btl: £137.70 Case: £130.05 |
| 2005 Ornellaia | 10 | £130.00 | Btl: £117.00 Case: £110.50 |

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MASSETO

Part of the sprawling Ornellaia estate is a vineyard called Masseto that was identified early on as being ideally suited to the cultivation of Merlot.

In actual fact the early signs were so promising that in 1986 Lodovico decided to vinify the Merlot from this site (just 7ha) separately and the result was a stunning wine that has gone on to be compared with Pomerol's Chateau Petrus. After a very strict selection, the wine is aged for 24 months in 100% new oak barrels.

In the '86 vintage the wine was labelled simply as 'Merlot', but the Masseto name was given to the cuvee in 1987.

| | Available | Retail price | Tasting price |
|--------------|-----------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2000 Masseto | n/a | £440.00 | Btl: £396.00 Case: £374.00 |
| 2005 Masseto | 1 | £195.00 | Btl: £175.50 Case: £165.75 |