

TUSCANY CELEBRATES THROUGHOUT 2016

TEXT & PHOTO: URSULA HELLBERG

There are many reasons to say "Cheers!" with Tuscan wine in 2016, as four important anniversaries are on the calendar this year. Chianti Classico celebrates 300 years since the Grand Duke Cosimo III de' Medici established the guidelines for what would later become Chianti Classico DOCG. Vernaccia di San Gimignano, Vino Nobile di Montepulciano and Brunello di Montalcino all celebrate fifty years with their respective DOC (now also DOCG).



CHIANTI CLASSICO- A SPIRITED 300-YEAR OLD

For two days in February every year, Stazione Leopolda in Florence is filled with wine bottles, producers, visitors and sommeliers. From the crowd of 165 exhibitors I met three producers who all grow organically, but have different backgrounds. Susanna Soderi from Setrioli began her career as a physiotherapist but in 2005 realized that she would rather be working with grapes. Her 3.5 ha Azienda Agricola is in Castellina in Chianti, where she grows



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Sangiovese on 95% of the 3.5 ha vineyard. The remainder is Merlot. The ground is both stony and limey which lends typical minerality to her wines. Unlike many other producers, she didn't have any difficulties with the problematic, rainy and cold 2014 season.

"It was a good year for me. Well, I did have to wait a little longer than usual to harvest, and a fungus had attacked some of the grapes. But what was left was perfect," she

Beside her stands Monica Raspi. Even though she grew up in a winegrower family, her choice of occupation wasn't pre-determined.

"No, I was a veterinarian first," she explains. The vineyard is called Pomona and is also located in Castellina in Chianti, near Siena. She grows 100% Sangiovese even though her mother Ingeborg used to keep watch over Cabernet Sauvignon. The effects of global warming can be seen here, despite their property's altitude (350 m over sea level), so last year, they began implementing new procedures in the vineyard.

"We used to remove a lot of leaves so the grapes would get more sun. Now, we don't take them away so that they can serve as protection," she adds.

Roberto Stucchi Prinetti from Badia a Coltibuono in Gaiole in Chianti agrees.

"Now we harvest a month earlier than we did 30 years ago," he says.

Until 1810, his property was a monastery, but under the Napoleonic era it became secularized. Roberto's family has owned Badia a Coltibuono since 1846. Besides the Sangiovese, the grow classic Tuscan grapes like Mammolo, Pugniatello, Malvasia Nera, Colorino, Canainolo, Fogliatonda and others. These are reflected in his IGT Toscana Montebello, where every bottle is a success and embodies Tuscany's fascinating grape history.

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THE SOMMELIERS HAD MANY BOTTLES TO SERVE WHEN NEW CHIANTI CLASSICO VINTAGES WERE TASTED IN FLORENCE.



SUSANNA SODERI, ROBERTO STUCCHI PRINETTI AND MONICA RASPI WERE 3 OF THE 165 PRODUCERS ON HAND IN STAZIONE LEOPOLDA TO PRESENT NEW CHIANTI CLASSICO VINTAGES.