

Gagliole Colli della Toscana Centrale 2006: a Super Tuscan from the heart of Chianti

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The wine: Chianti, IGT and Supertuscans



Although **Gagliole** is made in the beautiful village of **Castellina in Chianti** (20km north of Siena) it's not a Chianti by name. Why? Chianti must have a minimum percentage of the native Sangiovese and a lesser amount of Canaiolo grapes. This is all fine if you want to play by the rules and make some nice Chianti.

However, wines labeled "**IGT Toscana**" (Indicazione Geografica Tipica translates as "from the region of Tuscany") wines don't play by the stricter Chianti rules - essentially they're the Italian equivalent of the French **Vin de Pays** and allow the addition of foreign grapes like Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot.

This situation has allowed many winemakers, inspired by the great wines from Bordeaux, to make a name for themselves outside of Chianti. And it has clearly worked with the likes of **Ornellaia**, **Sassicaia** and **Tignanello** collectively referred to as "Supertuscans".

You could add the Gagliole to this elite list. The 2006 contains 90% Sangiovese and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon and, according to Thomas Bär, the Swiss lawyer/banker turned Italian winemaker.

2006 is the best, most exciting vintage out of all of the years they've produced Gagliole. Nature delivered near perfect conditions, followed by careful attention in the cellar.

The people: the team behind Gagliole

I remember once reading that **to make a small fortune in wine, you have to spend a large one.** This may or may not be true for Thomas and Monika Bär. Indeed, Monika was recently quoted in Decanter magazine explaining:

why Bär buys less fine furniture and works of art at Christie's: all his spare cash is soaked up by winemaking.





He's a Swiss banker, she's a gallery manager and together they fell in love with Tuscany and decided to settle there, buying the 30 hectare Gagliole estate in 1990.

In terms of investment, they've hired the best of Italian oenologists in Stefano Chioccioli in addition to Cesare Panti and Serenella Bentivoglio to manage the day-to-day running of the vineyards.

The making of Gagliole wine

According to a document in Siena's State Archives, the Gagliole estate dates back to 994 A.D. The vineyards are 500 meters above sea level where the **Sangiovese** slowly mature with a south-southwest exposure. The age of the vines (from 3 to 30 years) reflect the investment that has gone into Gagliole since the Bärns became the latest custodians of the estate.

There is a density of 5000 vines per hectare with a yield of 3500 - 4000 kg per hectare.

Grapes are handpicked (as opposed to the violent vine shaking tractors on stilts you see in parts of Chianti). Only the best grapes are then hand chosen for fermentation in oak vats.

The wine then spends at a minimum 14 months in French oak barriques (barrels with 225 litre capacity), of which 70% are new and 30% a mix of second and third use. The wine then spends a further 6 months in bottle before being released.

The verdict on Gagliole Colli della Toscana Centrale 2006

While it's clear that the Gagliole 2006 needs a few more years to develop to full maturity, it's drinking really well now, particularly after 3-4 hours decanting. This is a seriously good wine.

Dark inky ruby in the glass, the tannins are already a silky velvet and there's the excellent rich fruit of dark cherries and blackcurrants. Given the Wine Spectator's 94 and 96 point scores for the respective 2004 and 2005 vintages, the **2006 is sure to be a huge hit** when it reaches the wine shop shelves in Ireland. It can truly be said to be a "Supertuscan".

Credits

- Thanks to Bettina Bäck from Wine Partners for sending on the background information and, of course, for sending over the sample to taste.
- Gagliole.com - website for Gagliole estate.

Artikel zu finden unter: <http://www.sourgrapes.ie/2008/12/28/gagliole-%ef%bb%bf%ef%bb%bf%ef%bb%bf%ef%bb%bfcolli-della-toscana-centrale-2006/>