

# **John Fodera's** **Tuscan Vines**

Passionately Pursuing Italian Wine and Food

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## **UPDATE: TASTING AT CECCHI**

by John Fodera



~ The tasting took place at the Cecchi Offices in Castellina in Chianti ~

Dateline Tuscany.

After spending the morning shopping in San Gimignano, I headed back to Campochiarenti for lunch to give Daniele a break from the sweltering vineyards. Later that afternoon, I had a tasting scheduled at Cecchi followed by dinner at the Officina. It was a full rich day.

The Cecchi offices lie just south of Castellina in Chianti near Castellina Scalo. A gorgeous example of modern Tuscan architecture, the building houses the family offices, a large reception center and underground wine cellars. Andrea arranged a casual tasting of current vintages and barrel samples in a comfortable conference room.



~ The Cecchi Office in Castellina Scalo ~

The first flight consisted mostly of wines from the Villa Cerna Estate. Villa Cerna lies atop a majestic hill almost directly across the road from the Cecchi offices. Dedicated to Sangiovese based wines, the estate produces a wonderful Chianti Classico and a brilliant Riserva.

#### Flight 1

**2015 Villa Cerna Primocolle Chianti Classico:** This wine derives its name (“First Hill”) because it’s the first hill in Chianti Classico that one sees as they approach Castellina from Siena. The color is a deep ruby. On the nose there are ample aromas of tobacco, crushed red fruits and fresh flowers. In the mouth, the wine relies on bright cherry flavors backed by tobacco and earth tones. Good structure characteristic of the vintage. An excellent value. Contains 5% Colorino. 89-91 points.

**2016 Villa Cerna Primocolle Chianti Classico:** Another deeply colored wine, this is much more floral than the 2015. Red berries, flowers and perfume on the nose is followed by crushed berry and herbs on the palate. Much fresher and feminine than the more structured 2015, I actually prefer this wine. Contains 5% Colorino. 90-92 points. Find Primocolle

**2016 Villa Rosa Ribaldoni Chianti Classico:** This is the first vintage for this wine which I reviewed in this Tasting Report. Deep ruby with violet highlights this is driven more on the nose and palate by sweet tobacco and bright red fruits. Juicy, sapid and smooth in the mouth this is rather complex for its price point. Very nice. 91-93 points. Find Ribaldoni

2015 Villa Cerna Chianti Classico Riserva: This is a masculine Riserva. On the nose, crushed red cherry, stones, earth and flowers are prevalent. The flavors add spices and tobacco leaf to the ripe berry fruit. Needs time given the long, tannic structure. 91-94 points.

2016 Villa Cerna Chianti Classico Riserva: Again, the differences in vintage character are apparent. Fresh and vibrant on the nose with flowers, toasted spices, crushed cherry and earth. Flavors add dried herbs to the core of fruit. Elegant, fresh and impressive. 92-95 points.

2007 Villa Cerna Chianti Classico Riserva: This one came straight up from the cellar. The color is an amazing garnet. The nose is full of cherry, herbs and earth but there's a hint of bell pepper too. On the palate, the core of cherry is center stage with leaf tobacco and spices coming through. This is elegant, round and ripe. 90-93 points.



~ The first flight was three vintages of Chianti Classico and three vintages of Riserva from Villa Cerna, pictured at front ~



~ The Ribaldoni, at right, is sourced from a single vineyard on the Villa Rosa estate. The 2016 is the first vintage for this wine and it should improve as the vineyards are being renewed ~

## Flight 2

The next flight focused on the Gran Selezione from the Villa Rosa Estate. This wine is core to Cecchi's concept for both of the estates. The intention is to produce Chianti Classico and Chianti Classico Riserva from Villa Cerna and Chianti Classico and Gran Selezione from Villa Rosa. Both estates are located in Castellina in Chianti. Therefore, the aim is to highlight the differences in terroir; even considering the close proximity.

**2015 Villa Rosa Gran Selezione:** Generally, these are light colored wines almost reminiscent of Burgundy. Interesting nose of menthol, fresh herbs, berry, spice and tobacco. The crushed fruit, flowers and herbs carry through on the palate. This is masculine and tannic and still needs cellaring to develop its flavors further. 91-93 points.

**2016 Villa Rosa Gran Selezione:** More fruit driven on the nose with spices and ripe tobacco leaf added. Fresh, juicy and elegant on the palate with flowers, crushed berry and spice. Again, I prefer this to the 15. 92-94 points.

**2017 Villa Rosa Gran Selezione Barrel Sample:** These were pulled from barrel earlier in the afternoon. It's important to note that while it's labeled here as a Gran Selezione, the determination as to whether that is ultimately the case has not been made. Gorgeous nose of flowers and fruit. Very primary. On the palate this is soft, supple and seductive. Lots of crushed cherry with soft spices and just a hint of oak. I love this and would happily drink it right now! Excellent effort in the rough vintage. 93-95 points



2018 Villa Rosa Gran Selezione Barrel Sample: Same disclaimer as the 2017. Bountiful nose of crushed cherry, flowers, pepper and spice. Very fresh and vibrant on the palate. Viscous and forward, I am surprised it didn't seem more tannic. Spices, earth, cherry and floral notes are present and hint at a complex evolution. 91-94 points.

The Villa Rosa wines are excellent values; especially the Gran Selezione which should be under \$50 at retail. Find Villa Rosa GS



~ The first row illustrates the lighter color of the Villa Rosa Gran Selezione. At right are the barrel samples taken of the 2017 and 2018. ~



~ From the balcony of the conference room, you can see the new Foresteria Villa Cerna across the road. There was a private party occurring that night and they were waving to us. In the background, you can see the vines of Villa Cerna sloping up to the Villa ~

With the tasting completed, we were all getting hungry and piled into the car for the short ride up to Panzano for dinner at Dario's Officina. We grabbed a few interesting wines to pair with the dinner from the lineup below.



~ These are the wines that were tasted. From left to right: Primocolle Chianti Classico, Ribaldoni Chianti Classico, Villa Cerna Riserva showing the new and old label, Villa Rosa Gran Selezione and the Villa Rosa Barrel Samples brought up in empty magnums ~

In the near future, I will be updating tastings on these wines so stay tuned.

Salute!



**TuscanVines** ®  
@JohnMFodera



Updating Cecchi Tastings & more at their offices in Castellina. #Tuscanvines

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