Winemaker: Lorenzo Gatteschi
Generation: 2nd

PODERE CIONA

# Chianti Classico DOCG

For years, we've been hoping that Tuscan winemaker Lorenzo Gatteschi and his family would produce a "basic" Chianti Classico to accompany their stunning, high altitude Riserva. With only 5.5 hectares under vine, however, they simply didn't have the juice. Now, however, our long wait has paid off - this elegant, nano-production wine is far from simple, with a complex nose of bright red cherry, slate and bramble, and a rich and juicy palate born for food. Impossible to have just one glass!

**WINEMAKER BIOGRAPHY**

In addition to making stunning, small batch wines with his dad, Lorenzo Gatteschi helped found Small Vineyards and remains one of two Italian partners at August Imports. While he has lived extensively in the States, Lorenzo now spends most of his time at the family's high-altitude estate in Chianti Classico.

**ENOLOGIST**

Vincenza Folgheretti

**TASTING NOTES**

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| **Color** | Light ruby |
| **Nose** | Core of bright red cherry, with an outer ring of dark earth, slate, and blackberry bramble |
| **Palate** | The zingy, bright cherry repeats, accompanied by balanced acidity and a hint of dusty briar |
| **Finish** | Very clean and balanced |

**VINEYARD & VINIFICATION**

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| **Vineyard Location** | Chianti Classico DOCG, Tuscany |
| **Vineyard Size** | 1 ha |
| **Varietals List** | 96% Sangiovese<br>4% Merlot |
| **Farming Practices** | Organic farming (non-certified), including dry-farming; grapes picked by hand; all native yeasts |
| **Elevation** | 490-580 m |
| **Soils** | Primarily quartz arenite, some clay schist and marl |
| **Maturation Summary** | Bottled for 6 months |
| **Alcohol** | 13.5 % |
| **Acidity** | 5.91 g/liter |
| **Annual Production** | 2,400 bottles |

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## PODERE CIONA

Perched as high as one can go in the Chianti Classico region, the story of Podere Ciona is largely one of altitude. Situated at the top of a mountain-sized hill above Gaiole, the south-facing vines cover just 5 hectares but span 490-625 meters. At that height, you can stand in the vineyards and literally watch as clouds and weather systems part to go around the region. Dense woodland forests contrast the Gatteschi's manicured vineyards and silvery olive trees, and the estate enjoys a cooler climate than one might expect in Tuscany (especially at night). While various pockets exist at different altitudes, the soil is largely a mixture of quartz arenite (sandstone), schist, and marl – ideal for high-quality Sangiovese. Combined with the cool meso-climate, these rugged soils help to sculpt powerful wines of great tannic and acidic prowess. Lorenzo's Chianti Classico Riserva, for example, can age comfortably for 15 years, and for many 'Le Diacce'—the family's tannic, architectural Merlot—actually recalls the Right Bank. The addition of a little (true) Alicante Bouschet often lends a fascinating layer of earth-spice to the wines.

Because of the estate's small size, Lorenzo and his father, Franco, are able to personally track and oversee even the smallest detail contributing to their wine. Not only do they pick by hand, but at harvest, instead of whole clusters, they carry out an individual, grape-by-grape selection. The result? A maximum of one bottle per plant for all their efforts – sometimes a little less. Of course, both their size and location also come with inherent challenges. For example, in 2008 a single, 30-minute hailstorm took out their entire crop (1 hectare) of Merlot, and in 2013, an unusually hot summer cut the estate's production by one third (although it also led to some rather amazing concentration). The range of soils, too, makes it an ongoing challenge to find the perfect balance. "Vines that grow in schist are happier," says Lorenzo, "and produce fatter, more harmonious wines, whereas the quartz and bedrock lend themselves to more angular, mineral-driven fruit." Crafting that perfect weave each year is, of course, the beautiful, ongoing enological puzzle that is Podere Ciona.

PODERE CIONA

## REGION

### TUSCANY

One of the most recognizable regions in the world, Tuscany has an enological history dating back to the era of the Etruscans. Like Piedmont, Tuscany's daily life is interwoven with its food and wine... In sum, vino is a daily facet of the Tuscan lifestyle. With winding roads, sculpted cypresses, and romantic hilltop towns, Tuscany's beauty is legendary, and for many, Florence - once the epicenter of the Renaissance - provides a cultural heartbeat. That said, while the rolling hills of Colli Fiorentini help form a baseline in the minds of many Americans, the region is also home to Italy's Apennine mountain range (stretching from north to south), the wild, southern Maremma district, and a gorgeous, rugged coastline. In the end, Tuscany is topographically quite diverse, and wine zones range from warm and coastal to surprisingly high, continental, and cool.

As one of Italy's most prolific and historic wine regions, it's no wonder Tuscany has so many dedicated and regulated wines. There are currently 42 DOC's and 11 DOCG's. The latter include, of course, Chianti, Chianti Classico, Brunello di Montalcino and Vino Nobile, all predicated on the single red grape that dominates Tuscan production: Sangiovese. Roughly two-thirds of the vines in Tuscany are devoted to this noble varietal, which also happens to be Italy's most planted grape overall. Beyond this, winemakers have been increasingly supplementing vineyards with Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon (both with a 300+ year history in the region). For better or worse, white varieties generally take a distant back seat to the reds, with Trebbiano Toscano being the most widely planted and Vernaccia and Vermentino enjoying more prestige.

### CHIANTI CLASSICO DOCG

After the establishment of the initial Chianti DOC in 1967, the creation of the historic Chianti Classico DOCG followed two decades later, in 1996. While there is some overlap with the subzones of the larger Chianti designation, wines from the Classico zone are crafted in a single, smaller 'pocket ' extending from just south of Florence to the city of Siena. This area constitutes the original, historic growing zone and is often accompanied by a higher altitude above sea level. The 4 main communities of Radda, Gaiole, Greve, and Castellina lie entirely within the DOCG. Chianti Classico, Chianti Classico Riserva, and the highest-quality designation, Chianti Classico Gran Selezione, are all made according to more rigorous standards than the surrounding Chianti region.

In 1716, Grand Duke Cosimo III de'Medici demarcated the first Chianti wine zone, now known as Chianti Classico. The initial blend called for a majority of Sangiovese grapes (about 70%), along with Canaiolo and Malvasia Bianca. Today, the official blend requires a minimum of 80% Sangiovese, with a short list of other red grapes permitted to make up the remainder. These include natives such as Canaiolo and Colorino, along with well-established international varieties like Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Generally speaking, the region's best grapes are set aside used to produce Chianti Classico Riserva, which requires a minimum of 24 months maturation, including 18 months in the barrel and at least 3 in the bottle. In 2014 a new category of Chianti Classico was introduced: Chianti Classico Gran Selezione. A Gran Selezione wine is made exclusively from a estate's own grapes, and must undergo a full 30 months of aging, including 3 months fining in the bottle.