

Wine Spectator Insider

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INSIDER SPECIAL REPORT: TUSCANY

TUSCAN wine lovers are going to have a lot to celebrate this year. Many of the top wines in the outstanding year of 2006 are coming on to the market. Moreover, the excellent 2007 vintage will follow. I don't think there have ever been two back-to-back vintages with so much quality in the region.

It wasn't that the harvests in 2006 and 2007 were perfect. There was some intermittent rain in August and September in both years, and those two months generally make or break a vintage due to the crucial growing period for the vines. But most producers today are savvy enough in their vineyards and cellars to offset any slight declines in quality to their grapes or wines due to poor weather. And they did just that in 2006 and 2007. More important, most of the days were bright and sunny, giving the vines lots of energy with which to ripen their grapes.

What I love about the 2006s are their fabulous aromas. They are so bright and perfumed, especially the Sangioveses. In addition, they are rich and structured, with lots of ripe fruit and tannins. They remind me of the legendary 1997 vintage, but slightly more polished and refined. The top 2005s are very close to the excellent 2004s but a little softer in texture.

Included in this report is just a fraction of the outstanding wines from my blind tastings. Check out the Hot Wines on page 4 for this issue's top scorers, and see my annual Tuscany tasting report in the Oct. 31 issue of *Wine Spectator* for even more highlights.

—James Suckling

Italy Tuscany

LUCE DELLA VITE

Toscana Luce 2005

93 points | \$87 | 2,000 cases imported | Red

Shows blackberry, dark chocolate and roasted coffee on the nose. Full-bodied, with velvety, almost chewy tannins and lots of rich fruit that finishes with a vanilla bean and coffee aftertaste. Rich and delicious, but will be better with a few years of bottle age. Sangiovese and Merlot. Best after 2011.—J.S.

LA MASSA

Toscana 2006

93 points | \$28 | 1,100 cases imported | Red

Rich, almost decadent aromas of crushed berry, meat and mole. Turns floral. Full-bodied, with velvety tannins and a long, caressing finish. A beauty. Best after 2011.—J.S.

TUA RITA

Toscana Giusto di Notri 2006

93 points | \$111 | 150 cases imported | Red

Offers black licorice and currant, with hints of vanilla. Full-bodied, with chewy tannins and a solid core of ripe fruit. This is big and juicy, but tight and powerful. Needs time. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Best after 2011.—J.S.

ANTINORI

Toscana Tignanello 2005

92 points | \$95 | 26,250 cases made | Red

Pretty and fresh aromas of flowers, berry and licorice. Full-bodied, with ultrafine tannins and a solid core of fruit. Very pretty and balanced. Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Best after 2011.—J.S.

BRANCAIA IN MAREMMA

Maremma Toscana Ilatraia 2006

92 points | \$60 | 590 cases imported | Red

Shows aromas of currant and fresh herbs, such as basil and sage. Full-bodied, with silky tannins and a balanced, pretty, juicy finish. Delicious already. This is always outstanding. Cabernet Sauvignon, Sangiovese and Petit Verdot. Best after 2009.—*J.S.*

CASALVENTO

Toscana Janus 2005

92 points | \$54 | 300 cases imported | Red

Licorice, tar and mint aromas follow through to a full body, with a solid core of fruit and silky, refined tannins. Long and beautiful. Cabernet Sauvignon. Best after 2011.—*J.S.*

CASANOVA DI NERI

Toscana Pietradonice 2005

92 points | \$115 | 150 cases imported | Red

Dark ruby in color. Blackberry, mint and mineral aromas follow through to a full body, with superpolished tannins and a long, long finish. This is structured and very beautiful. Cabernet Sauvignon. Best after 2013.—*J.S.*

DEI

Toscana Sancta Catharina 2006

92 points | \$50 | 100 cases imported | Red

This is rich and decadent on the nose, with blackberry, coffee and vanilla aromas. Full-bodied and very concentrated. Round-textured. New World-like. Impressive and rich. Prugnolo Gentile (Sangiovese), Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot. Best after 2010.—*J.S.*

BIBI GRAETZ

Toscana Grilli del Testamatta 2006

92 points | \$35 | 750 cases imported | Red

There's beautiful fruit in this wine, with berry, chocolate, and Indian spices. Full-bodied, with velvety tannins and a long, flavorful finish. This has loads of fruit, yet it's refined and balanced. Sangiovese, Colorino and Canaiolo. Best after 2011.—*J.S.*

MARCHESI PANCRAZI

Colorino Toscana Casaglia 2005

92 points | \$31 | 100 cases imported | Red

Dark in color, with blackberry and mint aromas that follow through to a full body, with a solid core of fruit and a long, caressing finish. Chewy. Impressive. Best after 2009.—*J.S.*

SAN LUCIANO

Toscana D'Ovidio 2005

92 points | \$58 | 300 cases imported | Red

Offers slightly decadent aromas of mushroom and leather, with ripe fruit. Full-bodied, with soft tannins and a long, caressing finish. Layered and rich. Sangiovese, Montepulciano, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best after 2011.—*J.S.*

SAVIGNOLA PAOLINA

Toscana Il Granaio 2006

92 points | \$41 | 70 cases imported | Red

Ripe blueberry and strawberry aromas follow through to a full body, with silky tannins and a long, caressing finish. Polished and balanced. Sangiovese and Merlot. Best after 2010.—*J.S.*

SETTE PONTI

Toscana Crognolo 2006

92 points | \$36 | 3,200 cases imported | Red

Offers very, very pretty aromas of crushed berry and green coffee bean. Full-bodied, with super well-integrated tannins and a polished, caressing mouthfeel. Why wait? Sangiovese and Merlot. Drink now through 2012.—*J.S.*

VILLA PILLO

Toscana Borgoforte 2006

92 points | \$12 | 500 cases imported | Red

Very aromatic, with blackberry, black cherry and licorice. Full-bodied, with firm, silky tannins and a long, beautiful finish. Gorgeous. Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Best after 2010.—*J.S.*

VITICCIO

Toscana Monile 2005

92 points | \$55 | 250 cases imported | Red

Displays aromas of black currant and flowers. Full-bodied, with supersilky tannins and a long, fruity aftertaste of light vanilla. Balanced, polished and refined. Best after 2011.—*J.S.*

AIA VECCHIA

Toscana Lagone 2006

91 points | \$16 | 2,500 cases imported | Red

Has sweet berry and fresh herbs on the nose. Full-bodied, with soft, velvety tannins and a long, rich finish. Tight now, but shows excellent potential. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Best after 2010.—*J.S.*

BARONE RICASOLI

Toscana Casalferro 2005

91 points | \$54 | 1,000 cases imported | Red

Licorice, mineral and blackberry aromas follow through to a full body, with chewy tannins and lots of juicy fruit. Always outstanding. Sangiovese and Merlot. Best after 2011.—*J.S.*

FATTORIA DI BASCIANO

Colli della Toscana Centrale I Pini 2006

91 points | \$24 | 500 cases imported | Red

Dark purple in color, with aromas of blackberry, black licorice and light raisin. Full-bodied, with velvety tannins and a long, rich finish. Beautiful and complex. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah. Best after 2010.—*J.S.*

FATTORIA DI BASCIANO

Colli della Toscana Centrale Vigna Il Corto 2006
91 points | \$26 | 350 cases imported | Red

Blackberry, violet, milk chocolate and currant aromas follow through to a full body, with velvety tannins and berry, dark chocolate and light dried herb flavors. Sangiovese and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best after 2010.—*J.S.*

BOSCARELLI

Toscana 2005
91 points | \$109 | 200 cases imported | Red

Offers currant and blackberry, with hints of sage. Full-bodied, with silky tannins, yet slightly chewy. Turns smoky, with toasty oak and spices. Sangiovese, Merlot and Carmenère. Best after 2010.—*J.S.*

BRANCAIA

Toscana Il Blu 2006
91 points | \$60 | 1,250 cases imported | Red

Shows fresh, focused aromas of currant, berry and hints of vanilla. Full-bodied, with medium chewy tannins and a rich milk chocolate and berry aftertaste. Sangiovese, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best after 2010.—*J.S.*

CASTELLARE DI CASTELLINA

Merlot Toscana Poggio ai Merli 2006
91 points | \$112 | 60 cases imported | Red

Offers black olive, blackberry and cappuccino. Full-bodied, with soft, round tannins and a citrus fruit, berry and coffee aftertaste. Best after 2009.—*J.S.*

LE CINCIOLE

Toscana Camalaione 2005
91 points | \$45 | 130 cases imported | Red

Very ripe and rich on the nose, showing currant and licorice aromas that follow through to a full body, with silky tannins and a long, caressing finish. Pretty and extremely enticing. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah. Best after 2010.—*J.S.*

FERRERO

Cabernet Maremma Toscana Ca 2006
91 points | \$26 | 40 cases imported | Red

Aromas of currant and dried spices follow through to a full body, with excellent concentration and a long finish. Thick and pretty. Best after 2010.—*J.S.*

GRANCHIAIA

Toscana Selezione 2006
91 points | \$80 | 350 cases made | Red

This is very Cabernet, with currant, vanilla and a little mint. Full and rich, with silky tannins and a long finish. There's a solid core of berry and a minty character on the palate. Cabernet Sauvignon. Best after 2012.—*J.S.*

LUCE DELLA VITE

Toscana Lucente 2006
91 points | \$30 | 5,500 cases imported | Red

There's plenty of fresh strawberry and currant on the nose. Full-bodied, with silky tannins and a solid core of ripe fruit. Long and caressing. Rich and dense, yet balanced and refined. The best Lucente ever. Merlot, Sangiovese and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best after 2011.—*J.S.*

FATTORIA DI MAGLIANO

Maremma Toscana Poggio Bestiale 2006
91 points | \$55 | 500 cases imported | Red

Shows blackberry jam, with hints of dried fruitcake. Full-bodied, with chewy tannins and a licorice, blackberry and light vanilla aftertaste. Big and rich. Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best after 2011.—*J.S.*

MONTECALVI

Sangiovese Toscana Vieille Vigne 2006
91 points | \$72 | 100 cases imported | Red

Shows raspberry and cherry aromas, with hints of flowers. Medium- to full-bodied, with a solid core of ripe, pretty fruit and a long, caressing finish. Old-vine Sangiovese. Delicious. Best after 2010.—*J.S.*

MORIS FARMS

Maremma Toscana Avvoltoire 2006
91 points | \$62 | 400 cases imported | Red

Has plenty of plummy aromas, with hints of flowers and vanilla. Full-bodied, offering lovely berry and currant fruit character, with soft tannins and a long, fresh finish. This is always excellent. Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah. Best after 2009.—*J.S.*

PIAZZANO

Syrah Colli della Toscana Centrale 2006
91 points | \$35 | 220 cases made | Red

Aromas of black licorice, plum skin, flowers and sandalwood. Full-bodied, with soft, silky tannins and a coffee, berry and chocolate aftertaste. Rich and balanced. This producer continues to make impressive Syrah. Best after 2010.—*J.S.*

SAN FABIANO CALCINAIA

Cabernet Sauvignon Toscana 2006
91 points | \$46 | 100 cases imported | Red

Has a very pretty nose of currant, raspberry and nectarine. Full-bodied, with supersilky tannins and a long, caressing finish. Very polished and pretty. Needs some time, but this is already beautiful. Best after 2010.—*J.S.*

SAN MICHELE A TORRI

Colli della Toscana Centrale Murtas 2005
91 points | \$39 | 710 cases imported | Red

A beautiful floral wine, with currant and berry aromas that follow through to a full body, with fine tannins and a long, caressing finish. Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon and Colorino. Best after 2010.—*J.S.*

HOT WINES

These are the most exciting discoveries from our editors' most recent tastings, published exclusively in *Wine Spectator Insider*. They are high-scoring, low-production wines from around the world that may be difficult to find, but are worth seeking out.

BIBI GRAETZ

Toscana Testamatta 2006

98 points | \$120 | 200 cases imported | Red

Beautiful blackberry, coffee bean and chocolate aromas, with toasted oak undertones. Full-bodied, with supervelvet tannins and a follow through that lasts for minutes. So much milk chocolate and fruity character on the finish. I am in love with this wine. Fabulous pure Sangiovese. So layered and mind-blowing. Shows the great quality of the vintage. Best after 2011. *From Italy.—J.S.*

SETTE PONTI

Toscana Oreno 2006

96 points | \$110 | 1,600 cases imported | Red

Shows loads of black licorice, blackberry and toasty oak. Full-bodied, with supersilky tannins and a long, long finish. Has wonderful concentration and balance. Structured. The best Oreno ever. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Sangiovese. Best after 2013. *From Italy.—J.S.*

FONTODI

Colli della Toscana Centrale Flaccianello 2005

94 points | \$100 | 700 cases imported | Red

Shows complex and subtle aromas of blackberry, black licorice and cedar, with just a hint of dried spices. Full-bodied, with a wonderful concentration of fruit, chewy tannins and a long, long finish. Powerful and layered. Sangiovese. Best after 2012. *From Italy.—J.S.*

MONTECALVI

Toscana San Pietro 2006

94 points | \$90 | 85 cases imported | Red

Shows wonderful aromas of intense blackberry, dark licorice and subtle mint. Full-bodied, with velvety tannins and a long, long finish. This is fruit-forward, but balanced and refined. Hard not to drink now. A fantastic new wine from this estate. Cabernet Sauvignon, with Merlot, Syrah and Alicante. Best after 2011. *From Italy.—J.S.*

OLIVETO

Maremma Toscana Poggio Mandorlo 2005

94 points | \$95 | 200 cases imported | Red

Very pretty and fresh, with a focused blackberry and mineral character. Full-bodied, with a wonderful core of ripe fruit and a silky and soft texture. This is so focused and pretty. Balanced and complex. Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Best after 2011. *From Italy.—J.S.*

QUERCETO DI CASTELLINA

Merlot Toscana Podalirio 2006

94 points | \$45 | 90 cases imported | Red

Dark in color, with amazing aromas of crushed berry, violet and raspberry. Turns to mineral and fresh spices. Full-bodied, with ultrafine tannins and a long, caressing finish. Complex, rich and refined. An amazing wine from this producer. Best after 2010. *From Italy.—J.S.*

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Wine Spectator's 100-Point Scale

95-100	Classic
90-94	Outstanding
85-89	Very good
80-84	Good
75-79	Mediocre
50-74	Not recommended