

TASTING REPORT: EXCELLENT CHIANTI 2009

August 22th, 2012

Plenty of excellent Chianti is available this year with the 2008 and 2009 vintages, whether in Chianti Classico, Chianti Rufina, or even simple Chianti. Many 2010s are also on the market but they are not as good quality overall as the two preceding vintages. In fact, 2010 appears to be the weakest vintage for Chianti since 2004. The 2009 vintage is much better than I anticipated. The Chiantis I tasted showed wonderful perfumes and pure fruit. The tannins are fine. The acidities are bright. Perhaps I thought it would be difficult to find excellent wines after the superb vintages of 2006 and 2007 as well as the outstanding year of 2008. But 2009 is clearly an outstanding vintage as well. "The key to the 2009 vintage was the fall," said Marco Bacci, the owner of Castello di Bossi in Chianti Classico, near the town of Castelnuovo Berardenga. "The weather was so good in late September and October that we could pick whenever we wanted." The good weather allowed growers to pick their Sangiovese later than normal, thus giving the grape a long and slow ripening. This results in wines with lovely perfumes as well as developed flavors and ripe tannins and acidity. "We are happy with our wines from all the regions of Chianti," said Lamberto Frescobaldi, whose family is the biggest vineyard holders in Tuscany. My favorite growing area for Chianti, remains Chianti Classico. I am keenest on vineyards grown near the villages of Panzano and Castelnuovo Berardenga. I find the wines from these two areas tend have the deepest fruit and best structure. That's why my top scoring Chianti Classico this year came from Fontodi – the 2009 Fontodi Chianti Classico (93 points). I have also tasted many excellent riserva Chiantis this summer – most are 2009s. Stay tuned for a tasting report on the best in

