

# PODERE POGGIO SCALETTE

## RUFFOLI - GREVE IN CHIANTI

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Written by  
**Jancis Robinson**

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## Il Carbonaione from the start

TASTING ARTICLES TUSCANY ITALY

Vittorio Fiore was one of Tuscany's army of itinerant oenologists but decided to establish his own wine estate. The result was Poggio Scalette half way between Greve and Panzano, bought by Vittorio and his wife Adriana in 1991.

The property had been neglected but it boasted one still-terraced 5-ha vineyard known by the locals as Il Carbonaione. It was planted with particularly venerable Sangiovese di Lamole vines and Vittorio Fiore believes it may be the only Chianti vineyard to have survived the widespread replanting in the mid 20th century in the then common search for high yields and efficiency. Il Carbonaione was planted in the 1920s, soon after phylloxera was finally eliminated from Tuscany.

The vineyard is on a sandy west-southwest-facing hill known as Ruffoli at 450 m (1,476 ft) elevation – not so high as to prejudice ripening in any but the coolest years. Sangiovese di Lamole, a clone associated with Greve and in the same group of Sangioveses as Brunello, is known for its refinement.

Thus was born in 1992 a special single-vineyard bottling called Il Carbonaione, an unusually brave statement of faith in Sangiovese at that time when most Tuscan wine producers were infatuated with French vine varieties. Grapes are usually picked in early October and fermented in stainless steel for about 12 days before being transferred to 350-litre oak casks for about 14 months so that the wine is bottled before the heat of midsummer.

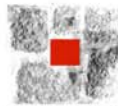
Today Vittorio has been joined by his son Jurij, who qualified as an oenologist in Beaune. This highly distinctive and much-admired estate has grown to a total of 15 ha (37 acres), perhaps inevitably including some Bordeaux varieties, although I am assured that Il Carbonaione is always made up of 100% ancient Sangiovese.

During the summer I had the pleasure of tasting every vintage from 1992 up to and including the 2012. Below are the bottles lined up on our hall table in the Languedoc. There were some minty notes in the early vintages, more balsam and occasional not-unpleasant dustiness in the later ones. I loved the structure of this wine - truly appetising and never with an excess of alcohol or oak - quite an achievement for this period in Tuscany. Bravissimo!



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### Scalette, Il Carbonaione 1992 IGT Alta Valle della Greve

15.5

*The debut vintage was very rainy.*  
Mid ruby with a very evolved rim. Warm, high-toned, rather fragile nose. Something pretty dusty on the finish and the acidity is clearly in the ascendant over the fruit which is drying out. More of a curiosity than a great pleasure at this stage in its life. 13%  
Drink 2000-2010

### Scalette, Il Carbonaione 1993 IGT Alta Valle della Greve

16

*Very cold winter and a late start to the growing season but a hot, dry summer delivered ripe grapes in early October.*  
Healthy blackish ruby. Creamy, well-integrated ripe fruit on the nose without any oak or alcohol in evidence. Sweet fruit and real vigour. A fully mature wine with a hint of mint and some slightly drying tannins on the end but capable of giving pleasure even now. Drink up though. 13%  
Drink 2000-2013

### Scalette, Il Carbonaione 1994 IGT Alta Valle della Greve

15.5

*Notably hot, dry summer with many days above 30 °C. Quality is officially classified as 'almost outstanding' (sic).*  
Crumbly cork. Mid ruby with an aged rim. A minty note, as detected in the 1993. Very warm impression and rather too dry and dried out on the palate. The wine tastes as though the vines could have done with a bit more rain. 13%  
Drink 2002-2010

### Scalette, Il Carbonaione 1995 IGT Alta Valle della Greve

16

*This wine had lost its main label so I am assuming both vintage and alcohol level (but only the 1995 was missing from my set). Very late growing season, cool rainy summer, saved only by an Indian summer. These grapes were not picked until early November.*  
Mid ruby and an aged rim. Light, mature, pretty complex nose. Very confident, ripe, fruity palate entry. Just a little drying on the end with some charred elements but the fruit is still alive and impressive. Minty and dusty. Really needs food. 13%  
Drink 2004-2017

### Scalette, Il Carbonaione 1996 IGT Alta Valle della Greve

17

*Early season, perfect flowering and summer slightly cooler than usual. A satisfactory harvest.*  
Crumbly cork. Dark crimson. Intense, well-evolved, quite interesting nose. Lots of ripe fruit here. Rather claret-like in structure and still with lots of fine tannin. Still quite youthful. Good vigour. 13%  
Drink 2007-2020

### Scalette, Il Carbonaione 1997 IGT Alta Valle della Greve

17.5

*Unusually early harvest in late September after a warm growing season.*  
Dark ruby. Interesting nose with balsam grace notes that is more complex than its five predecessors. Lots of ripe, sweet fruit with tannins that have been well managed and are already resolved. Tastes more than 13% alcohol with some very light tannins on the finish that are only just perceptible. Sweet and hugely winning. Just slightly dusty on the finish. Long. 13%  
Drink 2004-2020

### Scalette, Il Carbonaione 1998 IGT Alta Valle della Greve

16

*Pretty hot summer was followed by a rainy September that causes some disease pressure.*  
Dark ruby. Charred note on the nose with some strong mineral notes. Round and with well-managed tannins but at the moment a little fragile. Dusty tannins on the end. Pretty chewy with a bit of heat on the end. Rather diffuse. 13.5%  
Drink 2007-2017

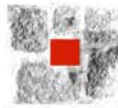
### Scalette, Il Carbonaione 1999 IGT Alta Valle della Greve

16.5

*Early, very dry, hot season. Predicted to need considerable bottle age. The first wine - tastig from old to young - that was obviously very dark crimson. Rich, ripe and concentrated. Interesting, complete wine with only the slightly drying tannins on the finish against it. Edgy, still very slightly simple blackcurrant flavours.*  
13.5%  
Drink 2014-2022

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### Scalette, Il Carbonaione 2000 IGT Alta Valle della Greve

16.5

*A demanding year during which a hot May accelerated the growing season and summer saw some heavy rain. Healthy mid crimson. Really quite claret-like on the nose with some sweetness and smoothness - almost as though there were some Cabernet in with the Sangiovese. Attractive wine that is perhaps just a tad sweet until a hint of acidity on the finish. Good current drinking. 13.5%*  
Drink 2009-2020

### Scalette, Il Carbonaione 2001 IGT Alta Valle della Greve

17

*Some vines were badly affected by spring frosts and the crop was shrunk, but summer was warm and dry, even if September brought some rain. Dark crimson. Savoury balsam notes on the nose. Very fine, well integrated, savoury fruit with some dusty tannins still on the finish - they may always be there right up to when the fruit fades. But this is an interesting, distinctive wine that could only be Tuscan. Definitely needs food. 13.5%*  
Drink 2012-2020

### Scalette, Il Carbonaione 2002 IGT Alta Valle della Greve

16

*Very cool, wet summer left full ripeness a vain goal in many vineyards. Small crop. Mid blackish crimson. Fruit does not exactly spring out of the glass. Though the wine is sweet, soft and a little muted on the palate before a rather pinched, dry, austere finish. Good attempt but it is not a complete success. 13.5%*  
Drink 2008-2017

### Scalette, Il Carbonaione 2003 IGT Alta Valle della Greve

17

*As elsewhere in Europe, the summer was unusually hot and totally dry, although rain arrived at the end of August. Dark healthy crimson. Interesting, well-married, quite complex nose and a rather luscious palate with lots of sweet fruit and not excessively drying tannins on the finish. Something a little, but not unattractively, pruney about this wine. Dried fruit perhaps? Very appetising. Long and neat. 13.5%*  
Drink 2009-2020

### Scalette, Il Carbonaione 2004 IGT Alta Valle della Greve

17.5

*An early start to the season led to a very generous fruit set, which meant that green harvesting was essential if full ripeness was to be achieved. Blackish crimson with a ruby rim. Edgy, savoury nose with a full, rather voluptuous palate. Pretty concentrated version of this wine with obviously ripe fruit and lightly dusty tannins. Masses of character - black olives? But it does need food to mitigate the dusty tannins. It is probably more than 13.5% alcohol. 13.5%*  
Drink 2012-2022

### Scalette, Il Carbonaione 2005 IGT Alta Valle della Greve

16.5

*Rain, a characteristic of early summer, disturbed the late flowering so the crop was relatively small. Rain in September prejudiced full ripening. Dark, lively crimson. Very vigorous, ripe nose - and flattering sweet palate that is not very concentrated but offers attractive current drinking. Composed, mouth-filling. Light, slightly dry tannins and a little more acidity than some other vintages. 13.5%*  
Drink 2012-2020

### Scalette, Il Carbonaione 2006 IGT Alta Valle della Greve

16.5+

*Propitious mix of rain in spring and early summer, hot dry weather in July and early August and then some useful downpours in late August and September. Healthy dark blackish crimson - a very dark colour for Sangiovese! Tobacco leaf and leather on the nose. Real sweet concentration. One of the more obvious 'modern', glamorous vintages. A little exaggerated and tough on the finish. Perhaps it will mellow with time...? At the moment it seems a bit aggressive in its structure with drying tannins on the end. 13.5%*  
Drink 2016-2024

### Scalette, Il Carbonaione 2007 IGT Alta Valle della Greve

17.5

*Excellent weather with just the right amount of rain and fully ripe phenolics. Dark healthy crimson. Very ripe fruit and a certain element of balsam. A super-rich version of the tanginess of Sangiovese with impressive ripeness. Lots of fruit almost obliterates the considerable charge of ripe tannins. 13.5%*  
Drink 2015-2030

### Scalette, Il Carbonaione 2008 IGT Alta Valle della Greve

16+

*Rainy, muddy late spring hampered treatments in the vineyard so this was a reduced crop. September was fine. Dark crimson. Not especially expressive on the nose. Lots of acidity and some pretty assertive tannins that are not as ripe as those in the 2007. A little austere at the moment. 13.5%*  
Drink 2019-2030

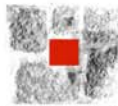
### Scalette, Il Carbonaione 2009 IGT Alta Valle della Greve

18

*No shortage of high temperatures after a wet spring brought disease pressure. Several days reached 40 °C but day-night temperature variation helped. Dark crimson. Very voluptuous, exotic nose. Both herbs and spices - and some meatiness. A really interesting wine. Very round and mellow. Super dramatic. Very exciting and bursting with health. The fruit almost covers the tannins. Ambitious. 13.5%*  
Drink 2019-2032

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### Scalette, Il Carbonaione 2010 IGT Alta Valle della Greve

16.5+

*Usefully wet spring. Usefully dry, not that warm summer with good diurnal temperature variation.*

Very dark crimson, though not right out to the rim. Rich, ripe, sweet nose with excellent balance. Pretty marked acidity and youthful. On the palate it seems much less opulent than on the nose. But it's very clean. 13.5%

Drink 2022-2034

### Scalette, Il Carbonaione 2011 IGT Alta Valle della Greve

16.5

*Uncomfortably hot summer speeded ripening and threatened the integrity of the grapes that were all picked much earlier than usual by the end of September.*

Dark crimson. Sweet, spicy nose and rather soft tannins followed by some acidity and dustiness. Despite some cassis flavour there is not quite the fruity core and weight of the finest vintages. Tastes as though it will be relatively early-maturing. 13.5%

Drink 2019-2030

### Scalette, Il Carbonaione 2012 IGT Alta Valle della Greve

16+

*April rains were useful in replenishing the water reserves during another extremely hot, dry summer when even the nights were pretty torrid.*

Mid crimson and a slightly pale rim. Sweet toasty nose but pretty light and soft on the palate. Seems a little baked and vapid. Drying finish. It doesn't taste as though all the grapes went through the complete ripening process. Was there considerable vine shut down? 13%

Drink 2019-2030

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