

The Wine

(Written/published by Clive Coates)

It is startling to think that Stak Aivaliotis' first vintage at the 5.5 hectare Monte Bernardi estate was as recently as 1992. In a very short space of time he has established the estate as one of Chianti's superstars. The crop is deliberately reduced (less than 20hl/ha in 1999) and now that he is bottling early, the wines have even more elegance and intensity. The 1999's are the best that he has ever made. Bravo!

Chianti Classico Paris 1999. Stak is no longer producing a Riserva. Paris is his middle name taken from his father. Very good colour. Very high-class nose. Excellent depth of fruit. Profound, rich, very ripe, but excellently complex and well balanced. This is most impressive. Indeed, one of the best young Chiantis I have ever had. Full structure. Very, very long. Excellent. Drink from 2004.

Sa'etta 1999. A single vineyard wine. A more powerful wine than the Paris. 100% Sangiovese again. A little closed. This is full and rich. Very concentrated and quite tannic. Splendid quality here. Excellent fruit. Very profound. Very, very promising. This is really excellent. Drink from 2006.

Tzingana 1999. Fine colour. Very lovely fruit on the nose. This has real poise. The oak is splendidly integrated. Full body. Excellent structure. Very good tannins. Marvelous fruit on the palate. A really elegant wine. Very very fine indeed. Drink from 2006.

Chianti Classico Paris 1998. Good, full, youthful colour. Some oak. After many of the other weedy 1998s, this comes as a great relief. Full structure. Vigorous. Still some tannin to resolve. Ample, ripe and fruity. Long and lovely. Drink from 2003.

Sa'etta 1998. Very good colour. Lovely, ample, ripe, plump oaky nose. Essentially soft. Has plenty of depth and length. Like the Paris above, this is a major success for 1998. Drink from 2006.

Tzingana 1998. 28% Cabernet Sauvignon, 14% Cabernet Franc, 45% Merlot, 13% Petit Verdot. Good weight and good grip. This is long, consistent and fine. Drink from 2006.

Chianti Classico Riserva 1997. Soft and developed. It is full and ripe and succulent. Nicely oaky. It still needs a year to soften. Good vigour and personality at the end. Very good indeed. Drink from 2002.

Sa'etta 1996. Good colour. Soft, sweet, evolved. But not weedy or over-developed. This is a pleasant drink with a positive follow-through and finish. Very good. Drink from 2001.