

the wine detective

Tuscany trip

<http://www.thewinedetective.co.uk>

Here are some highlights of a Monte Bernardi vertical presented by Imperial Wines in Suffolk (www.imperialwine.co.uk) earlier this year together with tasting notes from my visit which coincided with the Panzano Wine Festival:

Chianti Classico Paris Monte Bernardi 2003 (Sangiovese, with a small % of Canaiolo) – primary, fruity, sappy nose with violets and kid glove notes, palate shows good tannic grip and depth of black cherry fruit, finishes clean and minerally – impressive.

Chianti Classico Paris Monte Bernardi 1998 – ruby, spicy black cherry/berry nose – very attractive and inviting; tightly knit palate with excellent concentration of black fruits, well-balanced tannin, fruit and acidity; long, fresh finish with sour cherry twist.

Chianti Classico Paris Monte Bernardi 1999 – vibrantly fruity nose of black fruit gums (blackcurrant/cassis); a real fruit bomb on the palate supported by a firm backbone of tannins – concentrated and age worthy.

Sa'etta Monte Bernardi 2003 (100% Sangiovese) – closed on the nose and palate, hints of red fruits, vanilla; showing some tannic asperity but, overall, an elegant, minerally frame.

Sa'etta Monte Bernardi 1997 – lovely, rich, ripe cherry and plum fruit on the nose and palate; present tannins and well balanced acidity lend elegance – very good.

Tzingana Monte Bernardi 2003 (Bordeaux blend) – perfumed, blackcurranty nose, very primary and sappy, little peppery. Bright fruit on the youthful, well-structured, focused palate, fresh and minerally with toasty oak flavours. **Tzingana Monte Bernardi 1996 (magnum)** – blackcurrant, plum and cherry nose with mineral character; fleshy, fruity palate with good persistence and a fine, minerally finish with liquorice spiciness.

Tzingana Monte Bernardi 1997 – deep colour, exuberant blackcurrant nose, opulent palate, succulent blackcurrant and supple tannins – drinking beautifully now. **Tzingana Monte Bernardi 1998** – much tighter nose with smoky, charry oaked characters; great depth of fruit on the palate with kirsch and succulent black cherry, more structured than the 97, ripe tannins with well balanced acidity giving a long, persistent finish with a veneer of smoky oak.

Tzingana Monte Bernardi 1999 – great depth of colour, expressive nose of kirsch and creamed corn; tight knit, youthful palate; plenty yet to come.

Give us a clue from **The Wine Detective**, from **Superplonk**:

Monte Bernardi Chianti Classico DOCG - a vertical tasting of this wine at The Imperial Wine Company kicked off my Chianti quest this year; my favourite vintages include the **1993, 1996, 1998, 1999 & 2003**. Made from Sangiovese, with 5 to 8% Canaiolo grown in Panzano on South-facing, steeply sloping vineyards, the wine is finely structured with great fruit purity and classic Sangiovese "vigour"; it rewards ageing. A **barrel sample of the 2004 vintage** was fragrant, fine and fresh, with ripe fruit tannins; new winemaker and co-proprietor Michael Schmelzer has reigned back on the oak and is fully committed to working with Italian grape varieties.