

Excerpt from SLOW WINE, page 751

PANZANO IN CHIANTI (FI)
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"The Schmelzer siblings have created a model cellar in Panzano: employing a biodynamic regime, traditional vinification, and relating with their neighbors with professionalism – they have integrated perfectly in the social fabric of this stupendous corner of Tuscany."

15 hectares/37 acres – 42,000 bottles

THE HISTORY – In asking a young producer from Panzano about Michael, he says: "My father adores Michael because he is one of the few producers interested in Chianti Classico's difficult past; for example, he wants to know about the life of the "mezzadri" (sharecroppers). It is this genuine passion for Chianti Classico that brought Michael to Panzano in 2003.

THE VINEYARDS – The dynamic approach Michael applies to producing wine is very interesting and typical of cosmopolitan winemakers. But when you talk to him about Panzano, he becomes an uncompromising purist. Of all the Monte Bernardi vineyards, Sa'etta stands out, with its Sangiovese vines over 40 years in age and grown on "pietra forte" (a sandstone typical of the area). The other vineyards are grown, for the most part, on "galestro" (shale). Monte Bernardi farms naturally and is very attentive to any and all products used in the vineyards.

THE WINES – In the cellar everything happens very slowly with a long period of aging. Michael's desire to extract complexity, means he works in reduction, resulting in wines that when young are reluctant to show themselves. The **Chianti Classico Riserva Monte Bernardi 2009** (6,000 Btls.; 17€) is initially combative, but the potential of this wine is clear in its earthy and profound aromas, its noble tannins and great complexity. The **Chianti Classico Retromarcia 2010** (30,000 btls.; 11,50€) is aged in used barriques and tonneaux (second passage). The nose seems almost evolved considering how expressive it is on the palate. It seems less defined than past vintages. **Tzingana 2009** (Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon & Franc and Petit Verdot; 2,000 btls. 38€) is aged in barriques. A Bordeaux blend from which clearly emerges its intense territorial roots.

FERTILIZERS: manure pellets, biodynamic preparations, green manure

PEST CONTROL: copper and sulfur

WEED CONTROL: manual

YEASTS: natural

GRAPES: 5% purchased

CERTIFICATION: organic