

Excerpt from SLOW WINE

PANZANO IN CHIANTI (FI)
MONTE BERNARDI
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In visiting Monte Bernardi ... one is struck by the clarity with which the American Schmelzer family ... have thrown themselves into the local fabric, and have quickly grasped the Chianti spirit in a manner, which is authentic and sincere. The Schmelzer siblings – Michael, running the production, and Jennifer, the commercial side – are here with their whole heart. ... Michael's sensitivity, research and experience have brought him to farm the vineyards biodynamically, with an approach firmly based in pragmatism, good sense, with little of the spiritual (esoteric).

15 hectares/37 acres – 42,000 bottles – 10% discount if you have book with you when you purchase

THE HISTORY – In visiting Monte Bernardi, beyond the striking natural beauty of the surroundings in which this farm is situated, one is struck by the clarity with which the American Schmelzer family, who acquired the farm in 2003, have thrown themselves into the local fabric, and quickly grasped the Chianti spirit in a manner, which is authentic and sincere. The Schmelzer siblings – Michael, running the production, and Jennifer, the commercial side – are here with their whole heart.

THE VINEYARDS – situated in soils rich in galestro, and well exposed and ventilated, the vineyards are grassed in alternating rows; shoot tipping is avoided, turning to shoot wrapping instead in order to retain the plant's equilibrium. Michael's sensitivity, research and experience have brought him to farm the vineyards biodynamically, with an approach firmly based in pragmatism, good sense, with little of the spiritual (esoteric).

THE WINES – in the cellar interventions are few and select, there is no clarification or filtration, and at most, two or three rackings in the life of the wine. Pressing is done in a bucket press, vinification in cement tanks, aging in wood of varying sizes - never new, and minimal sulfur is added. The resulting wines have character and soul, even if sometimes they are not exempt of some youthful rusticity. The **Retromarcia Chianti Classico 2012**, selected as a vini quotidiano, (30,000 Btls.; 13€) has a typical "Chiantigiano" profile, earthy and floral, and subtle and sharp in the mouth, with a long, clean finish. Mature and rich, but still reticent in showing itself, the **Monte Bernardi Chianti Classico Riserva 2011** (5,000 Btls.; 17€) will need a little time to express it's potential. For those who love "tuscan blends" **Tzingana 2011** (cabernet sauvignon & franc, merlot; 1,700 Btls. 38€) is very well made.

SLOW WINE GUIDE 2013

TZINGANA 2009: featured in guide

JAPAN WINE CHALLENGE

TZINGANA 2008: awarded the bronze medal

SLOW WINE GUIDE 2012

TZINGANA 2008: awarded the "Grande Vino" (great wine)

... To read the above articles, see Press/Tzingana page of our website

TZINGANA IGT 2008: 2 stars (out of 3)

45% Merlot, 20 Cabernet Sauvignon, 20 Cabernet Franc, and 15 Petit Verdot; the vines were top grafted onto older vines in the 1990s. Lively ruby with cherry rim. The bouquet is fairly intense, with sour berry fruit laced with vegetal notes and black peppery spice, and fairly intense underbrush. On the palate it's smooth and quite ample, with bright berry fruit supported by clean sweet berry fruit acidity and smooth tannins that flow into a long warm tannic finish. Graceful and quite approachable in a more international and (to me) less interesting key than the Chianti. It's more up front, with less to discover.

FALSTAFF

01/2010

falstaff

TZINGANA IGT 2006: 92 pts

Funkelndes, sattes Rubinviolett. Intensive, offene Nase mit Noten nach Sandelholz, Johannisbeeren und dunklen Kirschen. Zeigt sich sehr saftig, dichtmaschiges Tannin, tiefgründig, feine mineralische Komponenten, herzhaft, im Finale viel satte Frucht.

March 12, 2010



Monte Bernardi Chianti – a renaissance

Tuscany is, of course, renaissance territory and, when I visited Monte Bernardi in 2005, the vineyards and winery were undergoing a slow but sure renovation. Purchased by the Schmelzer family in 2003, the estate had in fact only been making wine since 1992.

Since 2004, winemaker Michael Schmelzer has been putting his own stamp on the wines. In 2005, I reported that his non-interventionist instincts were leading him to reign back on oak and pursue biodynamic techniques in the vineyard. With lovely fruit purity, freshness and mineral undertones, his 2004 barrel samples looked very promising indeed. In January, I met Michael's sister Jennifer at a tasting of their wines and was delighted to see, indeed taste, how the Schmelzers' vision has paid off. Though the 2005s were a little diffuse (it rained during harvest), the 2006s showed a lovely subtle concentration – these are restrained, fresh, textured wines with a real sense of place about them.

Monte Bernardi Chianti Classico 2006 – with longer on the lees, this is textured, tight and long; very fresh and youthful without an ounce of excess fat for which I like it very much. A refreshing very food-friendly alternative to more commercial styles. Around £19.49

Monte Bernardi Sa'etta Chianti Classico 2006 – very, very good with a beautiful saturation of red and black currant fruit in the mouth with liquorice, spice and mineral notes. Long with fine supporting tannins it's surprisingly approachable now, with a lovely texture. This 100% Sangiovese comes from the best parcel on the estate, which is located in prime Chianti Classico territory – Panzano's "Conca d'Oro" (golden bowl). Around £28.99

Monte Bernardi Tzingana Toscana IGT 2006 – a very vital wine, lifted and floral with a lovely weight and concentration of black fruits fruit; long and very young, with present but ripe, textured tannins. Would benefit from a few years in bottle to flesh out and unfurl, but will surely blossom beautifully. Around £46

FALSTAFF

01/2007

falstaff

TZINGANA IGT 2005: 90 pts

Leuchtendes, intensives Rubinviolett; sehr klare Nase mit ausgeprägt fruchtigen Noten, nach Cassis, etwas Zwetschken; am Gaumen sehr geschmeidig, mit feinkörnigem Tannin, süßer Kern, zeigt zur Konzentration auch schöne Eleganz, rund und ausgewogen.

JAPAN WINE CHALLENGE

TZINGANA 2006: awarded the bronze medal

OZ CLARKE's - GRAPES and WINE

TZINGANA IGT: selected, best producers

MONTY WALDON's

"Tuscany - How to find great wines off the beaten track"

TZINGANA IGT: featured in book

ANDREA ZANFI's - "iSupertuscans"

TZINGANA IGT: featured in book

.... To read the above articles, see Press/Tzingana page of our website

FALSTAFF

01/2006

falstaff

TZINGANA IGT 2004: 92 pts

Sattes, undurchdringliches Rubinviolett; dicht angelegte Nase mit intensiven Noten nach Lakritze und Teer, dahinter etwas Brombeere und Cassis; kompakt in Ansatz und Verlauf, zeigt sehr klar herausgearbeitete dunkelbeerige Frucht, griffiges, gut eingebundenes Tannin, die Säure gibt dem Wein Frische.

TIGULLIOVINO

Giugno 2007

tigulliovino.it
cultura del vino e comunicazione



Tzingana Colli della Toscana Centrale Igt 2004

Monte Bernardi Azienda Agricola

di Commissione di TigullioVino.it

Tipologia : Rosso

Gradazione alcolica : 13

Vitigni : Merlot 45%, Cabernet Sauvignon 20%, Cabernet Franc 20%, P.Verdot 15%

Lotto : 1/05

Prezzo sorgente : 22,00 euro

TZINGANA IGT 2004: 88/20 punti

All'aspetto è limpido, di colore rosso rubino carico con orlo violaceo. All'olfatto si presenta intenso e persistente, fine, ampio, con sentori di violetta appassita, frutti rossi boschivi come corbezzoli e mora maturi, pepe nero e lieve di vaniglia. Al sapore è secco ma morbido, sapido, caldo, equilibratamente tannico, pieno e molto continuo. Al retrogusto si avvertono la nota fruttato-speziata e la liquirizia. Considerazioni: ottimo vino. Si può considerare un Supertuscan. E' ottenuto da scelte uve merlot (45%), cabernet sauvignon (20%), cabernet franc (20%) e petit verdot (15%), diraspate e pigiate e fatte fermentare assieme a temperatura controllata. Dopo la malolattica, il vino è fatto affinare in barriques francesi (30% nuove) per 12 mesi e, in bottiglia, per altri 12. Evoluzione: giovane ma già di buona armonia. Prezzo medio in enoteca: euro 39,60 (prezzo sorgente euro 22,00).

Valutazione di Tigulliovino: 18/20 (@@@@)



Tuscany trip

Monte Bernardi

I met brother and sister Michael and Jennifer Schmelzer earlier this year at a couple of tastings. They invited me to visit them at Monte Bernardi, their well-situated estate in the "Conca d'Oro" (golden bowl) of Panzano – one of Chianti Classico's hot spots. Michael, the winemaker, made the 2003 vintage in conjunction with the previous owner, Stak Aivaliotis. Since 2004, the wines have been solely down to Michael, whose non-interventionist instincts are leading him to reign back on oak and pursue biodynamic techniques in the vineyard – all to good effect based on the fruit purity, freshness and mineral undertones of barrel samples of the 2004 vintage!

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

Monte Bernardi 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 ageworthy.

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.

WINE SPECTATOR

The logo for Wine Spectator, featuring the words "Wine Spectator" in a white, serif font set against a solid red rectangular background.

TZINGANA IGT

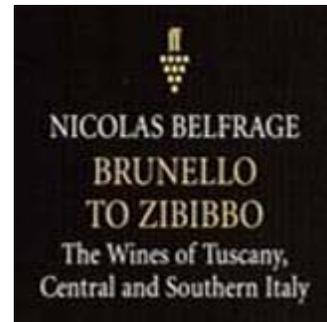
2001: 91 pts

Ripe berry, vanilla and spice aromas follow through to a medium to full-bodied palate, with firm, silky tannins. Promising, but tight now. Best after 2005.

January 2002

**NICHOLAS BELFRAGE
BRUNELLO TO ZIBIBBO**

TZINGANA IGT: 1 of top 5 Bordeaux Blends in Tuscany



Bordeaux blends - the top five wines of Tuscany

- Cappezana, Carmignano - Ghiaie della Furba
- Il Terriccio, Castellina Marittima – Lupicaia
- **Monte Bernardi, Panzano – Tzingana**
- Tenuta di Trinoro, Sarteano – Trinoro
- Tua Rita, Suvereto - Giusto di Notri

FALSTAFF

falstaff

TZINGANA IGT 1999: 92 pts

Sehr sattes, undurchdringliches Rubin-Violett; zu Beginn leicht verhangen, klärt sich dann, fette Frucht, Gewürznelken; salzig im Verlauf, funkelt am Gaumen, sehr gute Dichte, weich und geschmeidig, schokoladiges Finale.

ROBERT PARKER

Robert M. Parker, Jr.'s

**The
WINE
ADVOCATE®**

Monte Bernardi

TZINGANA IGT 1999: 90 pts
SA'ETTA IGT 1999: 91+ pts
CHIANTI CLASSICO PARIS 1999: 90 pts

These artisanal wines come at a high price, but they are interestingly packaged and, most importantly, impressive. The dazzling, dark ruby/purple-colored **1999 Chianti Classico Paris** offers a fabulous aromatic profile of sweet raspberry and currant fruit, new oak, and saddle leather. Ripe, textured, and intense, with super purity, and a long, medium to full-bodied, symmetrical finish, it is accessible, but promises to be even better with another 1-2 years of cellaring. It will last for 12-15 years.

The barrique-aged cuvée of 100% Sangiovese, the **1999 Sa'etta**, boasts an opaque purple color in addition to a sweet nose of black currants, blackberries, smoke and vanillin. The wine is full-bodied and ripe, with melted tannin, exceptional concentration, and a long finish. Initially, I thought it was internationally styled, but Sangiovese's distinctive character emerges as the wine sits in the glass. Anticipated maturity: 2002-2014.

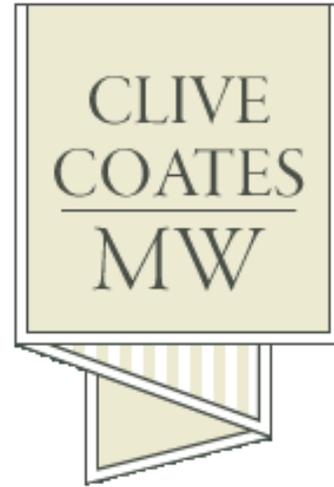
The super-expensive, internationally-styled **1999 Tzingana** (a Bordeaux-like blend of Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Petit Verdot) is impeccably well made. There are copious quantities of new oak in its blackberry, currant, licorice, and smoke-scented bouquet, medium to full-bodied flavors and moderate tannin in the long finish. No trace of Tuscan typicity can be found in this exceptional offering. Drink it over the next 10-14 years.

THE WINE

Written/published by
CLIVE COATES

Monte Bernardi

It is startling to think that the 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 they are 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.

WINE ART

TZINGANA IGT 1997: 95 pts

GAMBERO ROSSO

TZINGANA IGT 1997: Tre Bicchiere

ROBERT PARKER

Robert M. Parker, Jr.'s

**The
WINE
ADVOCATE®**

Monte Bernardi

TZINGANA IGT 1997:	92 pts
SA'ETTA IGT 1997:	90+ pts
CHIANTI CLASSICO RISERVA 1997:	90 pts

This Tuscan winery has fashioned beautiful wines. It will be hard, even in this top-notch vintage, to find a better Chianti than **Monte Bernardi's 1997 Chianti Classico**. Dense ruby-colored, with fabulous fruit, it unwinds on the palate to reveal expansive, sweet, black cherry and berry flavors intertwined with tobacco, spice-box, and dried herbs. With abundant glycerin and opulent texture, this barrique-aged Chianti is terrific. Drink it over the next 5-6 years.

The proprietary red, the **1997 Sa'etta** vino da tavola is a barrique aged, 100% Sangiovese. The dense ruby/purple color is followed by a voluptuously textured, medium to full-bodied, low acid wine with stunning quantities of red and black fruits. It should drink well for 7-8 years.

The Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Cabernet Franc vino da tavola from Monte Bernardi is called Tzingana. While the elegant, spicy, restrained 1996 is very good, the **1997 Tzingana** is undeniably sexy, revealing a dense purple color in addition to a gorgeous display of blackberries, plums, licorice, and toasty new oak. Sweet (because of high glycerin and alcohol), with low acidity, and layers of concentrated fruit, this terrific proprietary red should drink well for a decade.