
Tenuta di Carleone Il Guercio

Winery: Tenuta di Carleone
Category: Wine – Still – Red
Grape Variety: 100% Sangiovese
Region: Radda/ Toscana / Italy
Vineyard: Single vineyard “Mello” in Gaiole
Winery established: 2012
Feature: Organic with biodynamic practices
Awards: 2019: 93 Vinous, Bibenda 5 Grappoli



Product Information

Elevation: 700 meters (2,297 feet)

Age of vines: about 20 years old

Harvest: Hand harvested, later than the other vineyards due to the elevation

Vinification: Vinification: Fermentation is spontaneous in cement. A small portion of the wine is crushed by foot and begins fermentation in an open bin. About 20% whole cluster, the rest of the grapes are destemmed.

Maceration of 40-60 days, with very small pump-overs performed over time. The wine from each site is fermented and aged separately until the final blend. Aged 18 months in tonneaux, cement and stainless steel. Unfiltered and unfinned.

Yield: approximately 4 tons per hectare depending on the vintage

Tasting Notes: Peppery nose. A lighter style, while the acidity and complexity from the long maceration makes the wine as fresh as it is elegant.

Production: 6,0000 - 10,000 bottles

Producer Information

Thirty years ago, world-traveler and one-eyed dreamer Sean O’Callahan handed in his thesis at a German winemaking school, then took off on his motorcycle for an Italian vineyard adventure. He dived into Chianti and never looked back, now partnering with Karl Egger at Tenuta di Carleone. In 2012, Karl and his sister Kristine discovered their labor of love when they began to restore the ruins of Castiglioni, just outside of Radda. The micro-hamlet’s little castle was built by the Badia al Coltibuono monks, who penned the site’s first historical mention in the year 1078.

Using organic and biodynamic practices, they farm a collection of small plots, 20 hectares in total, nestled among wooded hills, small streams and aged olive trees. Ranging from 450-700 meters elevation, the mini-plots feature soils that alternate between "Alberese" limestone and "Galestro" sandstone and compacted shale. Some vines were planted in the 1970’s, with others more recently established or replanted. Each site is vinified and aged separately before the final blend is made. Winemaking both thoughtful and playful creates wines of “bevibilità,” that drinkability that makes bottles tend to disappear!

To start out, the wine was made in two garages, but they are currently renovating an old terra cotta factory to serve as the new cantina. Sean’s vision for Sangiovese wine is a balance between structure and fruit. That freshness is achieved by fermenting in concrete and/or steel containers, with a portion of the grapes in whole cluster. For the project’s most experimental wine, “Il Guercio,” which could translate to “one-eyed rascal” and may change from year to year, the open top bin where the whole clusters are crushed by foot remain in maceration in the same bin for over three months. Sean skips filtration and fining, lets his wines ferment spontaneously, and admonishes others to “do something that you love.”