
Tenuta di Carleone Chianti Classico

Winery: Tenuta di Carleone
Category: Wine – Still – Red
Grape Variety: 100% Sangiovese
Region: Radda/ Toscana / Italy
Vineyard: a selection of small plots in the Radda area
Winery established: 2012
Feature: Organic with biodynamic practices



Product Information

Soil: mixed plots favor either “Alberese” limestone over clay and sandy loam or “Galestro” sandstone and compacted shale

Exposure: various, some NW facing vineyards that help in the warming climate, one on the hilltop gets sun all day

Elevation: from 450-700 meters (1,476 – 2,297 feet)

Age of vines: 20-50 years old, with a few sections more recently replanted

Harvest: Hand harvested starting in late September, with the oldest vines picked last

Vinification: Fermentation is spontaneous in a mix of steel and cement. A small portion of the wine is crushed by foot and begins fermenting 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 cement and steel. Unfiltered and unfined.

Yield: approximately 4 tons per hectare depending on the vintage

Tasting Notes: : Notably fresh, with red fruit on the nose and palate, notes of red cherry and strawberry. Nice grip with finely textured tannins for excellent drinkability.

Production: 35,000 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.”