

Decanter Italy 2006

Riserva Petri, one of the Magnificent seven



Castello Vicchiomaggio, whose vineyards are being transformed



John Matta of Castello Vicchiomaggio is among those trying native and international grapes in blend

QUIET TRANSFORMATION

If revolution is in the air you would hardly know it from gazing out across this famously bucolic landscape of olive groves, vines and hilltop towns. With outlines hazy in the summer heat, the view seems as timeless as ever. Yet Englishman abroad Matta is among those slowly transforming their estates, in his case replanting half a hectare of his 32ha a year. The new vineyards are compact and vigorous compared with the 1970s plantings now in gentle decline. Matta moved here in 1970 when the family wine business in the UK was sold. Two main wines are made on the estate: San Jacopo, a traditional Chianti classico (90% Sangiovese, 10% Colorino-Canaiolo); and Ripa delle Mandorle, a modern IGT (75% Sangiovese, 25% Cabernet-Sauvignon). Some like one, some the other. Matta's philosophy is to let the market decide. Personally I prefer his cru wines from native grapes.

CHIANTI: A MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

■ **Castello
Vicchiomaggio, Petri**
2001 **BBB**

Intense floral nose with sharp,
cranberry flavours on the tongue.

Up to 2008. £13-14; Ave, Cle, Evy