

the world's best wine magazine

Decanter

www.decanter.com

Decanter | buying guide

PANEL TASTING

RESULTS

Chianti Classico Riserva 1999

A great vintage, and some exceptionally good wines

■ Castello Vicchiomaggio, Petri	£13.95	'Rich, brooding forest fruits nose – light. Closely knit palate with firm, chewy fruit and ripe, chunky tannins – solid but balanced. 2–3 years.' (RW)
■ Castello Vicchiomaggio, La Prima	£17.50	'Attractive, smoky oak. Quite intense, delicious fruit dominated now by vanilla oak. Supple and juicy with fine tannin. Very good but keep. 2–3 years.' (PMC)

Following a scenario which seems increasingly familiar in Tuscany, the summer of 1999 was hot and dry, although the problems of drought stress which afflicted the 1998 and 2000 vintages were avoided thanks to rain in late August, and the grapes were picked quickly and early. Quantities, up 5% on the small 1998 vintage, returned to average. On the basis of great must analyses, the Producers' Consortium gave the vintage an uncontroversial five-star rating.

1999 was a showcase for a lot of good things going on in Chianti Classico: better vineyard management; vinification techniques delivering more fruit and softer tannins; more Sangiovese in the blends and a trend towards Merlot as the top-up variety; plus more measured use of oak. Question marks remain on the issue of style, especially in the riserva category.

117 Chiantis tasted:
88 wines recommended
from the great 1999 vintage

BYO for the gourmet:
The top restaurants that let you bring your own wine

New York, New York:
New faces on the wine scene,
plus essential wine stops

