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MONTECALVI

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Marvin R. Shanken *Editor and Publisher*

Insider Special Report: Tuscany

Tuscan wine lovers are going to have a lot to celebrate this year. Many of the top wines in the outstanding year of 2006 are coming on to the market. Moreover, the excellent 2007 vintage will follow. I don't think there have ever been two back-to-back vintages with so much quality in the region.

It wasn't that the harvests in 2006 and 2007 were perfect. There was some intermittent rain in august and september in both years, and those two months generally make or break a vintage due to the crucial growing period for the vines. But most producers today are savvy enough in their vineyards and cellars to offset any slight declines in quality to their grapes or wines due to poor weather. and they did just that in 2006 and 2007. More important, most of the days were bright and sunny, giving the vines lots of energy with which to ripen their grapes.

What I love about the 2006s are their fabulous aromas. They are so bright and perfumed, especially the Sangioveses. In addition, they are rich and structured, with lots of ripe fruit and tannins. They remind me of the legendary 1997 vintage, but slightly more polished and refined. The top 2005s are very close to the excellent 2004s but a little softer in texture.

Included in this report is just a fraction of the outstanding wines from my blind tastings. check out the Hot Wines on page 4 for this issue's top scorers, and see my annual Tuscany tasting report in the Oct. 31 issue of *Wine Spectator* for even more highlights.

—James Suckling

Wine Spectator
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Toscana San Piero 2006

Shows wonderful aromas of intense blackberry, dark licorice and subtle mint. Full-bodied, with velvety tannins and a long, long finish. This is fruit-forward, but balanced and refined. Hard not to drink now. A fantastic new wine from this estate. Cabernet Sauvignon, with Merlot, Syrah and Alicante. Best after 2011. 165 cases made. —JS©

Score: 94
Release Price: \$90
Country: Italy
Region: Tuscany
Issue: Oct 15, 2008

Chianti Classico 2006

Good and fruity, with lots of black cherry, fresh herb and mineral character on the nose and palate. Full-bodied, with soft, velvety tannins and a clean finish of fruit and mineral, leaving a hint of chocolate. This is nice now, but should also improve. Best after 2009. 200 cases made. —JS

Score: 90
Release Price: \$25
Country: Italy
Issue: Oct 31, 2008

