

#Storiedivino tastings: New vintage releases from Italy

With the country under lockdown in response to COVID-19, innovative Italian producers took to social media channels to report on their latest wines. Aldo Fiordelli reports from the #storiedivino tastings and recommends a selection of wines to try...



Aldo Fiordelli
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📌 Exclusive Highlights Tastings Home

Italy has taken the COVID-19 lockdown seriously. There is no sharing of pizza, no aperitivo hour, no wine tastings. However, over the past few weeks, while almost all of us in the world have been staying safely at home, spring has awakened the vines. A smattering of snow and risk of frost on the flattest vineyards of Central-North Italy during the first days of April had winemakers worried, but bud break is now progressing very well due to mild temperatures and dry weather.

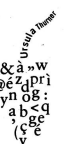
In sync with the season, wine producers are looking resolutely towards the future. With both Prowein and Vinitaly being cancelled this year, producers saved many samples of new vintages intended to be shared at these international wine fairs. But they are sharing in other ways.

A selection of top Italian producers – from Trentino-Alto Adige to Sicily – have joined forces to introduce not only their new vintages, but also their ideas and plans for the future, via social media. The title they have given to this initiative is #storiedivino.

Virtual wine fair

Through incentives such as this, wine lovers across the globe have been able to enjoy a 'virtual wine fair' throughout Italy, engaging in direct social media encounters. The most interesting virtual meetings, in my opinion, have been delivered from the vineyards; not easy from a technical point of view, yet offering a great and welcomed perspective for oenophiles who may be locked down at home.

From the top of his Colledilà cru, Barone Francesco Ricasoli took viewers along a virtual journey across part of his 240ha of vineyards in the stunning Chianti Classico region. In Florence, you're hard-pressed to come across a good trattoria that doesn't stock Ricasoli Chianti Classico, a true flagship of Tuscany. Nevertheless, the estate today boasts far more than just commercial appeal; it is widely recognised for its organic conversion, precision viticulture (as detailed by the baron) and critical studies on indigenous limestone and schist soils.



Live videos from the vineyards were also shared by young producer Bianca Ferrini of Giodo Brunello di Montalcino. Her father, Carlo Ferrini, is one of the most talented winemakers in Italy, a master of tamed tannins and elegant wines. After many years of treading vineyards, Ferrini's dream to own land of his own finally came when he purchased 6ha of vines in Montalcino – a considerable extent in the noble world of Brunello – between Sant'Angelo in Colle and Sant'Antimo.

Ferrini, said to have Sangiovese in his blood, has also invested in vineyards on Mount Etna in Sicily and virtually recently presented the resulting Alberelli di Giodo wines.

Some producers, such as Ginevra Venerosi Pesciolini, chose to broadcast from their cellars. Her estate, Tenuta di Ghizzano, lies within a 350ha biosystem, of which 20ha are planted to vineyards and the same to olive groves, on gently contoured hills, 300m above sea level, in the Colline Pisane southeast of Pisa. 'We are some 30km from the Tyrrhenian Sea, which is crucial for our vineyards in terms of sunshine influence and microclimate, providing balanced ripening,' she explained.

Carlo Franchetti presented his Trinoro estate in Val d'Orcia in Tuscany live on Instagram. He carefully described the hills and flatter plots of the vineyards, explaining the differences between the estate's three labels of 100% Cabernet Franc: the elegant Magnacosta, the fruitier and more approachable Tenaglia and the powerful Camagi.

Anselmo Guerrieri Gonzaga, with his wife Ilaria, talked about his extraordinary estate, Tenuta San Leonardo, situated beneath the Dolomites in Trentino-Alto Adige, and about his beloved Bordeaux blend San Leonardo, which he described as 'a wine with the sinews of a swimmer.'

Live tastings

Meanwhile, Lamberto Frescobaldi spoke from his office in Palazzo Frescobaldi in Florence about Tenuta Luce in Montalcino. The estate's 88ha of beautifully manicured vineyards, lying at 350-420m in Montalcino 'sheltered by the Amiata mountain and influenced by the sea breezes', according to Frescobaldi. This project was born in collaboration with US producer Robert Mondavi in 1993. It focuses on Sangiovese and Merlot because 'the former doesn't play his best on clay'. With the 2017 vintage, the Frescobaldi family are writing the 25th chapter of this masterpiece.

While tasting the 2016 vintage of Luce live, viewers asked: 'Is it not too young to be drunk now?' The marquis answered: 'Yes and no. Play with it during the lockdown.'

Aldo Fiordelli top Italian lockdown launches...

Tenuta di Trinoro, Rosso di Toscana, Tuscany, Italy, 2018



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The leaner character of the 2018 vintage matched with the concentrated style of Trinoro, where the vineyards are planted 1m x 1m, give to this wine a unique balance. 'As we neared the end of August, we were looking at larger than usual clusters, not too sweet for the period, and unusually soft in their early fruit!' said Andrea Franchetti. 'The skins, thin as they were, were incredibly forward in colour - they stained the fingers! Usually, that happens in mid-October'. After that there was a drop in temperature and a firm wind which were able to concentrate the flavours of the grapes. The wine is restrained, full of eucalyptus, dried leaf and fresh cassis - almost minty in depth - but its best arrives from perfectly polished tannins and lively acidity. A dense wine full of elegance.



Tenuta di Trinoro, Magnacosta, Rosso di Toscana, 2018

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Campo di Magnacosta is the lightest and more feminine Cabernet Franc of Trinoro's cru (Magnacosta, Camagi, Tenaglia) based on this grape variety. It is a 1.5 hectare parcel of river gravel and silt on the valley's bottom, where an old stream ate into a hill (hence the name: magna is eat and costa is hillside). It was planted over 20 years ago with cuttings from a vineyard in Pomerol. Intense and elegant on the nose with an intriguing restrained brumble fruit, dried eucalyptus and spices, it combines great fruit definition and creamy palate with tight-knit tannins and lively acidity in background. Warm on the finish, yet well balanced.

Drinking Window 2020 - 2035

Tenuta di Trinoro, Palazzi, Rosso di Toscana, Tuscany, 2018

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During the 2018 vintage a strange wind and drop in temperature arrived in the Orcia Valley, thus Palazzi should be considered of a cooler vintage. 'In the last days of summer, we were dizzy with the silver of the new moon. From the 21st, there was a sudden density in the Merlot: the astronomy signaling. This variety is showing dark and soft, and we began bringing in twenty tons of grape a day. The juice was low in alcohol, high in acidity, rich in taste – complex Merlots, reminding one of Saint-Emilion,' said Andrea Franchetti. Dark and plummy, with precise fruit and clean leathery notes, full of floral layers and buttery sweetness at core, it will age developing balsamic notes now whispered. The tannin shows a great progression on the palate with noble extraction and an almost crisp mineral finish.

Drinking Window 2021 - 2040

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