

Wines Of The Week: Tignanello 2015 And Castello Di Albola Poggio Alle Fate 2018



Brian Freedman Contributor 

Food & Drink

I cover food, wine, drinks, travel; host dinners; and consult on wine

Despite what it looks like from the outside, tasting collectible, age-worthy wines can be a difficult process. Don't get me wrong: I don't know any wine professionals who would ever complain about the prospect of tasting the greatest names in the wine pantheon. But as often as not, those bottles are built to be laid down, and in their youth are often dominated by the tannins and acid that will allow them to stand the test of time. In other words, the very aspects that will structure them for the long haul can also make them difficult to appreciate early on. The technicalities of the wine often (though of course not always) outweigh the pleasures they provide before they've matured a bit.

I bring this up because it's what I was expecting when I recently prepared to taste the Marchesi Antinori Tignanello 2015, my red Wine of the Week, whose reputation for longevity and profundity is matched by only a handful in all of Italy. What I found, however, was the exact opposite: I was shocked upon opening the bottle to discover wine that, while it absolutely has the potential to age for another 20 years or longer, close to impossible to resist right now.

As soon as it's poured into the glass, a profound mix of toasty oak and vanilla perfumes the air, all of it wrapping around a core of currants flecked with licorice and edged with notes of eucalyptus and a humid air filled with great cigars. It's ever so slightly floral as well, mainly on the violet end of the spectrum. On the palate this is pure sill with flavors of currants and spiced cherries both delicate and propulsive. The spice notes are sweet and mysterious, and speak of allspice and a hint of clove, and the gently candied violets are sweet and savory at once. There's a touch of cedar and sandalwood as well, with leather riding in on the finish. The balance and length here

are remarkable, and this promises to drink well to 2049 and possibly beyond. If you've never had Tignanello before, this is a great vintage to start with. If you're already a collector, it's a can't miss addition.

My white Wine of the Week is also from Italy, and also grown in Chianti Classico. Though just like the Tignanello, it, too, isn't labeled with the appellation's name. The Castello di Albola Poggio alle Fate 2018 is proof that even in this hilly part of Tuscan far more famous for its reds, white wines here have the potential to be standouts, too.

In this case, the Poggio alle Fate Toscana Chardonnay is sourced from a single eight-acre vineyard in Radda in Chianti. 15% of the grapes were fermented in French oak and the rest in stainless steel, and only 20% of it underwent malolactic fermentation—this is a wine about expressing the site, not overlaying the character of that unique place with an overuse of wood or butteriness. The result is a wine with utterly charming aromas of stone fruit, yellow apples, and pears, and a palate cut through with deeply mineral acidity framing flavors of fennel bulb, hard pears and apples, and a sense of salinity. It's all brilliantly concentrated and kissed with just the slightest suggestion of cinnamon stick, and promises to drink well for another four or five years. And at less than \$20, it's an absolute steal.

Both of these wines show that age-worthy bottles don't have to be tough in their youth, and that value can be found along all points of the price spectrum. Profundity doesn't have to cost a lot of money in the case of the Poggio alle Fate...and sometime what looks like a lot of money is actually a great deal, as the Tignanello so magnificently shows.

Marchesi Antinori Tignanello 2015

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leather riding in on the finish. The balance and length here are remarkable, and this promises to drink well to 2049 and possibly beyond. SRP: \$135



The Tignanello 2015, grown in the vineyard pictured above, is a wine that will age beautifully for decades, but reward early consumption, too (Credit: Courtesy of Marchesi Antinori) COURTESY OF MARCHESI ANTINORI

Castello di Albola Poggio alle Fate 2018

Charming aromas of stone fruit, yellow apples, and pears, and a palate cut through with deeply mineral acidity framing flavors of fennel bulb, hard pears and apples, and a sense of salinity. It's all brilliantly concentrated and kissed with just the slightest suggestion of cinnamon stick, and promises to drink well for another four or five years. SRP: \$18



The Poggio alle Fate 2018, by Castello di Albola, above, proves that world-class Chardonnay can be produced in Tuscany (Credit: 1821 Fine Wines & Spirits, A Zonin Family Company). 1821 FINE WINES & SPIRITS, A ZONIN FAMILY COMPANY



Brian Freedman

I am a food, wine, drinks, and travel writer, restaurant and beverage consultant, wine educator, and event host and speaker. I was Editor-in-Chief of Drink Me Magazine a... [Read More](#)