

CELLER

A PASSION FOR FINE WINES AND SPIRITS

SPRING 2011

ITALY'S INFLUENTIAL
GAMBERO ROSSO

PAIRING WINE WITH
VEGETARIAN DISHES

TASTE TEST
TRIPLE TAKE

SIPPING PRETTY
IN TOKYO

THE MAREMMA
HIDDEN
TUSCANY

The Moris family in the
medieval town of Scansano
in the Maremma.



NEW ARRIVALS: 42 WINES IN STORES MARCH 3 AND 17



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A PASSION FOR FINE WINES AND SPIRITS

SPRING 2011



PHOTO: CHRISTIAN LACROIX.

ON THE COVER

After a meal of pasta, boar and a few delicious glasses of Morellino wine, the Moris family took us for a stroll in the town of Scansano. The younger men are cousins and all three work at Moris Farms. Adolfo Parentini, centre, is married to one of the Moris daughters and still plays a role at the winery despite being officially retired.

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PHOTOS: CHRISTIAN LACROIX

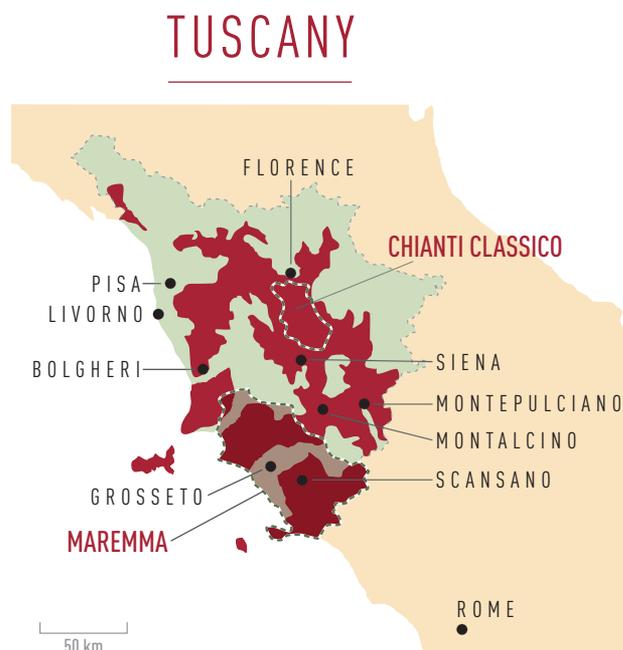
The Maremma

LIFE AFTER THE HYPE

TEN YEARS AGO, THE MAREMMA WAS THE DARLING OF WINE WRITERS. THE EUPHORIA HAS SINCE FADED, BUT THE FOUNDATIONS OF THIS TUSCAN REGION REMAIN SOLID AND ITS WINES VERY GOOD.

BY MARC CHAPLEAU

There is the Tuscany of Florence, Siena and Chianti, in all its grace and beauty. But there is another Tuscany too, one that's less rich, less chic and less touristy but no less fascinating: the Maremma, a long strip of coastline south of Livorno.



It's fertile now, but historically the Maremma was a swampy, marshy area (the name is related to the French *marais*, or marsh) that was rife with malaria. The swamps had to be drained before anything could be grown here, just as in 18th-century Médoc in Bordeaux. The process began in the 19th century in the Maremma and wasn't completed until about 1930.

The region produces mainly red wines, primarily from Sangiovese. The best-known appellation is Morellino di Scansano. Many other wines are labelled Maremma Toscana IGT (roughly the equivalent of Vin de Pays).

Grosseto is the capital of what is now technically the Maremma (see map). Until recently the region also included the world-famous Bolgheri production zone to the north, where Sassicaia, Ornellaia and other Supertuscans are made. The Bolgheri district was called the Alta Maremma to distinguish it from the Bassa Maremma, encompassing Grosseto and environs.

A tad confusing, and even locally there isn't full agreement on the names or boundaries of the two zones. But the fact remains that Bolgheri went upmarket, with some producers deciding they no longer wanted to be lumped in with their southern counterparts.

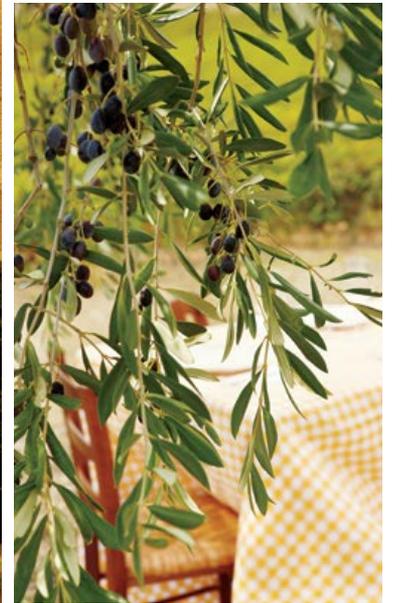
As Federico Zileri, general manager of Tenuta Argentiera and vice-president of the Bolgheri *consorzio*, told us: "Please, get the maps right in your article. This is Bolgheri, not the Maremma."

Not to worry, Signor Zileri. We'll do our best not to mix up the rich with the rabble. ■

PHOTOS: CHRISTIAN LACROIX



Left, the view from Tenuta Belguardo, a Maremma estate owned by the Mazzei family group. Below, an olive tree. Bottom from left, the market in Grosseto, the Maremma's main town; a detail from our meal with Mazzei staff; a street in the picturesque town of Montiano.



MORIS FARMS

SUNDAY IN THE COUNTRY

About a dozen of us are crowded around the lunch table at the Moris' house – their house being a 300-year-old, 40-room mansion in the pretty hill town of Massa Marittima in the heart of the Maremma. So picture-perfect, it suggests a scene from an Italian movie.

Photographer Christian Lacroix and I have been given a tour of the vineyards and facilities, and assorted family members – cousins, brothers-in-law, a sister-in-law and a toddler – have joined us for lunch on this Sunday afternoon. The walls are hung with portraits of family ancestors. Two



Moris Farms' Riserva contains 90-percent Sangiovese and is produced with grapes selected from the best vineyard parcels. The aging potential of Riservas from good vintages makes them appealing candidates for the cellar.

Sri Lankan servants wait on us, summoned after each course by a kind of bell pull that hangs from the light fixture over the table. The mood is cheerful and casual, imposing though the home itself is. We get a better sense of that later in the family's private chapel, which has two confessionals and is still in use.

Moris Farms is average-sized for the region, producing around 350,000 bottles a year, but it encompasses almost 500 hectares of land. The titular proprietor, who greets us at the start of our visit, looks much younger than her 97 years. Her late husband, we're told, once owned some 6,000 hectares and about 80 houses. The Moris family came to Italy from Spain in the 18th century.

"I prefer Bordeaux, but here I am making Burgundy!"

– ADOLFO PARENTINI

One of the people at the table is in-law and retired Moris Farms manager Adolfo Parentini, who still acts as a consultant to the estate. "Why the English name?" I ask him. "One of the brothers and co-owners who lives in San Francisco came up with the idea of giving it an English name. It's plural because we have two farms." One property is in the Morellino di Scansano appellation, the other in Montereale di Massa Marittima.

Their entry-level Morellino, available in Quebec for some time now, has no

contact with wood. Their Riserva, in contrast, is aged for 12 months in one- and two-year-old barrels. It contains 90-percent Sangiovese (called Morellino locally) and 10-percent Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, whereas Syrah plays the supporting role in the entry-level wine. Yields are lower for the Riserva, which is made from carefully selected grapes that are harvested parcel by parcel.

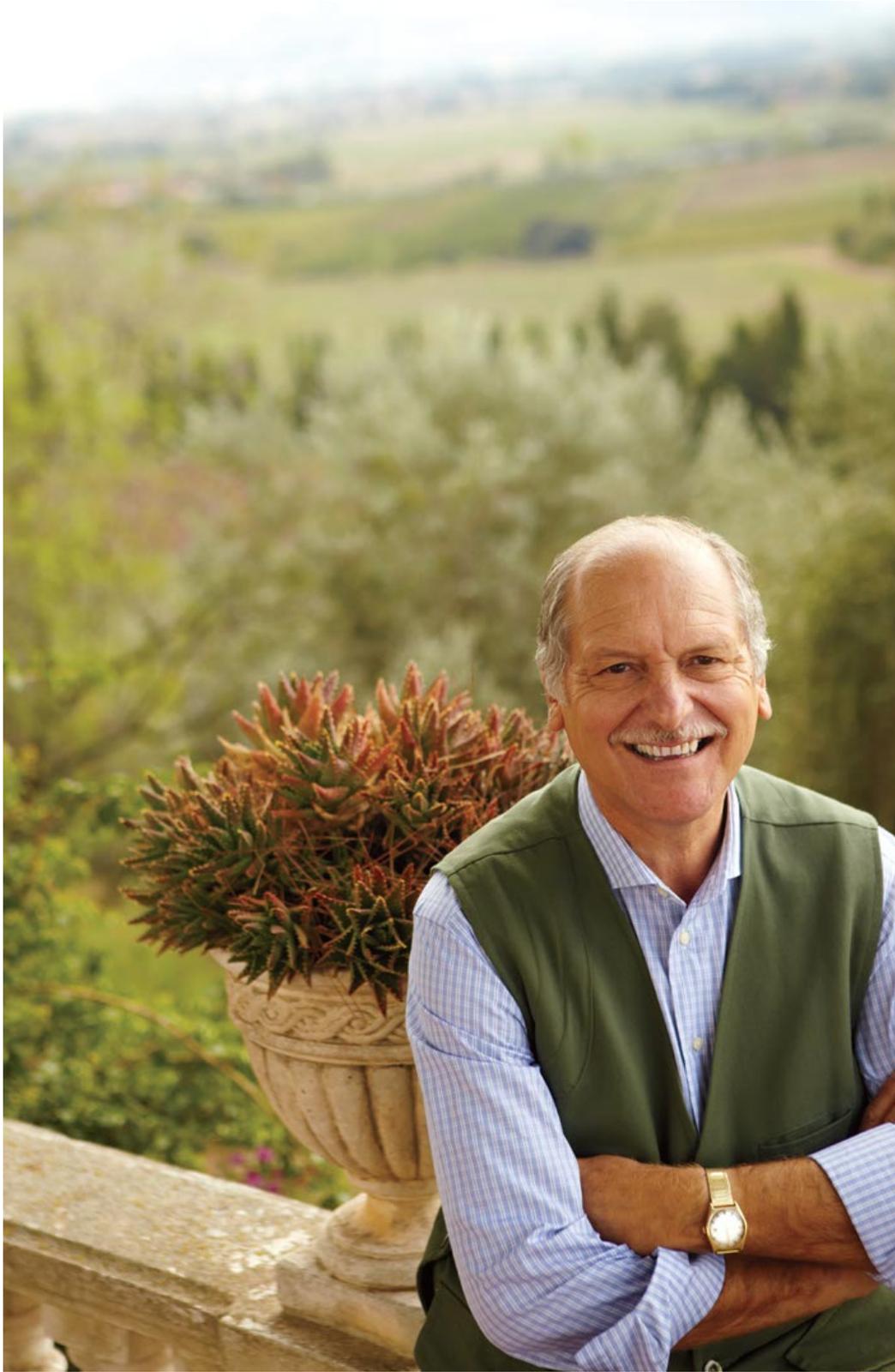
Though high in alcohol, at about 14.5 percent, the Riserva combines power and depth in the finish. Robust and generous, yet well structured, balanced and dynamic, it's best consumed with dishes such as the succulent boar served throughout the Maremma in autumn.

The Morellino Riserva can also be cellared, based on a vertical tasting at the estate: The 1990 is tired but the 1994 and 1995 are still holding up nicely. What's more, the former may not yet be at its peak.

The real standout of the tasting is the 1988, still fruity, spicy and elegant. "You'd think it was a great Pinot," I remark to Parentini, though I'm aware that back then the wine was made with 100-percent Sangiovese. He laughs. "*Va bene*, I prefer Bordeaux, but here I am making Burgundy!" M.C. ■

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 **Vendemmia 2006, Morellino di Scansano Riserva DOC, MORIS FARMS**



Adolfo Parentini, married to one of the Moris daughters, is officially retired but still involved in the family winery. Upper right, a house that can be rented by visitors; the rent is fairly high but the house, set amid maritime pines, is very spacious and the view is superb. It's one of several rental properties, some of which have a swimming pool as well, operated by the Moris family. Lower right, the titular proprietor of Moris Farms, who's well into her 90s and lives alone save for two servants in a 40-room mansion.

A Region Revealed (continued)

ALSO SEE ARTICLE ON PAGE 24.

TUSCANY

Novel Appeal

This young winery in Tuscany's up-and-coming Maremma area is a client of ubiquitous consulting winemaker Carlo Ferrini. A blend of Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot and Alicante, Dròmos is smooth and modern, with mingled plum and wood accents as well as roasted notes. E.B.



TUSCANY  2013
Dròmos 2013, Maremma Toscana IGT, Poggio Verrano
 \$32.50, 11370453, 750 mL
 NUMBER OF BOTTLES: 900

Accented with Tradition

Banfi, one of the giants in Tuscan wine, with thousands of hectares throughout the area, here delivers a Sangiovese augmented with a little Cabernet and Canaiolo Nero. It has a discreet nose of blackcurrant and tobacco, and the rather classic mouth shows anise notes and soft tannins. Would go well with tomatoey dishes. A.H.



TUSCANY  2015
Banfi 2015, Chianti Classico Riserva DOCG
 \$26.25, 11366091, 750 mL
 NUMBER OF BOTTLES: 2400

A Fine Vintage

The 2006 Chiantis are thoroughly impressive, and this Riserva wine from Castello di Bossi embodies everything you'd expect of a great year. Made exclusively from Sangiovese and barrel-matured for 18 months, it has a forthright attack that's dense and substantial. The complex aromatic profile brings to mind cherry, blueberry and chocolate augmented with menthol notes. E.B.

WS 93



TUSCANY  2016
Berardo 2006, Chianti Classico Riserva DOCG, Castello di Bossi
 \$27.75, 11370496, 750 mL
 NUMBER OF BOTTLES: 1200

Thriving Partnership

A joint venture of the Rothschilds of Lafite and Paolo Panerai, proprietor of Castellare di Castellina in Chianti, Rocca di Frassinello is located in a superb natural amphitheatre in the Maremma. Comprised of Merlot (20%), Cabernet Sauvignon (20%) and Sangiovese (60%), a small-grape Sangiovese, this, its flagship wine, presents a dense tannic frame and a freshness that creates harmony and elegance. E.B.

WS 91

TUSCANY  2016
Rocca di Frassinello 2006, Maremma Toscana IGT
 \$42.50, 11370488, 750 mL
 NUMBER OF BOTTLES: 600



A Charming Sangiovese

Farmers for generations, the Moris family has focused on viticulture since the mid 1990s. The charming results include this blend of Sangiovese accented with 10% Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Vendemmia has spices and ripe fruit on the nose, and exhibits body and good integration in the mouth. Serve with hearty dishes. A.H.

GR  WS 92

TUSCANY  2016
Vendemmia 2006, Morellino di Scansano Riserva DOC, Moris Farms
 \$32.50, 11370445, 750 mL
 NUMBER OF BOTTLES: 600

