



CASTELLO DI AMA

**World-renowned winemaker fêted
with preview of his 25th harvest, 2006**

Marco Pallanti's "Silver Anniversary" with Castello di Ama Custom-designed bottle and photographic triptych will celebrate his success and long-term exclusive relationship

More than a quarter of a century spent in passionate attachment to a corner of the earth, to wine, to his craft, to his family. Very few of the world's top winemakers can boast of so many harvests at a single winery, so many years spent in the heart of the Chianti area perfecting the art of making wine and tending the vine, bringing forth elegant, richly-acclaimed wines (*Castello di Ama*, *Vigneto Bellavista*, *Vigneto La Casuccia* and *L'Apparita*).

Perhaps a sole figure, **Marco Pallanti**, manager and winemaker at Castello di Ama, can celebrate these great loves, including family, all together. It is rare in the world of oenology to find a professional who has dedicated his genius and his creativity to realising the potential of a single area, drawing from it a superlative wine, and reaping such respected success.

Over a career of true brilliance, Pallanti was named "Best Winemaker of the Year" by Gambero Rosso's *2003 Wines of Italy*, Castello di Ama won the title "Best Winery of the Year" in 2005, and the *Guida Espresso 2008* awarded the winery its highest honour, Three Stars. Pallanti's wines have won numerous Italian and international awards. To cite a simply couple, the 1987 *L'Apparita* won first place in the International Tasting of the World's Best Merlots in 1991 in Zurich, and Castello di Ama wines have garnered Gambero Rosso's top ranking, Three Glasses, fully twenty-one times. Ama's achievements have been often recognised abroad. The *Wall Street Journal* listed Castello di Ama among the world's top producers, and *Wine Spectator*, the world's leading wine magazine, recently dedicated seven pages to the winery.

In 2006 Pallanti was elected President of the Consorzio del Vino Chianti Classico.

Pallanti is being fêted this year with a preview of **his twenty-fifth harvest at Ama: the 2006 vintage**. *Castello di Ama*, *Vigneto Bellavista*, *Vigneto La Casuccia*, and *L'Apparita*, four wines that will be released next year, are a true poker hand of aces, all from an exceptional growing year, every bit as fine as 1996.

To underline the fact that *Castello di Ama* has always figured as the winery's iconic product, its packaging has been executed in silver tones and the front label bears the dedication, "**Grazie Marco per questi 25 anni insieme. L.**" ("Thank you, Marco, for these 25 years together. L.") It is this handwritten tribute that best testifies to the relationship and understanding on which Castello di Ama's years of success have been built and which makes the 2006 edition so unique.

Lorenza Sebasti, the winery's managing director and Pallanti's wife, decided that this was the best way to personally commemorate the time spent together pursuing a common goal they had always shared: producing a truly great Chianti Classico, a wine that would above all eloquently reflect its place of origin, a wine of absolute quality and with a production of 200,000 bottles.

This goal was achieved, thanks to farsightedness and perseverance, and above all to the conviction of the importance of terroir, of the sense of place of origin that sets a wine apart and allows the sapient winemaker to produce unique and distinctive wines.



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To celebrate even more specially this particular anniversary, a custom art project was commissioned. Artist **Giovanni Ozzola** interpreted the locus and the event in her own personal way. Her photographic triptych, entitled *Omnia Munda Mundis*, which adorns the octagonal sacristy in the Cappella di Villa Ricucci, recounts the continuous rebirth of nature and the cycles of life.

Pallanti arrived at Ama in **1982** and, right from the beginning, enthusiastically embraced the owners' proposal to restore authenticity to Chianti Classico by making it solely from traditional local grapes and not using fruit brought in from the south.

Thus, after obtaining his university degree, Pallanti studied at the University of Bordeaux, the renowned centre for oenology science. Those studies and later contacts with world-class experts led him over the years to "re-think" Ama's vineyards (for example, he introduced the open lyre method of vine training in 1982, its first appearance in Italy); to experiment with non-traditional varieties such as Merlot, Chardonnay, and Pinot Noir; to enhance the concept of cru wines (introducing over the years *Vigneto Bellavista*, *Vigneto La Casuccia* and *L'Apparita*); and to begin utilising small oak barrels. But all of this was done without ever "losing sight" of Chianti Classico, always striving to make wines that would be the quintessence of a particular place of earth. Quality, innovation, and continuity have been the guiding concepts that have inspired Pallanti's work through to the present, along with the dynamism and stubbornness of his wife, who as a young woman arrived at Castello di Ama with all of the energy of a cyclone and later became its managing director. "We immediately shared a deep understanding and respect for each other," explains Lorenza Sebasti. "The spark was provided by the exceptional 1988 harvest. Marco is full of enthusiasm, but a reserved person, and was hoping silently that I would assume the position of directing the winery, so he taught me a lot, while always respecting my exuberance." The happy marriage was enriched by the birth of three children, Arturo, Norma, and Gemma, as well as by a shared passion for beauty and for contemporary art.

The new century dawned at Castello di Ama with its becoming the permanent venue for installations of contemporary art, displaying masterworks inspired by the genius loci and by the ideal bond between art, wine, and life.

To date, the installations include works by **Michelangelo Pistoletto** (*The Tree of Life: Division and Multiplication of Mirrors*, 2000); **Daniel Buren** (*Over the Vineyards. Points of View*, 2001); **Giulio Paolini** (*Paradigm*, 2002); **Kendell Geers** (*Revolution*, 2003); **Anish Kapoor** (*Aima=Blood*, 2004), **Chen Zhen** (*The Human Body's Inner Light*, 2005); **Carlos Garaicoa** (*I Wish to See My Neighbours No Longer*, 2006), and **Nedko Solakov** (*amadoodles*, 2007).

On September 21 the ninth installation was presented, *Towards the Ground*, by Spanish artist **Cristina Iglesias**.

Info www.castellodiama.com