

COLLAZZI

Vertical Tasting by Ian D'Agata

April 29, 2009

**COLLAZZI by I COLLAZZI:
ANOTHER GREAT (BUT LITTLE KNOWN)
FRESCOBALDI SUPERTUSCAN**

On April 29, 2009, I met with Lamberto Frescobaldi and sat through a vertical tasting of the Collazzi Supertuscan from the Frescobaldi family property of I Collazzi, located at Tavarnuzze, near the pretty Tuscan town of Impruneta, a stone's throw away from Florence.

The property actually belongs to the maternal side of Lamberto's family, first bought by his uncle Carlo back in 1933. Not originally intended as a fine wine making estate, its is only in recent years that Carlo approached Lamberto for advice on what to do with the picturesque estate. And thus vineyards were planted in 1994, with cabernet sauvignon, cabernet franc, merlot being the originally chosen grape varieties, followed later by small plantings of petit verdot and syrah as well.

The estate now produces about 16,000 – 28,000 bottles of its Supertuscan Collazzi, and another 30,000 bottles of a modern-leaning Chianti Classico, a very fine 80% sangiovese and 20% merlot blend. The soils are calcareous clay (where most of the merlot is planted) and clay-sand, where the cabernets thrive. At about 200 meters above sea level (roughly 650 feet), this area's climate is heavily influenced by the nearby, warm valley of Florence, which causes earlier flowering here than, for example, in Chianti Classico. The Collazzi is one of Italy's better, if least known and most fairly priced Supertuscans, and a wine you ought to look into.

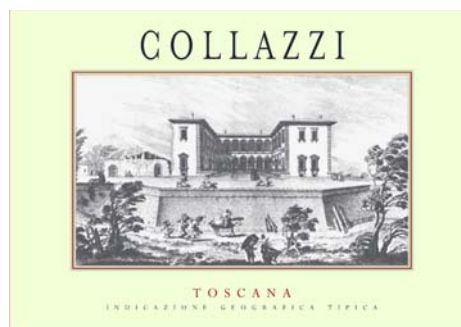
2006

A 60% cabernet sauvignon, 30% merlot, 7% cabernet franc and 3% petit verdot blend. This is the first vintage that has seen the addition of the petit verdot to the basic cabernet-merlot blend, while the syrah has not yet been used. Deep ruby-red. Very perfumed wine of real breeding and depth, with intense red cherry aromas highlighted by ripe dark plum, tobacco and balsamic nuances.

There's just a hint of over-ripe, almost stewed fruit here on the palate, with lusciously rich licorice and spicy red cherry flavours on a long smooth finish. Refined, and downright excellent.

2005

Roughly 70-30 cab sauvignon-merlot. Fresher vintage is evident on the nose, with an elegant nose that hints at green bell pepper and graphite, along with minerals and red currants. Creamy and sweet on entry, then finishes long and austere, a rather vertical wine with little in the way of excess baby fat. A little simpler than the 2006, but highly enjoyable and with a pleasant earthy nuance. Very well done here.



2004

Roughly 70-30 cab sauvignon-merlot. Very deep ruby, much darker than the '05 and '06. Spicy underbrush nose, with plenty of blackberry syrup, quinine and dried herbs on the nose. Very sweet mid-palate, a multi layered wine of real complexity and no shortage of power. Real quality in this bottle.

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2003

Medium dark red. Smells quite ripe, and it couldn't be any different in '03, characterized by furnace-like conditions. Just a touch of drip irrigation helped considerably, and the end result is just fine. Delicately spicy, showy red berry and cherry fruit aromas have a slightly earthy component. Very successful on the palate for an '03, as this is devoid of astringent tannins that were usually the norm in most '03 Tuscan wines of some concentration, this has plenty of soft ripe fruit and a medium long finish of some charm. Enjoyable.

2002

Deep ruby with a paler rim. Intensely violet aromas on the nose give way to strong tomato nuances. Pretty, delicate herbal and cassis flavours have a hint of peppery spiciness on the long, linear finish. Very clean and enjoyable, this is a mid-weight that is excellent for current or short term drinking while your '04 and '06 mature. A highly successful wine for the vintage you must try to see that all that has been said and written about the '02 wines is not always true.

2001

Dark ruby with a hint of rim. Real depth to the aromas of cracked black pepper, dark plums and red cherry with a hint of coffee and dark cocoa. Similar flavours to the aromas and real length and breeding on the palate, with fine acids and a tight core of fruit and tannins accompanying you on a long suave finish.