

Castello di Ama

L'APPARITA - MERLOT - 2018



CASTELLO DI AMA
SIENA - ITALIA

REGION: ITALY - TUSCANY



CASTELLO DI AMA

Castello di Ama was founded in 1976, and is located in Gaiole in Chianti, within the additional geographical unit of the same name (UGA), located in the heart of Tuscany. It is located about 12 miles northeast of Siena in the hills of Gaiole. This is the heart of Chianti Classico, a bucolic rolling landscape of woods, vineyards and olive groves.

The estate is currently helmed by CEO Lorenza Sebasti, a member of the second generation of one of the four founding families. Marco Pallanti, who was once the President of the Chianti Classico Consorzio, has been the winemaker and technical director at Castello di Ama since 1982.

The goal of the estate is to have each bottle of Castello di Ama express the uniqueness of the terroir, and be an authentic expression of the vintage. Ama has practiced sustainable viticulture since the end of the 1990s, and recently received *Equalitas* (Italy) certification.

THE WINE

Vineyard Profile

L'Apparita, the first purebred Merlot produced in Tuscany, has been an iconic wine since its initial harvest in 1985. Two parcels at the top of the Bellavista vineyard comprise the L'Apparita cru.

Vines were first planted in 1975 with Canaiolo and Malvasia Bianca, they have been replanted in 1982 with Merlot, using the clone nr 342. The open-lyre training system and predominately clay soil make this cru a crown jewel in world winemaking. Since the first vintage, this wine has maintained its unique expression in which the distinguishing features of Merlot are elevated by the terroir of Ama.

- Soils: Calcareous with clay
- Exposure: North-South
- Altitude: 1608 feet/490 meters
- Vineyard Area: 7.29 acres/2.95 Ha
- Vineyard initially planted to Canaiolo & Malvasia Bianca in 1975; replanted to Merlot in 1982
- Clone: Merlot NR 342
- Planting Density: 2800 plants/ha
- Vine Training System: Open Lyre

Harvest Notes

- Large diurnal temperature swings in Fall allowed good aroma development
- 2018 wines will be fruity with excellent and balance
- Extraordinary polyphenols this growing season
- Repeated sampling and organoleptic analyses determined harvest began 8/29/2018
- Hand harvested into 10 – 12kg crates, ending 10/15/2018
- Only ambient yeast vinification, in temperature controlled, stainless steel tanks
- Fermentation between 86–91° F with manual pumpovers for 28 days
- Racked into stainless, followed by malolactic fermentation
- Aged in 50% new, balance 2 yr old, oak barriques for 14 months

Winemaker's Notes

An impenetrable purple red with violet nuances. Refined and elegant on the nose. Aromas of red and black fruits, lavender, mint, sage, spice, new leather and cloves. The finish has a balsamic note. Layered, perfumed and wonderfully nuanced. An extremely elegant wine with rich concentration of fruit, juicy, bright acidity.

Technical Information

- 100% Merlot
- Alcohol: 13.5%
- Total Acidity: 5.23 g/l
- Residual Sugar: <1 g/l
- Extract: 31.9

REVIEWS

L'Apparita – Merlot – 2018

98 Points - [jamessuckling.com](https://www.jamessuckling.com), December, 2021

#32 of TOP 100 WINES OF ITALY 2021

Hard dark-chocolate aromas with blackberries and blue fruit. Pure and gorgeous. Full-bodied with gorgeous, polished tannins that are intense and powerful, yet ever so precise and together. It's so curated and real with a great finish. One of the best merlots from Ama in a long time. Drink after 2024 and onwards.

https://www.jamessuckling.com/wine-tasting-reports/top-100-wines-italy-2021/?mc_cid=6b38c60205&mc_eid=abec1db36f

97 Points - Wine Enthusiast, May, 2022

One of the rare instances where Merlot excels in Tuscany, this gorgeous wine opens with enticing aromas of dark-skinned berry, new leather, camphor and dark spice. Continuing where the nose left off, the elegant, delicious palate delivers cassis, ripe blackberry, licorice and crushed mint alongside the barest note of truffle. It's a world-class wine with breeding, extreme finesse and great depth. It's impeccably balanced, with a backbone of velvety tannins and fresh acidity. Drink through 2033.

99 Points - Vinous - Antonio Galloni, September, 2021

The 2018 L'Apparita is a total stunner. Ama's 100% Merlot is usually a wine of bombastic intensity, but the 2018 marks a departure from that style, as it is all finesse and nuance. Blackberry jam, spice, menthol and lavender are some of the aromas and flavors that open in an Apparita that dazzles with its precision and nuance. Rain at the end of August pushed out harvest and gave Marco Pallanti the ideal conditions to craft this gorgeous wine.

Lorenza Sebasti and Marco Pallanti showed me a brilliant set of new releases during my most recent visit. The Ama wines are often showy when young, but they only reveal their true potential after a number of years in bottle. These are quite simply some of the most singular expressions of Chianti Classico readers will find. I was especially struck by the sublime magnificent 100% Merlot L'Apparita.

94 Points - Wine Spectator, August, 2021

Black currant, black cherry, blueberry, wild herb and earth flavors are nicely displayed on the polished frame of this fluid and harmonious red, with dusty tannins lining the finish. More on the elegant side than powerful. Best from 2023 through 2033.

99 Points - © Wine Advocate, October, 2021

This wine has earned its spot in a world of pantheons that is grande vini Italiani. The Castello di Ama 2018 L'Apparita is one of the world's greatest Merlots, and this slightly cooler growing season delivers on all the promise and pedigree that we should expect of this collectors' favorite. L'Apparita opens to an inky dark and blackish appearance, and the bouquet slowly reveals black fruit, ripe cherry, dark spice, smoke and barbecue rub. The wine's texture and finish, which is so velvety and rich, so supple and soft, is what will ultimately win you over. Indeed, this wine excels especially in terms of the elegance and fullness of the mouthfeel. 2024 – 2045

94 Points - View From The Cellar, March, 2023

Castello di Ama's l'Apparita was the first merlot-based Super Tuscan produced in Italy when it was first released in 1985. The two parcels of merlot vines sit at the top of the Bellavista vineyard, planted on a mixture of limestone and clay soils. The 2018 version comes in at 13.5 percent octane and was raised in fifty percent new oak. The wine offers up a superb bouquet of dark berries, cassis, espresso, cigar smoke, fresh herb tones, a fine base of chalky soil and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and complex, with a fine core of fruit, excellent soil inflection, tangy acids, firm tannins and a long, well-balanced and very promising finish. This is properly structured and will need some extended cellaring before it starts to drink well, but it is going to be excellent. 2033 – 2085

GENERAL INFO

Country	Italy
Region	Tuscany
Appellation(s)	Chianti Classico
Proprietor/CEO	Lorenza Sebasti
Founded	1974
Winemaker	Marco Pallanti
Annual Production	25,000 9L cases
Farming (Sustainable, organic, biodynamic)	Sustainable certified by <i>Equalitas</i> Italy