



Classification:

Toscana IGT

Blend:

Cabernet Sauvignon 75%, Sangiovese 20%, Cabernet Franc 5%

Climate:

The season in the Chianti Classico production zone was characterized by an autumn and the following winter which were both cold and wet; winter rains guaranteed good and useful water reserves in the ground during the first part of spring, which was initially mild, without any return of winter cold. The bud break in the vineyard, accordingly, was a regular one and took place well within seasonal averages for the period; rain arrived in June and during the first days of the month of July and pushed the development of the vine vegetation. Flowering and bud set were also regular, even if the rains just cited influenced the size of the berries and the bunches, which began the summer well ahead in their ripening rhythm. The vines continued to vegetate quite abundantly during the summer months and then encountered a very hot and dry August and an initial ten days of September. Despite these conditions, the second half of September and the entire month of October enjoyed very favorable weather both in terms of the continuing warmth of the days and of the important temperature swings from daytime heat to evening and nighttime coolness. Both the Sangiovese and the Cabernet required a lengthy period on the vine to acquire full ripeness and finesse, to the point that picking took place principally during the first twenty days of October. The quality of the harvested grapes brought to the cellars was very high indeed, both in terms of their healthiness and, above all, of their ripeness and balance, raising expectations of a vintage of exceptional level.

Vinification:

Favorable climatic conditions allowed the grapes to ripen regularly, unhurriedly, and uniformly, thereby enabling picking operations to go forward in a way which allowed the maximum attention to nuances and detailed differences in each and every single parcel of the Solaia vineyard. The grapes, after being tasted and evaluated on the basis of their overall ripeness, the coloring material in their skins, and the maturity of their pips, were carefully picked by hand into small packing cases, separating the individual parcels from one another on the basis of all the varying viticultural and oenological criteria.

On their arrival in the cellars, the grapes were first destemmed and then, before pressing, selected on the sorting table; here attention to detail was at maximum levels and berries which were not completely ripe, an exception in this vintage, were discarded and only perfect ones wound up in the fermentation tanks. The must was slowly transformed into wine in the conical oak fermenters, and the fermentation and maceration was carried out with the maximum attention to the freshness of the aromas, the extraction of color, and a handling of the tannins programmed for softness and elegance. All of this required great sensitivity, a full knowledge of the grapes which were being worked, and a constant and careful attention to the fermenting wine, which was only run off its skins after attentive daily tastings. Once the skins were separated from the juice the wine was moved towards the malolactic fermentation, which took place in small oak barrels to give greater finesse and future drinking pleasure. The aging process then began and lasted eighteen months in French and Hungarian oak; during this period the various lots, fermented and aged separately according to the grape variety and the other variables (vineyard plot, ripeness, character), completed their aging and were assembled a few months before bottling.

Historical data:

Solaia, a twenty hectare (50 acre) vineyard of the Tignanello estate with a southwestern exposure, is situated at 350-400 meters (1175-1325 feet) above sea level on a soil of calcareous rock (known as "alberese in Tuscany). The Marchesi Antinori firm produced this wine for the first time in the 1978 vintage with an initial blend of 80% Cabernet Sauvignon and 20% Cabernet Franc, a blend repeated again in 1979. In the following vintages 20% of Sangiovese was added to the Cabernet grapes and the ratio of Cabernet Franc to Cabernet Sauvignon was changed in order to create a wine which has now become definitive in its various composing elements. Solaia is only produced in superior vintages and was not produced in 1980, 1981, 1983, 1984, and 1992.

Tasting notes:

The 2009 Solaia shows a ruby red color. On the palate the wine is smooth which is the result of perfectly ripe grapes along with sensations of coffee, chocolate, mint, and licorice. The wine impresses for its finesse and structure, and is characterized by great elegance and aging potential, with its soft and velvety tannins.