

FATTORIA DI FÈLSINA

Tuscany

Castelnuovo Berardenga, Province of Siena

Established: 1966

Owner: Beppe Poggiali

Winemaker: Franco Bernabei

Production: 400,000

Hectares under vine: 70

Viticulture: Organic

Vegan Friendly



Domenico Poggiali founded Fattoria di Fèlsina in 1966 on one of the finest terrains in Tuscany. Three thousand years ago the Etruscans introduced wine and olive trees to this area they called Fèlsina, meaning verdant. Beppe Poggiali, Giuseppe Mazzoclin and superstar winemaker Franco Bernabei form an awesome team that has collected 24 Tre Bicchieri and, in 2009, Gambero Rosso awarded Fèlsina the prestigious title of 'Italian Winery of the Year'. Forty years of extensive research and clonal selection has resulted in an incredible combination of complexity, structure, power and finesse in these renowned Tuscan wines.

Fèlsina forged its reputation as a 'border land' as it is located on the southernmost boundary of Chianti Classico. To the south is the Colli Senesi, marking an administrative and geological shift. In 1995 Beppe purchased an old vineyard nearby in Pagliarese, also in Chianti Classico, allowing for replanting of much of the original vineyards and a third property in Sinalunga, Castello di Farnetella, produces Chianti Colli Senesi. To appreciate Fèlsina's wines is to understand its deep connection to its terroir and devotion to the Sangiovese grape. Since 1983, Felsina have been cultivating massal selections of Sangiovese in order to preserve the importance of the different clones, now numbering 20, grown across their 11 vineyards.

In addition, Fèlsina have another property at Sinalunga in the Chianti Colli Senesi, called Farnetella. The soil type here has more sand, clay and marine sediments and the wines tend to be more forward than those from Chianti Classico, well suited to near-term drinking. Farnetella Chianti Colle Senesi, from Sangiovese with about 8% Merlot, is medium bodied with perfumed preserved cherry fruit and liquorice, the palate fresh and satisfying.

Chianti Classico DOCG

Elegantly fruity nose with marked scents of cherry, wild red berries, leather and spice. The palate, too, shows excellent fruit supported by judicious tannins and a lengthy finish that will reward cellaring up to 10 years.

2018. The 2018 Chianti Classico Berardenga is endowed with so much class. In 2018, the Classico is a bit more restrained than it can be. That mid-weight sense of structure, though, gives the wine quite a bit of early appeal. Even so, I would cellar the 2018 for a few years, as all the elements haven't fully come together just yet. Dark cherry, game, smoke, licorice and earthy notes are a reminder we are in Castelnuovo Berardenga, even if the 2018 has less weight and overt power than Fèlsina fans are used to seeing. 92 points, Antonio Galloni

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Fontalloro IGT

This is Fèlsina's original SuperTuscan, first made in 1983 from 100% Sangiovese. At the time, the wine was labelled as Vino da Tavola since there was no approved higher denomination for a monovarietal wine. The border that defines Chianti Classico and Colli Senesi runs through the Fèlsina property and Fontalloro is sourced from both of these areas. As such, it is labelled IGT. Renowned for its powerful structure, depth and complexity, Fontalloro has more in common with the wines from nearby Montalcino and rewards patient cellaring. Dark berry fruit, leather, spice and tobacco develop along with earthy notes with time in the bottle. The powerful palate is structured with a hefty charge of medium-smooth tannins.

2017. Fontalloro is exquisite in 2017. It is also such a contrast to the Rancia, as the two wines could not possibly be more different. Fontalloro is bright and vibrant, with more sweet red Sangiovese character than the darker Rancia. It is also incredibly delicious now, even though it clearly has the energy to age for many years. The 2017 is one of the finest Fontalloros I can remember tasting. 95 points, Antonio Galloni

Chianti Classico DOCG Riserva 'Rancia'

If there is an exceptional location to gaze out over all of Fèlsina and its surrounding areas, that place is the vineyard on the ancient Rancia estate. A single vineyard cru first made in 1983, Rancia is renowned for its structure and acidity. This 6 hectare vineyard, planted entirely to Sangiovese, is at 400 metres above sea level and the soil is a type is a combination of alberese and galestro. Aged mostly in barrique for between 12-18 months, Rancia balances ripe fruit with a racy freshness that supports spice, smoke, game and mineral notes on a hugely structured palate layered with complexity and character.

2017. The 2017 Chianti Classico Riserva Rancia is incredibly polished and sophisticated. Silky tannins give the 2017 its racy, sleek personality. Over the last year, the 2017 has really settled into a gorgeous place. There is plenty of vintage 2017 intensity, but Rancia is distinctly medium in body and restrained. The wilder side of Sangiovese, one of the signatures of Rancia and Fèlsina more broadly, tastes a bit baked out. I can't wait to see how the 2017 develops over the coming years and decades. 95 points, Antonio Galloni

Vin Santo DOCG

Malvasia and Trebbiano with 20% Sangiovese are air dried on mats until the following February. The wine spends seven years in small casks and fermentation is encouraged by the 'mother' deposits of the previous vintages. This is slightly oxidative with scents of ripe peach, prune, cinnamon, figs and apricot. Although this is concentrated with a beautiful core of sweetness, the palate remains fresh and elegant.

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