

## Poggerino – Superb Chianti

On assignment in Tuscany, Five Way Cellars employee Ches Cook has reported back after sampling some of the best wines that Poggerino from Chianti, have to offer. With the help of colleague Oliver Oxenham, these tasting notes give an insight into the place and the wines.

After a full first day of tasting in Montalcino, our second day took us to Chianti for a visit to Poggerino. A tour of the vineyards, winery and cellar door, left us with a vast knowledge of Poggerino and the way in which they make their wines. Poggerino is a producer whom which I am reasonably familiar with as I have drunk a range of their Chianti's in the past few years (dating back to the 1995 Riserva if I remember correctly). For this reason I was quite excited to increase my knowledge of their wines through a comprehensive tasting of their entire range.

Being led around the winery by Piero Lanza, we toured Poggerino's 11ha's of vineyards in 30+ degree heat. The property has been in the possession of the family since 1940 yet it was not until 1973 that the first vines were planted with the first Poggerino vintage coming in 1980. Eight years later in 1988, Piero had his first vintage as winemaker. Under Piero, the winery has grown from having 5ha of vines to today, having 11, with one more to be planted by the end of 2012.

Currently 10ha of vines are devoted to Sangiovese with one sole ha of Merlot existing, although Piero is not overly excited by these vines. It is the Sangiovese that he is most passionate about.

At the base of the vines lie Galestro soils that Piero says help add body and elegance - as well as structure - to his wines. With a favorable southern aspect, existing between 100-150km from the coast, the climate at Poggerino in Radda, Chianti may be described as 'continental' as it involves hot summers, dry winters and cool nights. On top of this, as Piero explained, the Sangiovese grape is one that ripens quite slowly which is another contributing factor toward the complexity and balance of the Poggerino wines. Being approximately 450 metres above sea level, Piero continually stressed the importance of cool nights being critical to the slow maturation of his Sangiovese. Such temperature variations mean that under-ripeness and over-ripeness are generally avoided.

With a familiar focus on quality over quantity, Poggerino are intent on vine control and on guaranteeing low yields. Statistically, this means that Poggerino aims for 1.5 - 1.7kg of fruit per plant and this, in alignment with their organic and biodynamic practices, are a few good reasons for the exceptionally high quality of the Poggerino wines. Also, with enviable terroir, Poggerino today exists as a very highly regarded name in Chianti Classico which Piero attributes to the quality and character of Poggerino's micro-climate. In his own words, Piero stated that it was vitally important to work with the soil - rather than against it - in order to get the most out of the land. He stated that the clones and the vines can be changed but the soil cannot, thus it is important to treat it well in order to get the most out of it.



***Whilst Ches tasted the entire Poggerino range, below are two of the stand out's. The Chianti Classico is in stock. The 2007 Riserva is due in September. It will be very limited – we are taking advance orders for it.***

**Poggerino Chianti Classico 2009**

**Single bottle \$40.00 / Dozen price \$35.00 per bottle**

At the serious end of the tasting, we launched into the current vintage of Poggerino's 'business card' - the 2009 Poggerino Chianti Classico. Each year, 40,000 - 45,000 bottles of this wine are produced and it is this wine that most widely represents the Poggerino family and the Poggerino brand name. For this reason, a consistent high quality is crucial, and thus a huge percentage of Piero's time and effort goes into this wine. Bottled in March of this year, the '09 Chianti Classico is for me, a great example of medium bodied Italian Sangiovese. Savoury dark fruits dominate the palate with a consistent density, concentration of fruit and persistent length. On the nose, an array of florals and a certain forest floor character were evident in conjunction with the classic smell of dried green herbs and spice. A drinking wine with medium-term cellaring potential, this wine holds a strong acid backbone which is gained naturally from the Sangiovese grape and assists in providing length and structure. Firm velvety tannins round out this wine and make it a very appropriate trademark of Poggerino.

**Poggerino Chianti Classico 2007 Riserva**

**Single bottle price \$90.00 / dozen bottle price \$80.00 per bottle**

Tasting the 2007 Chianti Classico 'Bugialla' Riserva took things to the next level. With fruit taken solely from Poggerino's oldest vinyard - Bugialla - planted in 1973, this wine is only produced in the best vintages. It represents the best that Poggerino produces and it certainly is a cracking wine. With notes of rich vanilla and subtle oak, the nose of the wine is layered and powerful. The palate follows a similar path, combining savory dark fruits and spice with persistent acid - all in perfect harmony. Certainly a full bodied wine with great intensity and further drinking potential, it is clear to see why Piero regards this as his pride and joy.

Our tasting at Poggerino had come to an end. It was perhaps the most informative and educational visit of the two days in Tuscany and the quality of the wines spoke for themselves.