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Climate

After a late fall and winter, on the whole rather mild and rainy, the spring of 2016 began with excellent weather in Chianti Classico, favoring a bud break ten days in advance of seasonal averages. The month of May and the first half of June saw some precipitation but the weather, which was slightly cool, had no influence on the decisive phases of flowering and bud set. The climate was, for the most part, warm up until the end of August, dry and without temperatures peaks, excellent cultivation conditions for maintaining a first-class balance between vegetative production and the grapes, guaranteeing a perfect growth of the crop. The period of picking was regular, with occasional rains alternating with sun and wind, conditions which assisted an ideal process of ripening for the three grape varieties planted in the Solaia vineyard. The harvest of the Sangiovese began during the last week of September. The Cabernet Franc was picked from September 28 to October 1st, while the Cabernet Sauvignon harvest took place from the 3rd to the 12th of October. Total annual rainfall: 41.2 inches Average temperatures, April 1st to October 13th: 66.8 ° Fahrenheit Rainfall from April 1st to October 13th: 16.7 inches

Vinification

The 2016 vintage, regular in its development and time span, will be remembered for the harvest of healthy and fully ripe grapes, favored by excellent climatic conditions during the entire growing season, particularly during the period of picking. Attention was nonetheless completely focused both in the vineyard and in the cellar where the grape berries were delicately destemmed and the grapes, before being crushed, were carefully selected on the sorting table. It is essential that only perfect berries go into the 60 hectoliter (1,580 gallon) conical fermenting tanks where the wine is made. The must was slowly transformed into wine during the fermentation and the phase of skin contact; extreme care is needed in this winemaking phase in order to maintain the freshness and aroma of the grapes without neglecting an extraction of color and a management of the tannins aimed at both sweetness and elegance. Once the wine was run off its skins, the malolactic fermentation in small oak barrels took place, a process which exalted the complexity and pleasure level of the wine. The first part of aging took place in new French oak barrels, 60 gallons in capacity, and lasted ten months. After an initial period of aging in separate lots, the components were blended together and the evolution in oak is completely carried out. **Notes from the winemaker** An exceptional vintage in terms of quality, characterized, in comparison to 2015, by slightly cool weather conditions and light rains during the growing season. A year in which the balance of the soil and the site were reflected in the wine. A harmonious expression of a Solaia with many facets. A wine which is slightly shy, introverted, in certain aspects even more fascinating than the previous year, one capable of telling its tale both now and in the years to come.

Historical Data

Solaia is a 50 acre (20 hectare) vineyard with a southwestern exposure located at an altitude between 1150 and 1325 feet (350-400 meters) above sea level and with a stony soil of "alberese" (hard limestone) and "galestro" (flaky calcareous clay) rock. The vineyard is located at the Tignanello estate. The Antinori family produced this wine for the first time in the year 1978, and the initial blend was 80% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 20% Cabernet Franc, a formula repeated in 1979 as well. In the following years, 20% of Sangiovese was introduced and certain adjustments were also made in the rapport between Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc until the current blend was settled upon. Solaia is produced only in exceptional vintage, and was not produced in 1980, 1981, 1983, 1984, and 1992.



Tasting notes

An intense ruby red in color, Solaia 2016 distinguishes itself on the nose by its intensity and its aromatic richness, the notes of ripe dark fruit, particularly blackberries and blueberries, fused with balsamic sensations of aromatic herbs and mint; sweet notes of chocolate and cotton candy alternate with spicy suggestions of white pepper, conferring freshness and complexity to the bouquet. The palate is rich and enveloping with supple and silky tannins capable of transmitting elegance, character, and an exceptional expression of fruit. The vibrant finish, long and very persistent, indicates an optimal aging potential over time.

Awards

Wine Advocate 100/100 USA **James Suckling** 100/100 USA **Galloni** 99/100 USA **Wine Spectator** 98/100 USA
Gambero Rosso Tre Bicchieri IT