

# FONTALEONI

**V**ernaccia di San Gimignano is the only Tuscan white wine with an historical identity and, at its best, with a wonderful and lively personality. Its reputation dating back to the Middle Ages, the wine's ebullience was duly noted by Michelangelo who with a perceptive poetical flight described it as a wine that "kisses, bites, stings and caresses", perfectly capturing its delicate yet sinewy character. This wine was the first in Italy to be awarded the DOC status in 1966, which was then upgraded to DOCG in 1993.

The parents of Franco Troiani, the present owner, moved from the Marche to Tuscany in 1959 and purchased the estate. In the 1990s a large part of the vineyards were replanted. The Vernaccia clones were collected, and still are today, from the oldest vineyard of the property,

planted in 1980. Franco now replants two or three hectares of vineyards each year. An extremely modern and partially underground cellar was built in 2001. To have modern and sophisticated equipment is particularly important for Vernaccia as this grape has a delicate nature and a very very fragile skin that breaks easily when reaching full ripeness.

Fontaleoni's vineyards lie on a prevalently calcareous soil (originating from the Pliocene Epoch) at the ideal altitude of 200-250 meters above sea level. The vine training systems are guyot and cordon spur, the traditional ones of the area, vineyard density is 4,500 plants/hectare.

Vineyard management is meticulous and carried out entirely by hand: chemicals are reduced to a bare minimum, sulphur and copper base products are preferred, very little and

only organic fertilizers are spread, grass is left on every other aisle. Grape yield is kept low by thinning the buds during the budding phase and the clusters at veraison (the phase when the berries change colour) and before harvest.

This is a family run estate, Franco's son, Matteo, a trained oenologist, being part of the team. The touch of Paolo Caciorgna, who consults for Fontaleoni, is evident in the lovely wines.

Four Vernaccia di San Gimignano are made: two "base" versions; "Casanuova" - a selection of the best clusters of the best vineyards - and a Riserva, partially aged in wood. Franco also produces a Chianti, a Chianti Colli Senesi and a Chianti Colli Senesi Riserva. ◇



## Vernaccia di San Gimignano

Zone: *San Gimignano*  
 Varietal: *Vernaccia*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *13 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *70,000 bottles*



## Vernaccia di San Gimignano Casanuova

Zone: *San Gimignano*  
 Varietal: *90% Vernaccia, 10% Chardonnay*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *1.5 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *8,000 bottles*