



# CASTELLO DI VOLPAIA

## THE CHIANTI CLASSICO *(page 1 of 3)*

### THE BLACK ROOSTER

The trademark of Chianti Classico is the “Gallo Nero,” or “Black Rooster.” The image of the rooster silhouette has been allegorically tied to the region since before the Renaissance era (1450-1600). In 1250, when the Florentines organized their territories into independent administrations called “leghe,” or “leagues,” Volpaia was one of the original founders of the Lega del Chianti, whose emblem was also the Black Rooster. Painter Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574) depicted the rooster in his fresco located in the “Salone dei Cinquecento,” or “Hall of the Five Hundred,” in Florence’s Palazzo Vecchio.

In 1984, Chianti Classico had received its own D.O.C.G. status, and by 1996, Chianti Classico was recognized as an independent appellation with specific production regulations — establishing once and for all that Chianti Classico is different from all other Chianti wines.

Beginning with the 2005 vintage, all Chianti Classico wines started carrying the historical Black Rooster trademark embedded in the pink government “fascetta,” or “neck label,” to officially differentiate between Chianti and Chianti Classico wines.

### THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF VITICULTURE AT VOLPAIA

In ancient times, Volpaia was a viticultural center of special importance: unlike Brolio, Meleto and other Chianti-area castles, Volpaia was a “terra murata,” a “walled village.” There is considerable evidence that the decision to fortify Volpaia was due not only to military reasons, but also to the necessity of protecting, above all, the rural economy of the area, which was already devoted to growing grapes and making wine. Volpaia’s viticultural economy improved significantly beginning in the 16th century, thanks to a long period of peace in Florence and Siena due to military stalemate. In those happier times, the wines of the Chianti district were able to establish a reputation for quality not only in Italy, but also throughout much of Europe.

In 1716, Cosimo III de’ Medici, Great Duke of Tuscany (1624-1723), issued an edict that officially organized the boundaries of the Chianti district — the world’s first legal document defining the production zone of a wine.

The Volpaia area came to be known as the “poggi viniferi,” or “viniferous well,” a term cited by Emanuele Repetti in his “Dizionario Storico Geografico della Toscana,” or “Historical-Geographical Dictionary of Tuscany,” which appeared in 1841. In “I Vini di Toscana,” or “The Wines of Tuscany,” Mario Covoni, speaking of the Fattoria Castello di Volpaia and six other estates, observed that the “...wines of all these wineries, most or all of whose farms are to be found in the upper Chianti area, are quite widely appreciated and constitute the prototypes of that premium Tuscan wine, which, bearing the title of the production district itself, is now assured throughout Italy a large and constantly expanding market.” (I Vini di Toscana, M.

Cellini & Co., Florence, 1881: 10-11.) Covoni’s statement represents a clear identification that the best Chianti Classico vineyards are on a similar quality level to the French premier cru vineyards in the Appellation d’Origine Contrôlée system.



### VOLPAIA’S ROLE IN RESURRECTING THE CHIANTI CLASSICO

As a result of extensive abuse in the oenological use of the Chianti name, 33 top wine producers of the historical and geographical Chianti region, including Volpaia, gathered in the town of Radda in Chianti on May 14, 1924, to establish a voluntary association designed to preserve and promote the authenticity of the region’s wines. The group became known as the “Consorzio per la difesa del vino tipico del Chianti e della sua marca di origine,” or the “Consortium for the defense of the typical wine of Chianti and its brand name of origin.”

Despite the efforts of the Consorzio, in 1932 the Italian government established regulations that Chianti wine could also be produced in an enlarged Tuscan territory around the geographical “Chianti region” — a region which carried the oenological name of “Chianti Classico.” This was the fundamental onset of the so-called “Chianti paradox” — simple “Chianti wine” was now produced outside of the geographical and historical “Chianti region,” which now produced the “Chianti Classico wine.” Due to this legal debacle, the quantity of Chianti/Chianti Classico wines increased dramatically, and their reputation began to tarnish. By the early 1970s, it was common belief that Italian reds (Chianti among them) were cheap, quaffable, simple wines

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*Radda in Chianti*

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## THE CHIANTI CLASSICO *(page 2 of 3)*

of low quality and were easily recognized by the “fiasco,” or “raffia baskets,” wrapped around the bottles. At the same time, worldwide consumption of wine began to increase and new winemaking regions began to emerge to compete with Italy. As markets blossomed and technologies improved, many Italian wineries were slow to react.

### THE CONSORZIO DIVIDES

Sensing a change in the market, Castello di Volpaia implemented steps toward improving its winemaking capabilities, while many of its neighbors lagged behind. In 1987, new Italian legislation forced the Consorzio Vino Chianti Classico to divide its operations into two entities. The existing Consorzio Vino Chianti Classico became fully engaged in protection and oversight of Chianti Classico appellation, while protection and promotion of the Black Rooster trademark was spun off to the new group, Consorzio del Marchio Storico, to ensure that wines sealed with the Black Rooster were of higher quality than the simple, national law requirements.

After a few years, Castello di Volpaia owner Carlo Maria Mascheroni says it was easy to determine the following: (a) the Consorzio del Marchio Storico was unable to ensure better quality than standard levels granted by Consorzio Vino Chianti Classico; (b) many outstanding producers were not members of Consorzio del Marchio Storico; and (c) the existence of the two Consorzi was not only generating confusion in the market, it was also creating a division in the world of Chianti Classico producers.

### VOLPAIA'S LEADERSHIP IN THE CONSORZIO

Realizing both the necessity and urgency for reunification of these two groups, Mascheroni became the first non-Tuscan president (Mascheroni was born in Monza, near Milan) of the Consorzio Vino Chianti Classico in 1997. During his tenure, the forward-thinking Mascheroni struggled to bring the two organizations



New high-density plantings of Sangiovese at Castello di Volpaia's Castellino vineyard in the heart of the Chianti Classico region.

together with a very simple, clear plan: First, the Black Rooster would no longer be the banner for a portion of Chianti Classico producers (about 55 to 60 percent of them); it would simply return to being the icon of the Chianti Classico appellation (the symbol of all Chianti Classico producers, as it was in 1924). Secondly, this “return to the beginning” would help deliver a more simple and effective message to the market: Chianti Classico is different from — and better than — simple Chianti, and

authentic Chianti Classico can be easily recognized by the Black Rooster on each bottle.

The first vote on the measure to reunify did not pass. Disappointed, Mascheroni tabled the reunification mandate, but continued to promote the value of his strategy. Only when it had become abundantly clear that a more shocking approach was necessary, Volpaia resigned from the Consorzio del Marchio Storico in 2002, and Mascheroni continued his merger-strategy from the side of the Consorzio Vino Chianti Classico. After years of Mascheroni's persistent lobbying, the two groups finally merged in 2005 back into the original Consorzio Vino Chianti Classico, which now represents about 95 percent of Chianti Classico producers.

### LAY OF THE LAND — CHIANTI CLASSICO REGION, CHIANTI CLASSICO WINE

The region of Tuscany extends westward to the Tyrrhenian sea, northward to Liguria and Emilia-Romagna and is bordered by Lazio (south) and Umbria (east). Within Tuscany are three of Italy's most important red D.O.C.G. wines: Chianti Classico, Brunello di Montalcino and Vino Nobile di Montepulciano, all made from Tuscany's most notable grape, Sangiovese.

Covering half of Tuscany (see map on next page), the Chianti production area is comprised of seven subzones, plus the most prized zone, Chianti Classico, which encompasses the entire,

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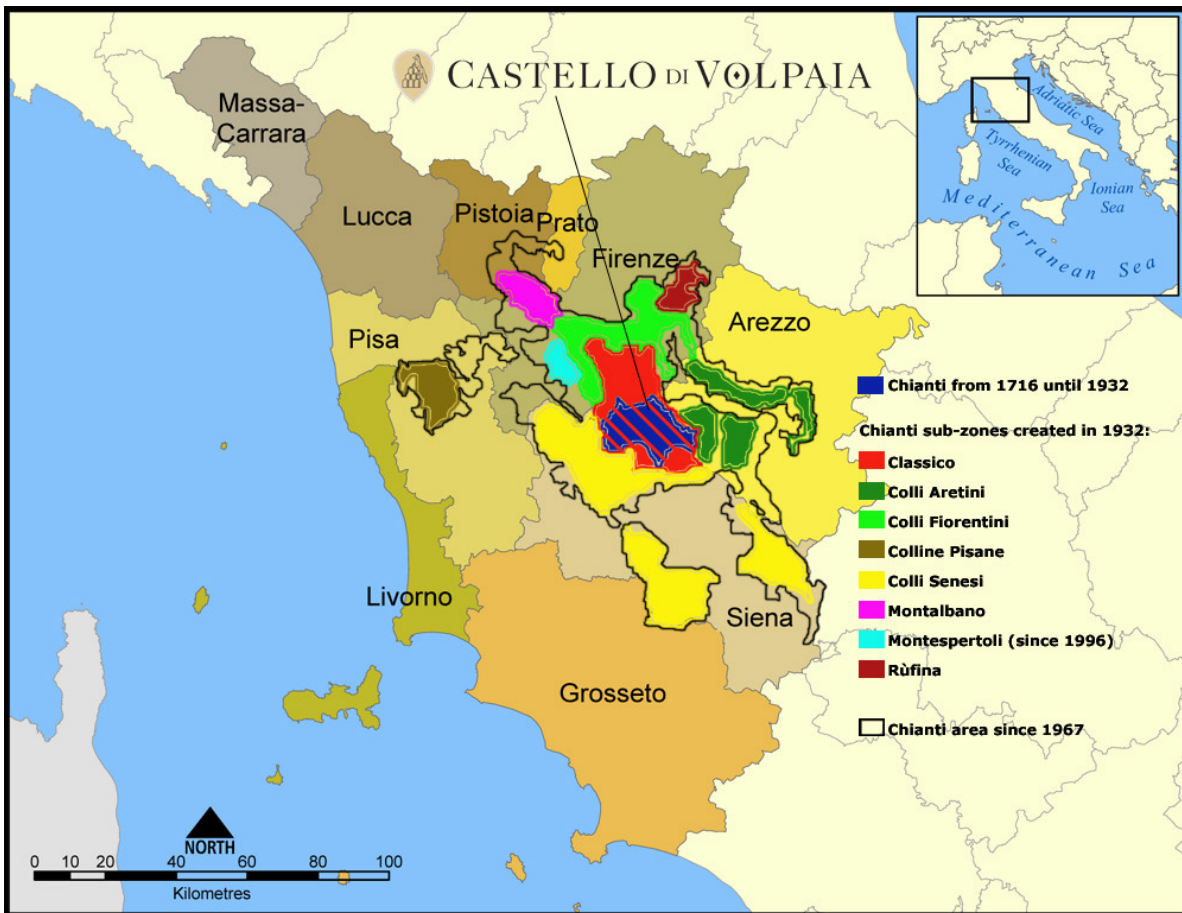
# CASTELLO DI VOLPAIA

## THE CHIANTI CLASSICO *(page 3 of 3)*

original geographic area of Chianti (1716-1932). The Chianti Classico covers 7,142 hectares (17,640 acres) of vineyards located on both sides of the Via Chiantigiana (SS222), which winds from Florence in the north to Siena in the south through some of the most beautiful countryside in all of Italy. Approximately halfway between Florence and Siena, just to the east, is the little town of Radda in Chianti. Another four miles directly north of Radda in Chianti is Volpaia, home of the Castello di Volpaia winery.

In modern times, the D.O.C. (Denominazione di Origine Controllata) was granted to Chianti and Chianti Classico in 1967, and the first version of the D.O.C.G. (Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita) production code for Chianti and Chianti Classico dates back to 1984, when Chianti Classico was still considered a sub-denomination of the vast Chianti D.O.C.G.

By law, Chianti Classico wines must be comprised of 80 to 100 percent Sangiovese and up to 20 percent other red grapes (both native and international varieties, most common of late being Canaiolo, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon). Beginning with the 2006 vintage, white wine grapes, such as Trebbiano and Malvasia, can no longer be used in Chianti Classico wine. Other Chianti Classico standards include: a minimum vineyard density of 3,350 vines per hectare (1,356 vines per acre); a maximum production level (yield) of 75 quintals of grapes per hectare (a quintal equals 3.34 tons per acre), the equivalent of 52.5 hectoliters of wine (559 U.S. gallons an acre); a minimum alcohol level of 12 percent for regular wine and 12.5 percent for Riservas; every aspect of wine production (bottling included) must be conducted within the production zone; and a minimum maturation period of 12 months for regular wine and 24 months (with at least three months of bottle aging) for Riservas.



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