



Written by
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Tenuta di Ghizzano, Il Ghizzano 2014 Costa Toscana

WINES OF THE WEEK TUSCANY

From €10.50, \$20.95, 2,400 yen, 149.95 Danish krone

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I found to my amazement that, although I have been aware of this producer for many a long year, our database of nearly 134,000 tasting notes had no reviews of Tenuta di Ghizzano wines until I recently tasted my way through the current releases.

This may be because of its location. It is north and west of Chianti country and, despite the (relatively new) denomination, quite a way inland. It is also well north of Bolgheri and the famous estates on the Tuscan coast. Tenuta di Ghizzano is south of the Pisa-Florence road, rather closer to the leaning tower than Brunelleschi's dome.



It is one of those sickeningly beautiful estates owned by the same family for 600 years or so, the Venerosi Pesciolinis in this case. They have been producing olive oil and wine for centuries, cereals too. About 20 ha of the total 350 ha is devoted to vineyard around the little village of Ghizzano on top of a hill about 200 metres above sea level. The maritime influence saves it from the frost and climatological extremes that can sometimes try the patience of their counterparts in Chianti Classico. The vineyards have been certified organic since 2008 and they claim, as so many wine producers do today, that they are moving in a biodynamic direction.

They have been in the agriturismo business since 2001, having restored four farmhouses on the estate. More details [here](#). The gardens, as shown on Ghizzano's website, look especially dreamy. This choice may bring back memories of Italian holidays for some. It seems appropriate since our thoughts are turning to our fourth Barolo Night in London (and our first in New York). We intend that any surplus generated will be donated to helping in some small measure those affected by the recent earthquake in central Italy, albeit on the other side of the Appenines from this estate.

The best-known wines of Tenuta di Ghizzano are the strangely named Nambrot, dominated by Merlot, and Veneroso based on the local Sangiovese. (Nambrot was apparently the name of an ancestor in, if you please, the ninth century.) Nambrot has been a regular three-glass winner and is a darling of that segment of Italian wine culture that worships French grape varieties and barriques (although the proportion of new oak is being reduced and is already down to 30%). I tasted Nambrot 2013 and, while I could see that much skill had gone into making it, and admired the fact that it was not trying to ape bordeaux, it's hardly the sort of quintessential Tuscan I would seek at around £30 a bottle. It's also still quite youthful and I would not think of opening it for another 18 months or so. (The links from these wine names lead to my tasting notes.)

I was particularly impressed by Veneroso 2013 and Veneroso 2012, wines composed of about 70% Sangiovese with 30% of (surprisingly discreet) Cabernet Sauvignon – foot trodden, apparently, and aged in 500-litre casks – whose average price is about £21 a bottle. Winesearcher.com do not yet list any stockists of the 2013 but this is a vintage of which Ginevra Venerosi Pesciolini who currently runs the estate is particularly proud. The 2012, in which the Sangiovese tastes even more dominant, is already drinking gloriously with polished tannins and great persistence, but it was a relatively small crop. The 2013 is more concentrated and should drink well from next year. I liked the balsam note on it, though Veneroso is definitely a wine for food.



But the wine I am recommending today as a particularly good buy is a sort of baby Veneroso. Il Ghizzano 2014, recently relabelled, is their introductory wine and sells for the equivalent of only £9 a bottle average price according to Winesearcher. Made from Sangiovese with just 5% Merlot, it was grown in a difficult cool, wet growing season but I loved its quintessentially Tuscan quality with a very direct, winning, fresh, ripe Sangiovese nose. It's just the sort of red to serve before or at the beginning of a meal with aperitivo-type pre-prandial nibbles. A bit of salami, prosciutto, some hard cheese ... it may have been a difficult season but there is nothing remotely weedy about this, and it has admirably well-worked tannins. It's 13% alcohol and I suggest enjoying it over the next two or three years.

Winesearcher.com lists retailers of Il Ghizzano 2014 in Italy, Spain, Denmark, Germany, the US and Japan.

According to the estate, Ghizzano wines are available in the following countries: Australia (World Wine Estate), Austria (Entkorkt & Ausgetrunken), Belgium (Licata Vini NV), Canada (LCBO Vintages and SAQ), Denmark (Theis Vine), England (Plowden Fine Wines), Estonia (Brillare OU), France (Enoteca Midi Maude et Melanie, I Golosi - Ristorante Enoteca, Martelli Distribution, Oliviers & Co), Germany (C&D Weinhandelsgesellschaft, Jacopini Import, La Bottega, Mediterraneo Feinkost, Mikondor Trading, Pietsch Import, Rewe Zentral, Villa Marie Gastronomiebetriebs, Vin Savoir, Wein Consult, Wein-Und-Mehr, Weinhandlung Drexler), Holland (Ciro Wijinimport, PHTurkenburg), Hong Kong (12 Bottle Company, El Grande Trading, Nighthawk Trading Heritage Wines), Japan (Mottox Inc), Russia (Vin Market), South Korea (Plateau Wine Trading), Switzerland (Caratello Weine, DM Vini, Vini D'Amato), Thailand (Estella Wine) and the US (Henriot). Furthermore, Wine-searcher.com lists retailers of Ghizzano wines - although not necessarily Il Ghizzano 2014 - in three more countries: Singapore, Spain and Sweden.

When looking up this wine, be aware that the estate also makes a white wine called Il Ghizzano, the current one being Il Ghizzano 2015. It's a blend of Vermentino, Trebbiano Toscano and Malvasia that is fine, and more perfumed than the average Tuscan white but, as usual for this part of the world, it's the red wines that are of much more interest.

Il Ghizzano	2014	IGT Costa Toscana	5 Aug 2016	16.5	2016 - 2019
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The introductory red from this historic organic-verging-on-biodynamic estate near Pisa. It is 95% Sangiovese with 5% Merlot and is unoaked. 2014 was a difficult cool, wet growing season. Very direct, winning, fresh, ripe Sangiovese nose. Super-correct. A beaker of the Tuscan hills! Really gets the gastro-juices flowing. To be savoured with aperitivo-type pre-prandial nibbles. A bit of salami, prosciutto, some hard cheese... It may have been a difficult season but there is nothing remotely weedy about this, and it has admirably well-worked tannins.

Veneroso	2012	Terre di Pisa	5 Aug 2016	16.5	2015 - 2020
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A very good quality but poor quantity vintage for Ghizzano. 70% Sangiovese, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon, aged for 16 months in 500-litre casks. Nicely mellow nose. Much more mature aromatically than the 2013. Already a very attractive drink with Sangiovese dominating. In fact it tastes as though the Sangiovese portion were more than 70%. Polished tannins. Very long. Less concentrated than the 2013. Perhaps a little more truly Tuscan.

Veneroso	2013	Terre di Pisa	5 Aug 2016	16.5	2017 - 2023
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This is a vintage they are particularly proud of at Ghizzano. Their Veneroso is the first wine they bottled, in 1985, named after a famous forebear and now they claim the grapes - 70% Sangiovese and 30% Cabernet Sauvignon - are foot trodden. Harvest was later than usual because of the wet August. Aged for 15 months in 500-litre casks; ambient yeast. Dark crimson. Spicy, very healthy nose. Sangiovese definitely dominates here and the Cabernet just seems to add colour rather than flavour. Lots of fine tannin but most of all this is bursting with natural flavour. A little balsam, and just a hint of oak. Definitely needs food.

Nambrot	2013	IGP Costa Toscana	5 Aug 2016	16	2018 - 2023
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This started off in 1996 - when Bordeaux varieties were all the rage - as a Merlot but is now 60% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc and 20% Petit Verdot. Foot trodden. Fermented in open wooden and concrete vats. Aged for 18 months in barriques but the proportion of new oak is being reduced and is now 30%. Lustrous crimson. This certainly doesn't taste Bordelais - more like a dusty Tuscan claret. It's a bit more austere than the Veneroso and is marked by quite dry tannins. I would keep it awhile. There's a rather sour note for the moment.