

Wine Spectator Insider

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A Members-Only, Weekly Publication

INSIDER SPECIAL REPORT: TUSCANY

TUSCAN wine lovers are going to have a lot to celebrate this year. Many of the top wines in the outstanding year of 2006 are coming on to the market. Moreover, the excellent 2007 vintage will follow. I don't think there have ever been two back-to-back vintages with so much quality in the region.

It wasn't that the harvests in 2006 and 2007 were perfect. There was some intermittent rain in August and September in both years, and those two months generally make or break a vintage due to the crucial growing period for the vines. But most producers today are savvy enough in their vineyards and cellars to offset any slight declines in quality to their grapes or wines due to poor weather. And they did just that in 2006 and 2007. More important, most of the days were bright and sunny, giving the vines lots of energy with which to ripen their grapes.

What I love about the 2006s are their fabulous aromas. They are so bright and perfumed, especially the Sangioveses. In addition, they are rich and structured, with lots of ripe fruit and tannins. They remind me of the legendary 1997 vintage, but slightly more polished and refined. The top 2005s are very close to the excellent 2004s but a little softer in texture.

Included in this report is just a fraction of the outstanding wines from my blind tastings. Check out the Hot Wines on page 4 for this issue's top scorers, and see my annual Tuscany tasting report in the Oct. 31 issue of *Wine Spectator* for even more highlights.

—James Suckling

Italy Tuscany

POGGIOMANDORLO

Maremma Toscana Poggio Mandorlo 2005

94 points | \$95 | 200 cases imported | Red

Very pretty and fresh, with a focused blackberry and mineral character. Full-bodied, with a wonderful core of ripe fruit and a silky and soft texture. This is so focused and pretty. Balanced and complex. Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Best after 2011. *From Italy.*—J.S.

Wine Spectator's 100-Point Scale

95-100	Classic
90-94	Outstanding
85-89	Very good
80-84	Good
75-79	Mediocre
50-74	Not recommended

HOT WINES

These are the most exciting discoveries from our editors' most recent tastings, published exclusively in *Wine Spectator Insider*. They are high-scoring, low-production wines from around the world that may be difficult to find, but are worth seeking out.