



Italy, Tuscany: Bolgheri - Le Macchiole Messorio

NEAL MARTIN

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If you love Merlot, I have a special treat this year. I sat down with Cinzia Merli and her winemaking staff for a small vertical of some of the best vintages of Messorio ever made (2000, 2001, 2004, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012 and the current release 2013). In addition to this special tasting, I reviewed Le Macchiole's other famous wines such as the Cabernet Franc Paleo and Syrah Scio. These are some of the finest wines I have tasted from this estate. For almost a quarter of a century, Le Macchiole was guided by the expert hand of consulting enologist Luca D'Attoma. Luca left this project two years ago to pursue other estates. All the wines presented here were made by Luca nonetheless.



Cinzia Merli of Le Macchiole during our retrospective of Messorio in Bolgheri, Tuscany.

Le Macchiole was founded in 1983 but by the mid-1990's the estate wanted to make a pure expression of Merlot. Neighboring Tenuta dell'Ornellaia was already making Masseto, a wine that would become a source of inspiration for many vintners in Bolgheri. Le Macchiole had already planted Merlot to use in its blended reds. They identified the best hectare of the grape, which was slowly enlarged to two hectares (replanted at 10,000 vines per hectare). The soils exhibit veins of mixed limestone clay that run east to west along this single parcel. At almost 20 years old, the vines are in their prime production years today. The excellent 2013 vintage underlines this fact. Le Macchiole produces anywhere from 10,000 to 11,000 bottles of Messorio per year.