

#96

Wines of Italy – 2

Italian Appellation System. Italy's classification system is a modern one that reflects current realities. It has four classes of wine, with two falling under the EU category Quality Wine Produced in a Specific Region (QWPSR) and two falling under the category of 'table wine.' The four classes are:

Table Wine:

- *Vino da Tavola* (VDT) – Denotes wine from Italy. NOTE: this is not always synonymous with other countries' legal definitions of 'table wine.' The appellation indicates either an inferior quaffing wine, or one that does not follow current wine law. Some quality wines do carry this appellation.
- *Indicazione Geografica Tipica* (IGT) – Denotes wine from a more specific region within Italy. This appellation was created for the "new" wines of Italy, those that had broken the strict, old wine laws but were wines of great quality. Before the IGT was created, quality "Super Tuscan" wines such as Tignanello and Sassicaia were labeled *Vino da Tavola*.



Quality Wine Produced in a Specific Region (QWPSR):

- *Denominazione di Origine Controllata* (DOC)
- *Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita* (DOCG)

Both DOC and DOCG wines refer to zones which are more specific than an IGT, and the permitted grapes are also more specifically defined. The main difference between a DOC and a DOCG is that the latter must pass a blind taste test for quality in addition to conforming to the strict legal requirements to be designated as a wine from the area in question.

Super Tuscans. The term "Super Tuscan" describes any Tuscan red wine that does not adhere to traditional blending laws for the region. For example, Chianti Classico wines are made from a blend of grapes with Sangiovese as the dominant varietal in the blend. Super Tuscans often use other grapes, especially cabernet sauvignon, making them ineligible for DOC(G) classification under the traditional rules.

In 1968 the first ever "Super Tuscan" called Vigorello was produced, and in the 1970s the Antinori family which had been making wine for more than 600 years, also decided to make a richer wine by eliminating the white grapes from the Chianti blend, and instead adding Bordeaux varietals. He was inspired by a little-known (at the time) Cabernet Sauvignon made by relatives called Sassicaia, which openly flouted the rules set down for traditional wines in Tuscany. The result was one of the first Super Tuscans, which he named Tignanello, after the vineyard where the grapes were grown. Other winemakers started experimenting with Super Tuscan blends of their own thereafter.

Because these wines did not conform to strict DOC(G) classifications, they were initially labeled as *vino da tavola*, meaning "table wine," a term ordinarily reserved for lower quality wines. The creation of the *Indicazione Geografica Tipica* category (technically indicating a level of quality between *vino da tavola* and DOCG) helped bring Super Tuscans "back into the fold" from a regulatory standpoint. Since the pioneering work of the super-Tuscans there has been a rapid expansion in production of high-quality wines throughout Italy that do not qualify for DOC or DOCG classification, as a result of the efforts of a new generation of Italian wine producers and, in some cases, flying winemakers.

Source: Adapted from Wikipedia