



# Living the Gourmet

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June 3, 2021

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## A Taste of Tuscany

Jun 3, 2021 · 2 Comments

*Today's post has been brought to you by [Tenuta Luce & Castello del Terriccio](#). All opinions expressed are my own. The following message is intended for those 21+. Please enjoy responsibly.*

Today we're reviewing a pair of bottles from one of the world's premier wine regions – Tuscany, Italy. We'll cover some of the region's basics, including what makes Tuscany so special, and then taking a look at the wines themselves, before closing with some pairing suggestions.





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## The Where – Tuscany, Italy

In viniculture, 'The Three Great Terroirs' consist of – in order of prestige, value, and production – France, Italy, and Spain. Today's bottle comes to us from Tuscany, which is arguably one of the most iconic regions of Italian winemaking – which in turn makes it "One of the most iconic regions in 'all' of winemaking."

To start, Tuscany is divided across a whopping forty-one DOCs and 11 DOCGs, which are regional classification systems regulating how and where wines are made. Aside from production methods and geography, this classification system also sets rigid quality standards, including but not limited to standardized taste testing.





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However, Sangiovese is assuredly ‘not’ the beginning and end of the story of Tuscan winemaking. For example, the 1970s saw the rise of ‘Super Tuscans,’ an unofficial term used to describe several high-quality Tuscan wines that were – for one reason or another – excluded from receiving DOC or DOCG status by breaking traditional Italian winemaking norms. Regardless of local labeling, a number of these wines achieved critical acclaim, as well as commercial success, and ended up becoming ‘cult wines’ that commanded high prices. Over the ensuing decades some of these ‘Super Tuscans’ were granted DOC or DOCG status – although it can be argued that such status detracted from their ‘cult’ mystique as ‘rogue labels.’ Aside from the controversial ‘Super Tuscans,’ other wines have also seen success across Tuscany, such as Syrah, Merlot, and Cabernet Sauvignon.





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Tight regulations and quality standards aside, climate is perhaps the foremost factor in Tuscany's success. The region's warm and temperate coastline is flanked by inland hillsides and mountains, which help temper the region's searing summers, which in turn contributes to increased temperature variation. This temperature variation between the hills, mountains, and warm coastline help balance the sugars and acidity of the region's grapes. Sangiovese performs best when it receives maximum direct sunlight, and as such the hilly terrain of the region is almost tailormade for this grape, with the majority of area's vineyards being planted at elevations of between some five-hundred and sixteen-hundred feet. This higher elevation further increases temperature variance, which further increases the balance in sugar and acidity.



## The Bottles – A Showcase

First up, we'll be sampling a *2018 La Vite Lucente*, which is a Merlot, Sangiovese, and Cabernet Sauvignon blend.

Next, we'll be taking a look at a *2020 Con Vento* from Castello del Terriccio, which is a Sauvignon Blanc and Viognier blend.





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The Con Vento greets with what I'll describe as a bouquet of "grass and fresh dew." The aromatics are intensely reminiscent of a spring morning spent outside surrounded by lush greenery – but without being 'floral.' On my second and third breaths, notes of mint and freshly cut grass introduced themselves into the bouquet. On the palate, the wine is pleasantly acidic, with notes of peach and apricot set adrift on what I'm torn between describing as 'damp minerality' and 'marine saltiness.' This was a pleasantly complex and enjoyable drinking experience.

## What to Eat – The Pairing

With the Con Vento think pasta. Plain and simple. If they're in season, [Fried Zucchini Blossoms](#) set over a bed of pasta tossed with fresh tomatoes and toasted pine nuts would be simply divine. On the hardier end of spectrum, you might consider a [Crisped Pasta Bake](#), such as ziti layered with fresh tomatoes, toasted bread crumbs, and fresh basil, topped by a dense layer of either Jarlsberg or mozzarella cheese.

