

OCEAN DRIVE®

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VINE TALK
BY FRED BARGER

IL MOLINO, FULL OF GRACE



Il Molino di Grace Chianti
Classico Riserva 2003.

MIRANDA KERR

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A bottle of wine tastes a bit more special if some passion is attached to it. Frank Grace and family moved from San Francisco to Europe about 30 years ago. When they decided to grow grapes and make wine, they settled on Tuscany, and 13 years ago bought land near Panzano in the heart of Chianti country. There were some beautiful old Sangiovese vines but no winery—there was just a 19th-century windmill.

So Il Molino di Grace (“the windmill of grace”) was born. The family built a winery on the site of a former barn, and now their Tuscan reds are getting noticed, both in Italy and abroad. They have done this by making honest, very Italian wines that are primarily Sangiovese and are not overoaked or over-the-top. They are balanced, elegant wines true to their roots. They followed their passion.

Gratius IGT Toscana 2003 is all Sangiovese from the oldest planted vineyard, about 55 years of age, and highest elevation, about 400 meters. They thought it needed its own



Il Molino di Grace Chianti Classico Riserva 2003.

81, and Hancock, 68, haven't. Robert Oatley Vineyards wines are a line of serious but reasonably priced offerings, mostly from Oatley's vineyards in Mudgee, New South Wales. All are

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name, and it deserves it for its rich dark-cherry fruit, spice and harmony with food. About \$55.

Il Molino di Grace Chianti Classico Riserva 2003 is a really convincing effort from a warm vintage. It has good acidity and balance and cherry-preserve flavors. About \$30.

Il Molino di Grace Chianti Classico 2004 is what it says: classic Tuscan red. It comes from some of the younger estate vineyards but still gets picked by hand just a bit earlier than its siblings. Lovely acid-fruit balance and fine cherry fruit make it a perfect match for tomato sauces. About \$20.

More than 30 years ago owner Robert Oatley and executive Chris Hancock started Australia's Rosemount Estate. After joining one large ownership group and selling out to another, the script says both men would take it easy. But Oatley, now

under screw top and retail for less than \$20.

Robert Oatley Shiraz Mudgee 2007 has ripe fruit, good fruit-acid balance and enough structure to be interesting.

Robert Oatley Rosé of Sangiovese Mudgee 2008 also retains good body, freshness and crisp berry fruit.

Robert Oatley Chardonnay Mudgee 2007 is a combination of barrel- and stainless-steel-fermented grapes. Oak plays a supporting role to the delicious creamy tropical fruit.

Two real surprises are a **Robert Oatley Sauvignon Blanc Western Australia 2008** and **Robert Oatley Pinot Grigio South Australia 2008**, which both offer crispness, backbone and complexity in wines that are seldom Australia's strong suit.

It just shows where a bit of passion and a lot of wine knowledge can take you.