



buzzed thinking while drinking

Amazing Grace

By Jordan Mackay

I had the opportunity to catch lunch with Tim Grace the other day. There are lots of winemakers floating around the city, but Tim is one of the few (if not the only) who produces wine not in Napa or Sonoma, but in Tuscany. Better yet, Il Molino di Grace, his winery and property near the town of Panzano, produces some of the most delicious Chiantis on the market. Tim lives with his family here in SF--his kids are in school here--but makes frequent trips back and forth to the Tuscan estate and to sell his wine around Italy.

What I liked so much about the wine is that it's not made with a lot of new world flash, the so-called "international style." While there's good fruit and a little bit of oak, it seems the grace varieties all speak for themselves with too much winemaking embellishment. There's a fair proportion of Merlot in a lot of the wines--a fairly modern phenomenon--yet I find that it doesn't cloud the flavor so much as enhance the depth and density of the Sangiovese, Chianti's dominant grape.

I was particularly pleased with "Il Volano" an inexpensive quaffer that sees only stainless steel tank. Yet it's as round, bright and straightforward as you'd want for any Tuesday night pasta wine. The Chianti Classico and two CC Riservas are both excellent. One of the Riservas, tagged "Il Margone" is literally a harvest selection, where the most picture perfect grapes go into this wine. Really deep, pithy and delicious. Finally, there's the Super Tuscan wine Gratius, a dark, 100% Sangiovese beauty. It's got a fair amount of barrel on it, but the Sangiovese--grown on a steep, high altitude vineyard in the Tuscan hills--can handle it, and the notes of dark cherry, blackberry, dark chocolate, coffee and pepper are undeniable.

Glad to have Tim in SF, but equally happy to have him over there, making great Tuscan wines for us. Look for his bottles at the Jug Shop, K&L, Blackwells, and Plumpjack and especially at the new Piazza Market on North Beach, which, Tim says, just stocked up. Or else order a glass at District, Rose Pistola, Kokkari or Jardinere.



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il Molino di
Grace

