

**Bedford Uncorked!**  
Pressing News About Our Fine Italian Wines - September 2008



## JAMES SUCKLING'S TOP-VALUE ITALIAN WHITE

Wine Spectator - August 31st 2008

[Riccardo Falchini](#)  
[Vernaccia di San Gimignano DOCG](#)  
['Vigna a Solatio' 2007](#)

"Very rich, with apple pie and mineral character that turns to fresh peach. Medium-bodied, with delicious fruit and a delicate, spicy finish. Drink now."

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Video interviews on [winesfrombedford.com](http://winesfrombedford.com)

### Azienda Agricola Casale Falchini in San Gimignano

We continue our series of video interviews shot in Italy with filmmaker Francisco Fagan with a focus on Falchini and the unique wines of San Gimignano.

The San Gimignano area is historically known for the local DOCG production of Vernaccia, a delightful white wine whose origin dates back to the 9th century. Despite the abundance of Vernaccia growers, it is very hard to find 100% estate-bottled wines like those of Riccardo Falchini and his two sons, Michael and Christopher. They will take you through the winery and the marvelous Tuscan hills surrounding San Gimignano and its famous towers.

#### History

The ancient building Casale, which names the surrounding area, is located just steps outside the walls of San Gimignano. In 1964, the property was acquired by Riccardo Falchini, a descendant of an ancient Florentine family of viticulturists and winemakers, who during the Renaissance had been producing wines for the family of Cosimo de' Medici.

In 1968, the first specialized vineyards were born. Eight years later, the old wine cellar was converted in to a new modern facility, the **absolute first** in the area to be equipped with cold processing and temperature control for the fermentation of the must and tartrate stabilization for the whites.



Casale Falchini and the towers of San Gimignano (Siena)

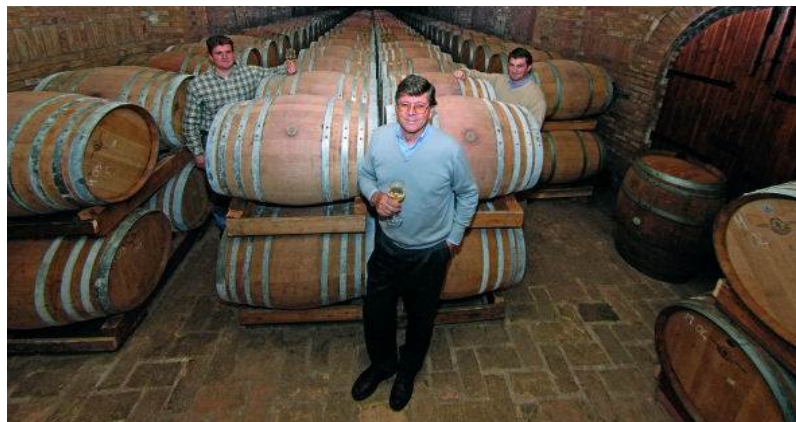
### **Winemaking philosophy**

Riccardo Falchini has been experimenting in the vineyards and innovating in the winery for over 40 years. His background in construction and long-time friendship with legendary enologist Giacomo Tachis (creator of Sassicaia, Tignanello, Ornellaia, etc.) were very influential and emphasized the focus on rigorous quantitative quality control measures and modern vineyard management while contributing to revolutionary ideas such as the [cold stabilization](#) process.

This technique is commonly used today throughout the winemaking world, but during the 60s and 70s no winemaker in Tuscany would have even considered bringing his white wines so close to freezing point to get rid of tartrates and improve the product stability and longevity.

Riccardo, instead, wanted to make the first modern Vernaccia and was quick to see the potential of defying the conventional wisdom. As a result, he enjoyed a very early advantage over his fellow San Gimignano producers, exporting to the U.S.A., Japan and Australia while most traditional Vernaccias could hardly travel within Europe.

These days, he is still very hands-on and enjoys cooperating with his two sons, Michael and Christopher, who were professionally trained in Oregon and are following in his footsteps.



The Falchis in the aging cellar at Casale

## Wine production

Vernaccia di San Gimignano represents 65% of the entire production of Casale. However, the Falchini have also received important international wine awards for their two red Supertuscans (Campora and Paretai) as well as for their delicious Vin Santo del Chianto DOC.

Since 1964, Casale Falchini has also been producing a Chianti Colli Senesi. During the 80s, its production was moved to the Colombaia property and it is now bottled as a single vineyard Chianti Colli Senesi Titolato Colombaia.

In 1979 Falchini, again consulted by Tachis, started producing Falchini Brut, a Spumante Metodo Classico made with Vernaccia grapes. To this day, it is the only Spumante Metodo Classico (equivalent to the French [Methode Champenoise](#)) made in Tuscany.

## The Wines

[Vernaccia Di San Gimignano 'Vigna a Solatio' DOCG](#)

[Vernaccia di San Gimignano 'Vinea Doni' DOCG](#)

[Chianti Colli Senesi 'Colombaia' DOC](#)

[Sangiovese Supertuscan 'Paretai' IGT](#)

[Cabernet Supertuscan 'Campora' IGT](#)

[Spumante Brut Metodo Classico](#)

[Vin Santo del Chianti 'Podere Casale' DOC](#)



Riccardo Falchini Cabernet Sauvignon 'Campora'  
One of Tuscany's iconic cabs

Robert M. Parker, Jr.'s  
**The  
WINE  
ADVOCATE®**

**[Riccardo Falchini Supertuscan 'Campora' 2001](#)**

**92 points**

"Possesses an intriguing profile of super-ripe yet vibrant fruit... Campora remains one of the handful of Tuscan Cabernets with real personality."

**The 97/98/99 vintages of Campora are still available in the US (limited quantities)**

**[Riccardo Falchini Supertuscan 'Paretaio' 2004](#)**

**91 points**

"100% Sangiovese aged in French oak...Generous dark fruit intermingled with sweet toasted oak, earthiness, tobacco, smoke and leather."

**[Grattamacco Bolgheri Superiore 2004](#)**

**92 points**

"65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot, 15% Sangiovese. A fresh vibrant wine, outstanding for its persistence and polished tannins..."

**[Salcheto Vino Nobile di Montepulciano 'Salco Evoluzione' 2003](#)**

**91 points**

"Round, generous offering endowed with sweet dark fruit, spices, minerals, new leather, toasted oak and roasted coffee beans all of which emerge with time in the glass..."

**[Vignamaggio Cabernet Franc 2004](#)**

**90 points**

"Reveals exotic aromatics that meld into a gorgeous expression of fruit...This bottling shows a lot of varietal character, something I wish I could say more often about Tuscan wines made from French varieties."

**[Vignamaggio Wine Obsession 2004](#)**

**90 points**

"Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah aged in French oak. A deeply-colored offering, this massively constituted wine is sweet and long with tons of fruit..."

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More Bedford ratings from The Wine Advocate

[Colle Massari Montecucco Riserva 2005](#) - 89 points

[Grattamacco Bolgheri Rosso 2006](#) - 89 points

[Grattamacco Bolgheri Superiore 2003](#) - 89 points

[Salcheto Vino Nobile di Montepulciano 2004](#) - 89 points

[Salcheto Rosso di Montepulciano 2006](#) - 89 points

[Vignamaggio Chianti Cl. Ris. Monna Lisa 2004](#) - 89 points

Wine Spectator ratings - August-September 2008

**Wine Spectator**  
www.winespectator.com

[Torre Rosazza Friulano Colli Orientali del Friuli 2007](#)

**89 points**

"Offers a fabulous nose of fresh peach, piecrust and mineral. Full and round, with loads of ripe fruit and a medium finish."

[Contratto Barolo Cerequio 2004](#)

**89 points**

"Shows plum and rose on the nose, with hints of vanilla. Medium to full-bodied, with lots of ripe fruit and a round, friendly finish. Forward and attractive to drink now."