

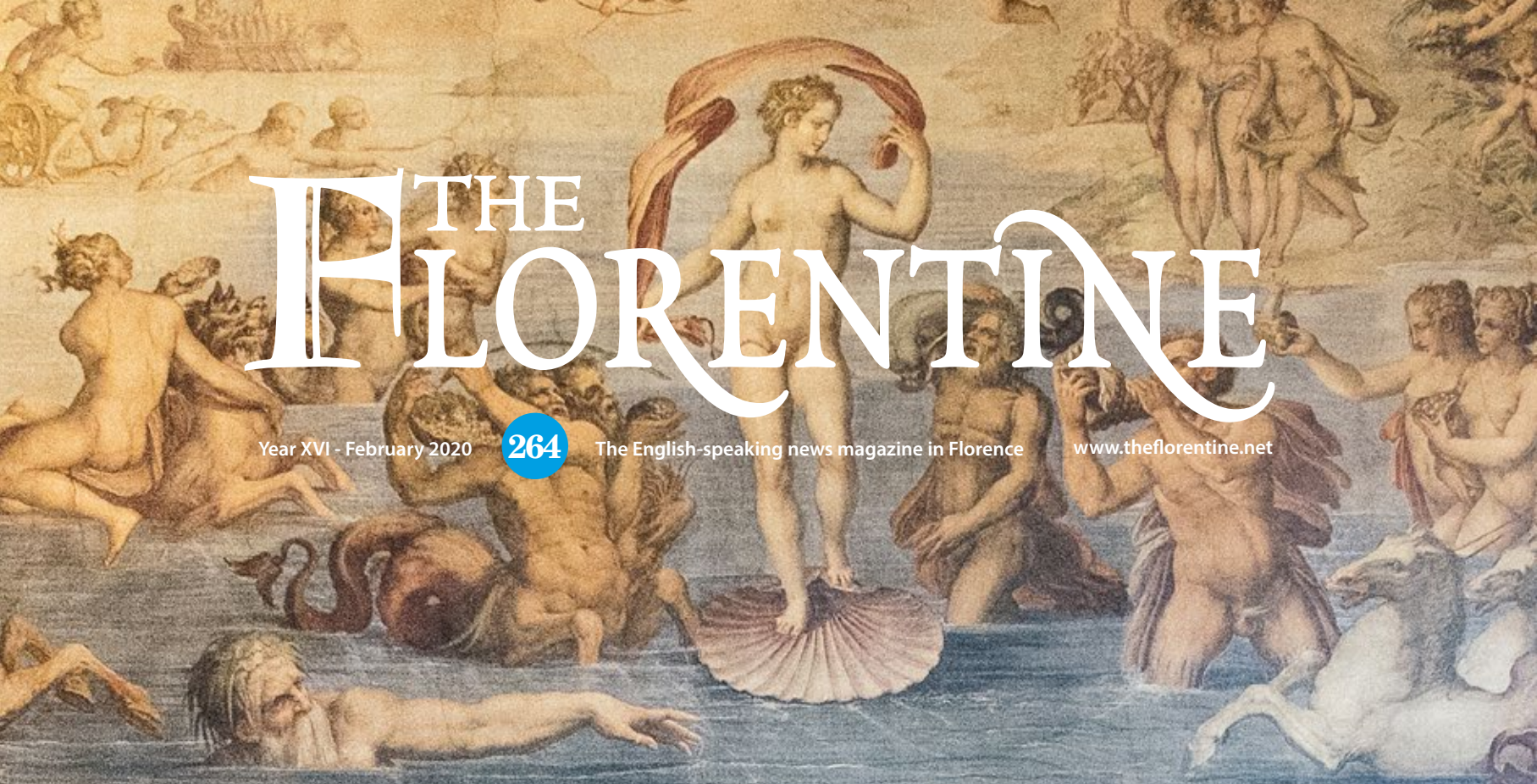
# THE FLORENTINE

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[www.theflorentine.net](http://www.theflorentine.net)



## FLORENCE IS FAMILY

The Renaissance city opens its arms and embraces those who wish to be part of it. Our Family Issue celebrates the homey familiarity that can be found in Florence.



# Le Sorgenti: made with love

WINE / Helen Farrell

Last Christmas, a friend gave me a bottle of Tuscan Malbec. (“You’ll find this interesting.”) Fruit-forward, faintly spiced and easy-drinking, it proved a tasty winter tonic by family-run winery Le Sorgenti.

**F**ed by three springs (*sorgente* means spring in Italian), this Bagno a Ripoli winery sits above the Arno river just five minutes from Firenze Sud. A cast iron gate leads into a wonderland, where the temperature stays a few degrees cooler than along the main via di Rosano road. It’s a magical place where owner Gabriele Ferrari produces **traditional Chianti Colli Fiorentini**, including Riserva, as well as more **innovative labels**, such as Codarossa, that unique Tuscan Malbec that set my wheels in motion, and Supertuscan Scirus, the winery’s iconic label. There’s a limited-edition Chardonnay sparkler called Calicò, just 2,000 bottles that are riddled by hand while spending 36 months on the lees, as well as the exceedingly high-quality bag in box wines (Chardonnay, Malbec, Merlot and Sangiovese, plus a Cabernet, Petit Verdot and Malbec blend), which are popular with locals and internationals alike.

“I do it for my kids. There’s no immediate return. Every farmer thinks this way for the next generation,” Gabriele Ferrari explained, as we embarked on a bumpy

Jeep safari of his hard-earned estate, from the parcels above the Arno embankment planted to Malbec, Cabernet and Petit Verdot to the more recently acquired Sangiovese “Capaccio” vineyard, which stands at 370 metres above sea level and boasts a Duomo view.

“Originally the owners of this particular parcel rented the land to me. I had to earn their respect before they agreed to sell it. They knew they could trust me when I decided not to cut down that holm oak tree. We planted the vineyard around it. After all, one of the oldest holm oaks in the whole of Italy is just around the corner there’s one: it’s 400 years old!”

Everything at Le Sorgenti is conducted independently and on site: from vineyard planning to ploughing and bottling. This level of autonomy is what has enabled the winery to acquire and maintain VIVA certification, whereby representatives from the Italian ministry of agriculture visit several times a year to guarantee that the winery meets sustainable standards for the land, air, vineyard and water usage.

Le Sorgenti is not just a wine producer; it makes some of the finest olive oil in Tuscany. The 800-strong Frantoio olive tree grove by the Rimaggio roundabout is manicured—the trees are tall and top-heavy—and Gabriele pays special attention to it, painstakingly checking strips of sticky paper for evidence of the dreaded fruit fly that has so afflicted the region of late. His Laudemio, the top tier of Tuscan olive oil making, is exquisite, ethereal and necessitates nothing else except a piece of saltless bread. It’s little wonder that London IOOC International Olive Oil Competition and Bibenda have lavished medals on this speciality.

## Fattoria Le Sorgenti

Cellar tours and tastings available. The wine shop is open on Wednesday and Friday 3-7pm; Saturday 9am-1pm. Via di Docciola 8, 50012 Bagno a Ripoli (Florence) +39 055 696004

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# Tuscan wine preview week

WINE / Alexandra Korey



**F**or ten days mid-February, wine critics from around the world descend upon Florence and then stride out to Montepulciano, San Gimignano and Montalcino in what is likely the most concentrated *en primeur* in Europe. The major wine consortia, like Chianti Classico, have been holding wine previews, where winemakers present the most recent vintage permitted by each area’s regulations, for some 25 years. Since 2014, the Tuscan Region has been involved in uniting the goals of the consortia (there are 23) under the umbrella of Antepreme di Toscana, encouraging more consortia to participate and ensuring convenient consecutive dates. It also

supports the smaller organizations through PrimAnteprema, a combined event that kicks off wine preview week.

The Antepreme are “next season’s fashion show for wine,” Gennaro Giliberti, executive at the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, explained to me. “We concentrate our efforts, making it convenient for visitors and attracting journalists, trade and also the general public from afar, with the great advantage of being held in Tuscany, rather than presenting the vintages in various locations abroad.”

Filippo Bartolotta, a wine educator and sommelier agrees, adding that he can’t think of any other region

that reunites so many wine zones in such a concentrated manner. “Even after 20 years of experience professionally tasting wine, having everything back to back provides a very clear picture of how the different vintages behave in the different appellations. Not to mention that it’s a phenomenal networking party!”

For Swedish journalist Åsa Johansson, who resides in Florence, the Antepreme “create a historical library of the different vintages of Tuscan wines.” She adds that she appreciated how journalists with more experience shared their knowledge with her when she was new to Tuscan wine, and she hopes to do the same for younger colleagues. Which is certainly a bonus for 24-year-old Elba native Stefano Quaglierini, an Instagram influencer known as @italian\_wines, who says he looks forward to networking with both winemakers and critics just as much as to tasting the latest vintages.

What about the winemakers who spend back-to-back days at their booth? Jacopo Di Battista, owner of Querceto di Castellina, points out that “it’s a chance to catch up with fellow producers... we spend a lot of time in our own worlds so I value the collaborative nature of Chianti Classico Collection, an event that brings us all together to showcase this iconic wine.”

Hayo Loacker, enologist at Loacker Wine Estates including Corte Pavone in Montalcino, says Benvenuto Brunello is a great platform to present his wines, but that he particularly enjoys “seeing the glow in the eyes of my winemaker colleagues when they pour that first glass of the new vintage and observe the tasting and reaction. It’s the moment you understand how proud they are of their product, independently of press rumours or any gossip.”

The 2020 Antepreme start with PrimAnteprema in Florence on February 15 and close with Benvenuto Brunello in Montalcino on February 24. Select dates of each event are open to the public – for a full schedule see [www.antepremetosane.it](http://www.antepremetosane.it) and purchase advance tickets from the individual consortia.



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