



Cignale

*Location: Greve,
Province of Florence*



The story of this superb Tuscan Cabernet began on a singular note, when its first vintage was wiped out by wild boars.

The episode inspired **Neil & Maria Empson** to call their most exclusive proprietary brand “Cignale” – “Wild Boar” in ancient Tuscan.

Maria Empson (an artist under her maiden name of Maria Gemma) created the **six original label designs** portraying the wine’s first fans, and once the vineyards were effectively enclosed, Cignale took off.

These were the 'Eighties: Neil, Maria and longtime friend **Alessandro François** had planted the vines – mostly **Cabernet Sauvignon** and a small percentage of **Merlot** – in **February 1981**, on three locations near Greve, one of Tuscany’s finest wine districts.

Together, the sites covered seven and a half acres of schist, clay, lime and sand at 425-500 meters (1,394-1,640 feet) above sea level.

The soil here was **abundant in nitrogen**, key element to structure and consequently cellar life. The next step was selecting the ideal clones for this exceptional terrain, giving them full south/southwest exposure, and making sure the crops were tiny...

To this day, they are **less than one ton per acre** (just over 20 hl. per hectare): a totally uneconomic yield!

The result is a deep crimson to garnet, extract-loaded wine expressing the **power, concentration and longevity** of its terroir to the full, fine-tuned by carefully orchestrated vinification and élevage.



For **Cabernet Sauvignon**, harvest takes place towards the end of October. The **Merlot** is picked in early to mid-October. The grapes are collected in small boxes and transported to the winery for immediate de-stemming and pressing. Only **65%** of the free-run juice is used, and parts of the press-run are then blended back into the mass. Fermentation takes c. 21 days. The resulting wine goes through full malolactic and

is racked 6 times over the first 12 months.

New and 12-month-old French barriques

are employed,

where Cignale ages for approximately **18 to 24 months**. After a further year, it is clarified with egg whites and unfiltered at bottling. Altogether, the wine is not released until 3 to 4 years from harvest date. Quantities are minuscule, and cellar life is up to twenty years.

Besides the original **7½ acres** (3 hectares), a further **3.7 acres** (1.5 hectares) of vineyards have been purchased, albeit not yet productive. The plan is to increase production by 50% in about four years’ time.



Tasting Notes:

Deep, dark crimson in color; spicy bouquet of cedar-wood, black cherry, wild strawberry, black currant, subtle notes of well integrated new oak.

On the palate, rich, harmonious, concentrated, powerful and intense, beautifully structured, with polished tannins and a long, silky finish.