

Tuscany

Terrabianca

Location: Vagliagli,
Province of Siena



Maja & Roberto Guldener

Not long after the year 1000, the red wine produced in the hillside Chianti area, between Florence and Siena, was already exported and appreciated well beyond the Tuscan borders: we know this for a fact, from the surviving files of a family of medieval négociants residing in Prato. Even then, in the heart of what would later be called the historic, Chianti Classico territory, was to be found a rural homestead called **Terrabianca** (*terra bianca*, “white soil”, from the calcareous nature of its terrain). The first extant documents referring to it are dated as far back as **1085**.

Over 900 years later – in **1988** – **Roberto** and **Maja Guldener** purchased the estate. The couple had left their native Switzerland and previous careers to devote themselves entirely to what would soon become a major Tuscan star. Perfect timing: four years earlier (1984), the DOC had earned itself the prestigious Garantita. Under the Guldener’s tutelage, the quality leap at the Radda in Chianti property proved tremendous, and the wines crafted by top oenologist **Vittorio Fiore** reaped countless accolades, worldwide.

Today, the team comprises Roberto & Maja’s daughters, **Maja, Jr.** and **Annette**, as well as technical manager **Francesco Russo**. Total surface is 124 hectares – just under **307 acres** of vineyards, olive groves and woodland around the original nucleus, over and above a more recent purchase 43 miles away. This second property, located in the mineral-rich Maremma area, is dependent on the first, where the actual vinification and bottling take place. Its name is “Il Tesoro” (“Treasure”), and it covers **262 acres** (106 hectares) – including 4,000 olive trees, many 300 to 400 years old, which yield **magnificent olive oil**. At Terrabianca, soil composition is **calcareous, with strata of chalk, sand and clay from the Paleozoic and Mesozoic eras**. The vineyards lie at 250-500 meters (**820 to 1,640 feet**) a.s.l., with the finest exposures (**south/southeast**). The range – totaling c. **358,000 bottles** – epitomizes both Chianti Classico and such regional wonders as the Super Tuscan, providing unique **consistency** from vintage to vintage.

In 2006, Classico regulations were rewritten. In the new production code, the minimum percentage of Sangiovese was increased from 75 to 80% (there is no maximum restriction: in other words, Classicos can be 100% Sangiovese), and white grapes could no longer be used. In this as in many other qualitative regards, Terrabianca was already cutting-edge, with **both Chianti Classicos** – “Crocce” and “Scassino” – from **97% Sangiovese** and **3% Canaiolo**. The soft touch of the latter variety is not only part of the area’s classic heritage (in the 1700s, Canaiolo was even more popular than Sangiovese itself...); it is also instrumental to achieving singular silkiness and roundness in texture.



CHIANTI CLASSICO “SCASSINO” DOCG: The more forward Chianti version, **97% Sangiovese/3% Canaiolo** – that most classic of Classico formulas. The vineyard’s name comes from “scasso”, stony soil, which makes this terrain difficult to cultivate but

fabulous in terms of fruit and concentration. *Élevage* for **8 months in Slavonian oak** (50-hl. capacity) yields an appealing, delightful, well balanced red with lively notes of raspberry and blueberry & excellent structure.

CHIANTI CLASSICO RISERVA “CROCE” DOCG: Deep, dark ruby, the color first seduces you, the delicate bouquet of vanilla, red fruit and spice reels you in, the soft, round, layered, extracted and persistent palate just lingers and whispers its infinite nuances of flavor and texture. The blend is also **97% Sangiovese** and **3% Canaiolo**, aging **1½ years in Slavonian oak** followed by 3 months in the bottle.

PIANO DEL CIPRESSO IGT: 100% Sangiovese, aged in 300-liter barriques 1 year and bottle-aged a further 6 months, the nose recalls blackberries, blueberries and ripe pomegranate, with notes of cinnamon & licorice, elegantly confirmed on the palate. Excellent structure and firm tannins.

CAMPACCIO IGT: In Roberto Guldener’s words, “This wine was created to express the Terrabianca philosophy to the fullest. It is the most representative of the estate, and exemplifies its originality of flavors and aromas.” The blend is **70% Sangiovese** and **30% Cabernet Sauvignon** for the regular; **50% Sangiovese/50% Cabernet Sauvignon** for the Riserva. The regular ages **12 months** in oak barriques, then **at least 6 months in the bottle**; the Riserva, **2 years in barrique** followed by **12 months’ bottle age**. The wine’s deep, brilliant ruby color with garnet hues precludes unbelievable richness & complexity on the palate, where the multi-dimensional flavors and aromas evoke a textured sensation of plenitude and volume, lingering and evolving into an exquisite finish.

CEPPATE IGT: If Campaccio embodies the original Terrabianca concept, **Ceppate** incarnates the synergy of its Chianti Classico and Maremma estates – Terrabianca itself and Il Tesoro. **90% Cabernet Sauvignon** and **10% Merlot** from the two terroirs, the distinct micro-climates and diverse soil types add further dimension and depth to the blend. The varieties are vinified separately at Terrabianca, with approximately 2 weeks’ maceration on the skins. After malolactic fermentation, the Cabernet and Merlot are blended, then **barrique-aged for 1 year** previous to several months’ bottle age. The result is a deep, deep ruby gem with a bouquet of blueberry and blackberry subtly meshing with the noble oak aromas and notes of licorice, chocolate and tobacco. On the palate, structure and a uniquely silky texture combine in sustained harmony.

LA FONTE IGT: This **100% Sangiovese** is named after “the fountain” originally found in the vineyard, part of Il Tesoro. Styled as a youthful red with approximately **6 months** in **50-hl. oak barrels**, it maintains all the appealing, juicy fruit and soft versatility of its noble grape.

MERLOT IL TESORO IGT: After lengthy maceration on the skins (14-15 days), this **100% Merlot** is racked into **barrique** for malolactic fermentation and **at least 12 months’** *élevage* previous to several months’ bottle age. Structured, concentrated, with a well integrated bouquet of blueberries, blackcurrant, chocolate, licorice, vanilla, tobacco and toasted almonds. Outstanding varietal character and longevity.

IL FIOR DI FINO IGT: This **50% Trebbiano/50% Malvasia** white dessert wine is from withered, partly Botrytised grapes. **Barrique fermentation** lasts 6 months, followed by **élevage in barrique c. 3-5 years**; the resulting nectar’s sweet richness is beautifully integrated by structure & lively natural acidity.