



The return of the classic

In fashion, design and wine & food, Italians are rediscovering their country's excellent products and Chianti Classico is at the top of the list of timeless wines.

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The timeless allure of a dress that never goes out of style, of an evergreen object of Italian design, of a wine from a winery with hundreds of years of history behind it: at a time of crisis Italians are rediscovering the excellencies of their *Bel Paese* and confirm Chianti Classico at the top of the list of timeless wines. This is a trend confirmed by sociologist **Marilena Colussi**, head of the Food & Retail Area of the **GPF research institute founded by Giampaolo Fabris**, who explains: "This very difficult economic situation is taking us back to a more critical stance towards purchases: consumers are looking for less glamour and more value, a new synthesis of image, authenticity and quality. While still very tied to image and appearance, Italian society is evolving towards sustainability and today, when one buys a product, values and meanings are weighed and assessed with greater attention. Authenticity, safe bets and guarantees are reassuring assets". And so out are purchases that exceed in originality and are destined to fade in a season - today it's cool to buy less but better. A need surely dictated by the economic situation but also by an increasingly common desire to rediscover forgotten values that speak of good taste, of a search for harmony, of respect for the times and the quality of life. Chianti Classico – which will be presenting a preview of new vintages on **February 17 and 17 in Florence, with the "Chianti Classico Collection" event** – is a perfect example of this rediscovered value system: throughout the world its name is synonymous not only with prestigious labels but also with a unique territory and lifestyle, a peerless mix of excellent wine, top grade olive oil, centuries-old castles and landscapes unchanged since the Middle Ages. One of the most solid strong points of Chianti wineries is a tradition imprinted with quality and handed down from generation to generation, as opposed to the many wine companies created from scratch in recent years that have pushed prices to stratospheric levels and are now really feeling the crunch. "If there's a good side to the recession", states **Marco Pallanti, president of the Chianti Classico Wine Consortium**, "it can be seen in an end to compulsive buying and shopping sprees. Italians are going back to shopping shrewdly, carefully assessing value, whether it's for clothing, travel or choosing a bottle of wine to drink. Not surprisingly, sales figures for Chianti Classico in Italy show that our labels held steady in 2008; the Italian market now absorbs 27% of production".

In the Chianti Classico district, where 597 producers (345 of them bottlers) work and which has 18,000 acres of DOCG-registered vineyards, average yearly output is 37 million bottles of Chianti Classico wine. The biggest importer is the United States (with 29%) followed by Germany (10%), the United Kingdom (9%), Switzerland (7%), Canada, Japan, Russia, Austria and Holland. Annual sales of Chianti Classico average around 270 million euro.

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