

# CELLAR MASTER WINE CLUB

June 2024

## 2017 Selvapiana Fornace

Tuscany, Italy

During the 17th and 18th centuries, England and France were frequently at war with each other, which among other things meant that England was periodically cut off from its usual sources of wine across the Channel. Looking farther afield, they found substitutes for their French clarets in far-away Tuscany. The market for Chianti and other Tuscan wines grew and brought in significant revenue, to the point that Grand Duke Cosimo III de' Medici, ruler of Tuscany for more than 50 years beginning in 1670, realized that this market sector needed some regulation to protect its value. Therefore, in 1716, he issued a bando (decree) that defined exactly which parts of his realm were suitable for the production of its most renowned wines. Among the four areas that Cosimo elaborated was a zone called Pomino.

Pomino is the name of a current wine denomination, but the Pomino region defined by Cosimo III was much larger—essentially the same as the Rufina subzone of the Chianti DOCG today. Thus, Chianti Rufina was one of the areas (along with Chianti Classico, Carmignano, and Val d'Arno di Sopra) defined in the world's earliest-known denomination protection law. It celebrated the bando's 300th anniversary in 2016.

Selvapiana is among the best-known and most respected of the two dozen growers in Rufina—the smallest subzone of Chianti—and as it happens is also one of only two wineries to produce wine from the tiny Pomino DOC. The Selvapiana winery, like all of Chianti Rufina, lies close to the Sieve River, a tributary of the Arno upriver from Florence. The air is cooler and cleaner here than in the city, which is why these hills have long been a retreat for aristocrats escaping Florence's summer heat. During the Renaissance, one noble Florentine family constructed the Selvapiana residence by enlarging a medieval watchtower that was one of the outposts guarding Florence from invading enemies.

For centuries, the house was the summer home of a series of wealthy city dwellers, including bishops of Florence. Its modern history began in 1827, when banker Michele Giuntini Selvapiana bought the property. Ownership passed down through his descendants to the current owner, Francesco Giuntini Antinori, representing the fifth generation of family ownership. With the assistance of consulting enologist Franco Bernabei beginning in 1978, Selvapiana was among the first Tuscan producers to make a Chianti Riserva from 100% Sangiovese (1978) and to produce a single-vineyard wine (Bucerchiale 1979).

[www.dallaterra.com/](http://www.dallaterra.com/)

*"Dense and packed with plum, black cherry, leather, tobacco and spice flavors, this red is backed by a spine of stiff tannins. Offers sufficient fruit to match the structure, finding nice equilibrium in the end. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2025 through 2040."* **Wine Spectator 92**



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## 2018 d'Arenberg The Dead Arm Shiraz McLaren Vale, Australia

d'Arenberg is one of the undisputed kings of Australian Shiraz and other Rhone varieties that have historically defined the region. A century on, their vineyards have grown to some 450 acres in McLaren Vale, including Shiraz dating back to d'Arenberg's first plantings in 1912, and nearly one-third of McLaren Vale's old bush-vine Grenache. Fourth generation winemaker, Chester Osborn, recently converted all of the family's vineyards to organics and biodynamics and moved to solar energy in the winery. All the while, in terms of winemaking, not much has changed--all the wines are basket-pressed, the reds foot-trodden during fermentation; everything is done in small batches, leading to an impressive array of bottlings every year, each showing a different facet of McLaren Vale terroir. Having been inducted into Wine & Spirits Magazine's Hall of Fame for earning a place on its Top 100 Wineries nine times, this accolade is a reflection of d'Arenberg's revered reputation worldwide.

Known for opulent red wines with intense power and concentration, McLaren Vale is home to perhaps the most "classic" style of Australian Shiraz. Vinified on its own or in Rhône Blends, these hot-climate wines are deeply colored and high in extract with signature hints of dark chocolate and licorice. Cabernet Sauvignon is also produced in a similar style.

Dead Arm is a vine disease caused by the fungus *Eutypa Lata* that randomly affects vineyards all over the world. Often affected vines are severely pruned or replanted. One half, or an 'arm' of the vine slowly becomes reduced to dead wood. That side may be lifeless and brittle, but the grapes on the other side, while low yielding, display amazing intensity.

Selected parcels of premium fruit from across over a century of d'Arenberg's top vineyards are artfully blended to create this stunning Shiraz. More savoury than previous Dead Arms, the 2018 begins with dark fruits, damson plum, and lovely fennel seed twists. Rich balsamic glazed beets, roasted meats and jus give layers of complexity unlike anything we've ever seen. Superb balance. Slaty, persistent, mineral like tannins bring a generous framework for decades of cellaring. This is a wine of history and provenance. Highly collectable, The Dead Arm is considered by many to be one of the top Shiraz in Australia.

Notes from [www.darenberg.com.au/](http://www.darenberg.com.au/)

*"Quite expressive and exotic, with red plums, blackberries and iodine, as well as dried herbs and nori, quite fragrant spices and currants. The palate has a sleek, dense and long feel, with impressive fruit intensity, delivered in such contained and impressively composed style. This has such length and intensity with a silky texture. Old vines underpin the style here. Drink over the next decade or more."* **James Suckling 96**



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