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a new winery, due for completion in time for the 2008 harvest. Until now, Moretti has been making use of old cellars and buildings scattered around the estate.

Maccari's top wine is Maharis, an opulent blend comprising equal parts of Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon and Nero d'Avola. The Syrah and Cabernet vines were transported from Moretti's Tuscan estates in 2002 and grafted onto 7- to 8-year-old head-trained vines already growing at Feudo Maccari. "Some of our soil here is almost white color, because of the high proportion of lime," explains Moretti, discussing the decision to graft. "It's hard for young vines to flourish in these conditions."

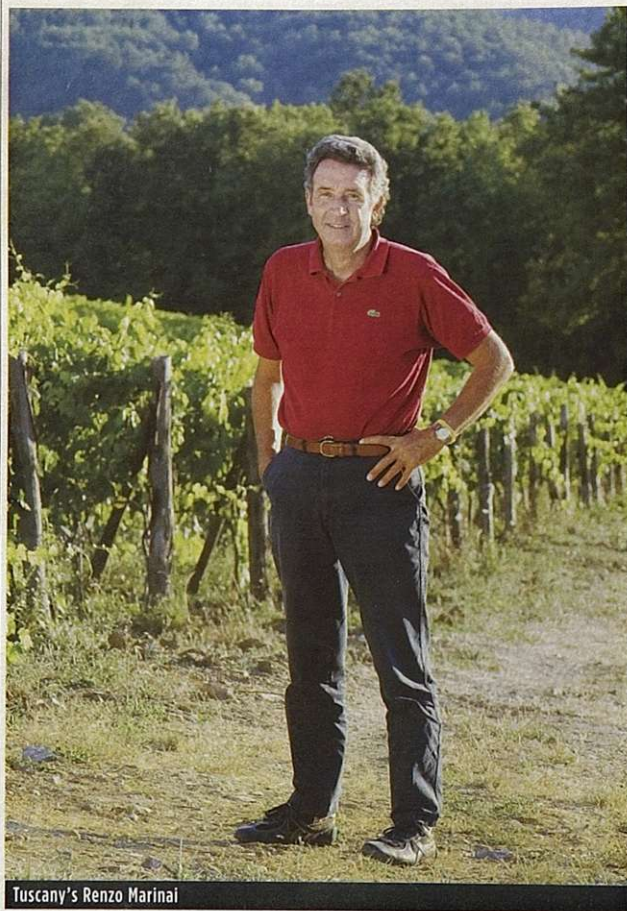
Maccari's top Nero d'Avola is Saia, harvested from 30- to 40-year-old vines, and oak-aged. The estate also produces Re Noto, a simpler, stainless steel-only blend of Nero d'Avola and Syrah.

Feudo Maccari is run under the watchful eyes of Tuscan-based consulting enologist Carlo Ferrini and agronomist Gioia Cresti (of Carpineta Fontalpino; see profile page 73). They also tend to Moretti's better-known Tuscan estates: Sette Ponti, which produces the Sangiovese-Merlot blend Crognolo and the Cabernet blend Oreno; Poggio al Lupo in Tuscany's coastal area of Maremma; and, further up the coast in Bolgheri, the Orma estate, Moretti's most recent Tuscan acquisition.

"Why break up a winning team?" Moretti observes simply. The results of his Sicilian venture bear him out. —J.C.

Nero d'Avola Sicilia Saia 2006 92/\$35; 4,420 cases made, 1,000 cases imported

Sicilia Maharis 2006 94/\$60; 1,085 cases made, 160 cases imported



Tuscany's Renzo Marinai

Renzo Marinai

Tuscany

Owner Renzo Marinai **Winemaker** Giovanni Cappelli
Annual case production 2,400

Renzo Marinai, 59, calls himself a farmer, not a winemaker, as he runs Podere Cencione, his 75-acre family estate located in the heart of Chianti Classico about a mile outside of the village of Panzano. But it's his winemaking that may give him an international reputation.

"We grow a variety of crops together to give a natural balance to the land," says Marinai, who cultivates a range of produce from cereals to vines to olive trees. "It's all linked and all about nature, they all help each other."

In the late 1990s, Marinai spurred a quality drive. In 1995, he stopped using chemical and synthetic materials in the vineyards. "I wanted to create a place that is as natural as possible," he says. "What I produce, I consume. I don't think it is right to use chemicals."

In 1999, with the advice and help of agronomist Fabrizio Balò and enologist Giovanni Cappelli, Marinai replanted and renewed the vineyards. Now the 13.5 acres are planted 90 percent to Sangiovese, followed by Cannaiolo and Cabernet Sauvignon, along with 1 acre of native grape varieties Colorino, Prugnolo, Cilieggiolo and Mammolo.

In 2002 Marinai released its first bottled vintage onto the market. (Prior to that, Marinai sold the wine in bulk to Tuscan wine merchants Antinori and Ricasoli, which used them for proprietary blends.) The best wines are the Chianti Classico and Chianti Classico Riserva; a super Tuscan blend called Guerrante (half Sangiovese and half Cabernet Sauvignon) is also produced.

The cellar is located underneath the original house on the property, and is filled day and night with music by Beethoven, Rossini and others. "Wine is a living thing and needs to evolve in a protected and comfortable environment, it needs to be treated with respect," Marinai says. "What you give to a wine is what it gives you in return." —R.Q.

Chianti Classico 2006 90/\$28; 1,000 cases made, 500 cases imported

Chianti Classico Riserva 2005 92/\$47; 400 cases made, 200 cases imported

Toscana Guerrante 2004 88/\$NA; 1,000 cases made, 500 cases imported

Suavia

Veneto

Owner Tessari family **Winemakers** Giovanni and Valentina Tessari **Annual case production** 10,415

For many consumers, the name "Soave" still conjures up the memory of a rather faceless, light white picked up from a supermarket shelf for a few bucks. But a handful of producers are proving that Veneto's leading white can be a wine of elegance and distinction.

This group of leaders includes the four Tessari sisters, Arianna, 34, Meri, 33, Valentina, 30, and Alessandra, 20, who are gradually taking over the running of the family's 30-acre estate in the heart of Soave