

Carpineta Fontalpino

Tuscany

Owners Gioia and Filippo Cresti **Winemaker**
Gioia Cresti **Annual case production** 5,830

Gioia Cresti is building a successful career as a consulting agronomist, but still finds time to make wine on her family's 217-acre estate, located just outside the Chianti Classico zone near Castelnuovo Berardenga, about 10 miles east of Siena.

Carpineta Fontalpino has been in Cresti's family since the 1960s.

Gioia, 39, took over the estate with her brother, Filippo, 45, in 1990 and immediately set about replanting 44 acres of vineyards. She is currently producing some of the most exciting wines in Tuscany, including Dofana, a Sangiovese-Petit Verdot blend that earned a classic, 96-point rating in only its second vintage.

"We aimed at the highest quality possible right from the start," Cresti says, "but we had to wait for the young vines to mature to see the real results. These are coming now, and the quality is where I want it."

Cresti started experimenting with new Sangiovese and Petit Verdot clones in 2000. The vines produce loosely packed bunches with relatively few grapes per cluster, instead of the typical tight bunches where each grape hugs its neighbor.

"There's less potential for disease and rot," Cresti explains "as well as making for more even ripening. They may look a bit odd," she adds with a smile, "but I've found that the uglier the bunch, the better the wine it produces!"

The estate's winery is a simple but functional barnlike structure, which Cresti renovated in 1992. In one room there is an assortment of stainless steel and cement vats. Cresti believes in the use of cement, and scrupulously maintains her vats. A second room contains French oak barrels of various sizes, for aging the wines. In 2006, the winery debuted a Chianti Classico made from 12 acres of vineyards Cresti rents nearby. (None of the wines are currently available in the U.S. as the winery seeks a new importer.)

Cresti is also busy with her work as a consulting agronomist. She collaborates with Carlo Ferrini, one of Tuscany's best-known consulting enologists, at well-known estates such as Casanova di Neri, Petrolo and Sette Ponti, while also consulting for a half-dozen estates on her own.

"The difference between working for others and for myself," says Cresti, "is that here I can do what I like and experiment with what I like. It's fun!"

—J.C.

Chianti Classico Fontalpino 2006	90/\$NA; 1,665 cases made
Toscana Do ut Des 2006	92/\$NA; 1,665 case made
Toscana Dofana 2006	96/\$NA; 500 cases made

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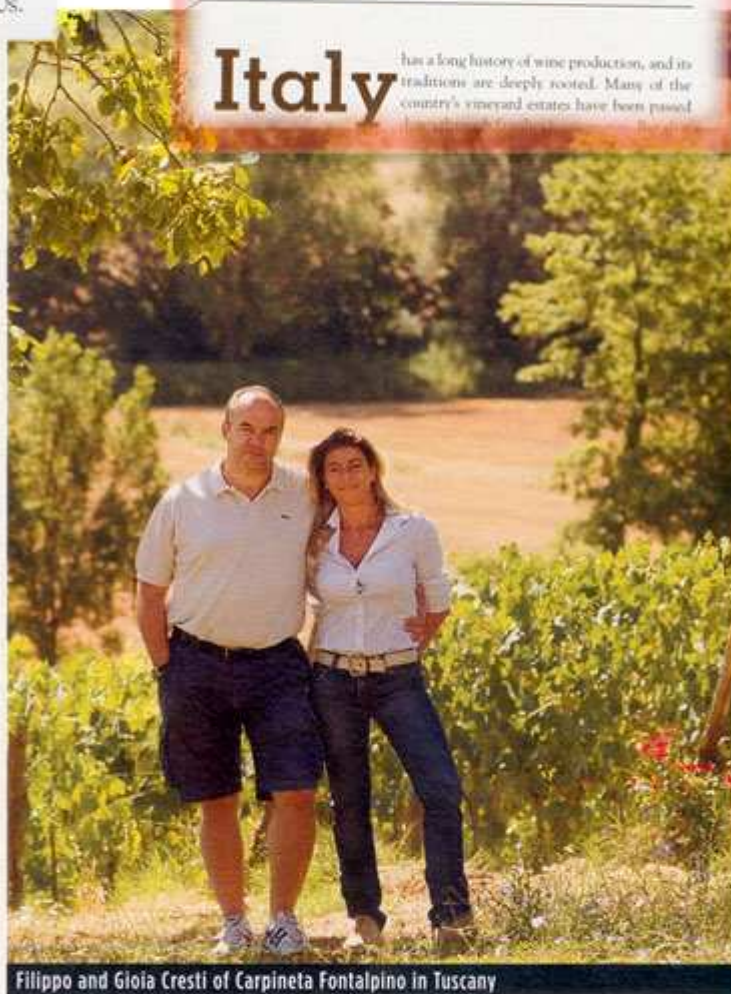
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Filippo and Gioia Cresti of Carpineta Fontalpino in Tuscany

