

FOOD & WINE

OCTOBER 2006

best-ever wine guide

**Top wines
under \$20**

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**Great American
food & wine
matches**

**Astonishingly
good California
Chardonnay**

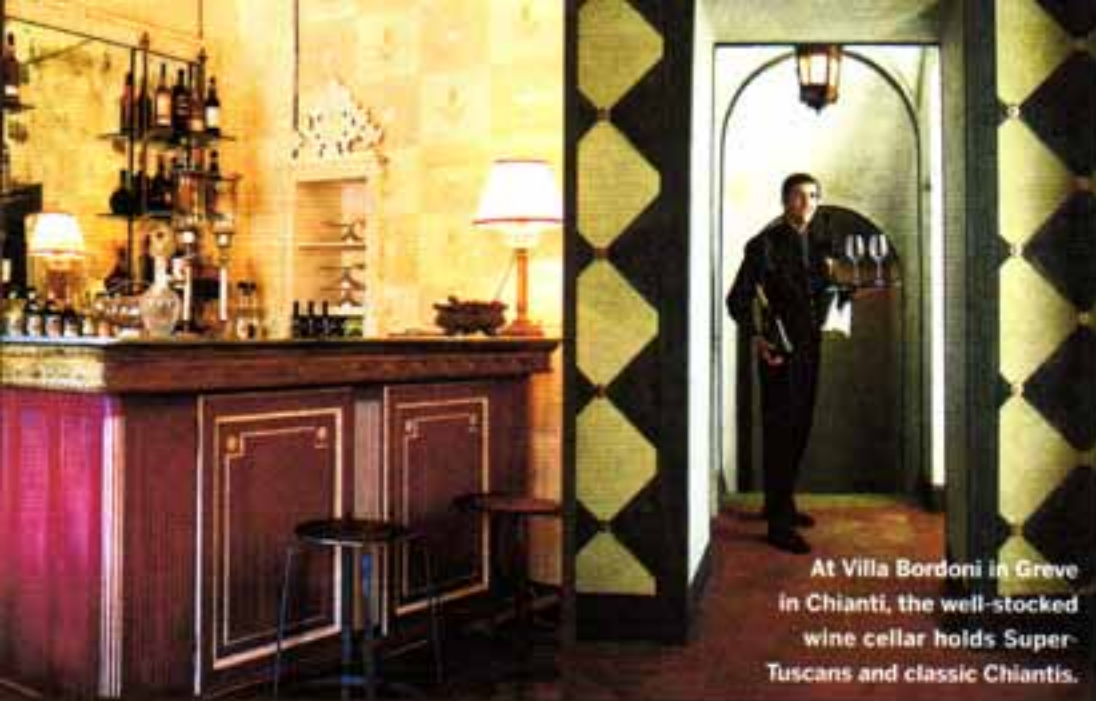
**Robert Parker's
Bordeaux picks**

**The best wine
routes to explore
from Tuscany
to Australia**

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At Villa Bordonni in Greve in Chianti, the well-stocked wine cellar holds Super-Tuscans and classic Chiantis.

Where To Go Next

tuscany

BY CARLA CAPALBO

FLORENCE

Teatro del Sale Chef Fabio Picchi's new spot in a 14th-century food cellar is one of Florence's most theatrical restaurants—especially at dinner, when musicians and other entertainers perform on stage. It's much more tranquil, and economical, at lunch: \$19 (plus the \$6 annual membership fee) buys access to a large table of delicious Mediterranean-inspired dishes like spaghetti dotted with anchovies, or spicy fish stew with couscous. Teatro del Sale is right across the street from

Picchi's other restaurants: the famed Cibrèo and Caffè Cibrèo (which is great for light suppers). **DETAILS** 111r via dei Macci, Florence; 011-39-055-200-1492.

CHIANTI

Villa Bordonni Scotsman David Gardner, a partner in Florence's Beccofino and Baldovino, has a gift for creating successful restaurants. His latest project has taken him out of town. "I wanted to move to the heart of Chianti's countryside," he says, "and then I saw Villa Bordonni and fell in love." Gardner completely remodeled the blue 16th-century country-

house hotel outside Greve, decorating the place with hand-stenciled motifs and Spanish textiles, and restoring the walled garden. Young Apulian chef Francesco Fineo uses the original wood-burning oven for dishes like succulent veal chops with San Marzano tomatoes; he also teaches the villa's cooking classes. There are big names in the cellars, including acclaimed Super-Tuscans like Rampolla's Sammarco (six vintages are on offer). **DETAILS** 31-32 via San Cresci, Mezzuola, Greve in Chianti; 011-39-055-884-0004.

IN OR NEAR SIENA

Enoteca Italiana

Sienna's Enoteca Italiana, inside a Medici fortress, has always been one of the country's most exciting wine emporiums, with a collection of over 1,300 great Italian wines. Until recently, the place offered only cheeses and salumi. But now there's an inexpensive buffet lunch provided by a rotating list of local chefs. The menu varies, but there's always a hot *primo*, such as white bean soup or baked pasta, followed by a *secondo*, like beef braised in Tuscan red wine; desserts might include a fresh ricotta and fig torte. **DETAILS** Fortezza Medicea, Siena; 011-39-0577-288-497.

Ristorante Walter Redaelli

As chef at the renowned Locanda dell'Amorosa near Sinalunga, a half hour east of Siena, Walter Redaelli served an exceptional Mediterranean menu. Now he's opened his own intimate country inn and trattoria in nearby Bettolle, where his specialties include *pici* (handmade pasta ropes that resemble thick spaghetti) and porcini-flecked gnocchi topped with grated black truffles. Redaelli has also compiled a Tuscan-focused wine list with top Montepulciano producers, like Poliziano and Boscarelli. **DETAILS** 72 via Bandita, Bettolle; 011-39-0577-623-447.