



BARONE  
RICASOLI

Established in the Chianti Classico region at the Castello di Brolio in 1141, Barone Ricasoli is one of the four oldest wine estates in the world.



**IMAGES** This page -  
Above - Francesco Ricasoli.  
Below - The Colledilà vineyard.  
Opposite page -  
The Castello di Brolio.

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With a history that dates back nearly a thousand years the story of Ricasoli has, not surprisingly, become closely interwoven with that of the region. The strength and importance of this long association has been captured in a number of historical documents, including a reproduction of the Ricasoli family tree that was printed in 1584, which is one of the first references to wine in the Chianti region. Later documentation shows Ricasoli's growing importance in the region, with records from the 1600's detailing its first exports to Amsterdam and England. Bettino Ricasoli, who was known as the 'Iron Baron', is also credited with producing the original Chianti Classico blend in the 19th Century. He was the interior minister of the Tuscany region and became Prime Minister of the newly unified Italy on two occasions in the late 1860's.

Today the company is presided over by Francesco Ricasoli, great grandson of Bettino, who is the driving force behind the company's vision of bringing new meaning to the region's wine and wine making culture.

As owner and president of the company he has been instrumental in generating new ideas to ensure the long term sustainability of the vineyards, including the ongoing study of soil types, and the clonal selection of the Brolio Sangiovese, both of which are among his great passions. He has also totally renovated the vineyards and mapped them in great detail.

At the heart of the Ricasoli estate is the Castello di Brolio (the Brolio Castle). In medieval times the armies of Florence and Siena fought over the Castello di Brolio and today it retains much of the character of that period.

It was here that Bettino started his studies and experimented with local grape varieties when he was just twenty years old. The castle is now the headquarters of the modern firm, with its state-of-the-art cellars close by.

## The Ricasoli Estate

The castle and surrounding vineyards account for 230 of this 1,200 hectare estate, the largest in Chianti Classico.

Situated between the villages of Gaiole and Castelnuovo Berardenga, this area of outstanding beauty is made up of a variety of landscapes including valleys, hills, oak and chestnut woods and 26 hectares of olive groves. A variety of soils and micro-climates are found in this central part of the Chianti area, creating a unique set of growing conditions.

## The Heart of Ricasoli

The cellars of Barone Ricasoli, which are at the foot of Brolio Castle, are separated from the main body of the winery, which is exclusively used for winemaking. The modernization of the old cellars has been done sympathetically by restoring the aesthetics of the original 19th Century rooms, whilst simultaneously incorporating the latest technology.

Each vineyard plot is harvested separately. Once gathered, the grapes are taken to the vat room in containers with a maximum capacity of 200 kg. Vinification then takes place in small steel vats, enabling the fermentation process to be carefully regulated in order to retain the characteristics of every single vineyard plot.



**IMAGES** This page - Top - Castello di Brolio castle in the distance. Bottom - Harvest. Opposite page - Top - Close up of the Brolio Castle. Bottom - Barone Ricasoli family tree dating back to 1584. Bottle - Castello di Brolio Chianti Classico DOGC gran selezione.



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Experimentation and a thorough knowledge of the land have led Ricasoli to vinify separately, even within the same plot, depending on the morphological similarities of the subsoil. The structure of the winemaking cellar has been designed so that the vats are filled by gravity, which produces a gentle pressure and only extracts the most desirable elements from the skins of the grapes.

At the end of the fermentation process the wines are transferred to barrels and oak barriques in the barrel ageing cellar. The wines are then carefully monitored throughout their development right up to their long bottle ageing in temperature-controlled rooms, before being released for sale.

