

## BODEGA CHACRA

PATAGONIA ~ RIO NEGRO

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### *Food-Friendly Italian Wine*

There aren't a lot of men with four names in the winemaking business but Piero Incisa della Rocchetta is unique in many respects. He's the third-generation scion of the noble Tuscan family who created the legendary Sassicaia, a.k.a the original Super Tuscan.

He's the public face and ambassador of the Tenuta San Guido estate (home of Sassicaia) as well as Bodega Chacra, a Pinot Noir winery in Patagonia and most recently a "star sommelier" in New York.



I'd heard about Mr. della Rocchetta's starring turn at A Voce in Time Warner Center (he was one of several star winemakers who came to work on the restaurant's floor) and we had a brief chat about his sommelier experience while I was at a trade tasting where Mr. della Rocchetta was one of several producers pouring their wines, including some of his (very good) Patagonian Pinot Noir and absolutely stellar (if rather closed and backward) 2008 Sassicaia.

I steered the conversation to wine and food (the topic of my column this weekend), explaining my column's premise that Italians produce some of the most food-friendly wines in the world.

Mr. della Rocchetta agreed, at least partially. There were some wines he considered problematic: "the more extracted, higher alcohol" wines that have become more common in Italy in the past twenty years.

In fact, during the last Vinitaly, the big Italian trade fair, Mr. della Rocchetta said he had had a "challenging time finding a wine to pair with food."

I told him I thought the problem — high alcohol, highly extracted — was present in Italy to a lesser degree than other countries, like the United States. I still thought that Italy was home of some of the very best food wines. And food, Mr. della Rocchetta and I both agreed, was the primary reason for drinking wine.

Mr. della Rocchetta waxed eloquent, even emphatic, on this particular point: "Wine is not an element of meditation but an element of a meal. When you and I sit down for a meal, it is a coming-together in a completely human way."

As human as one can be, of course, at dinner with four-name nobility.

| by Lettie Teague