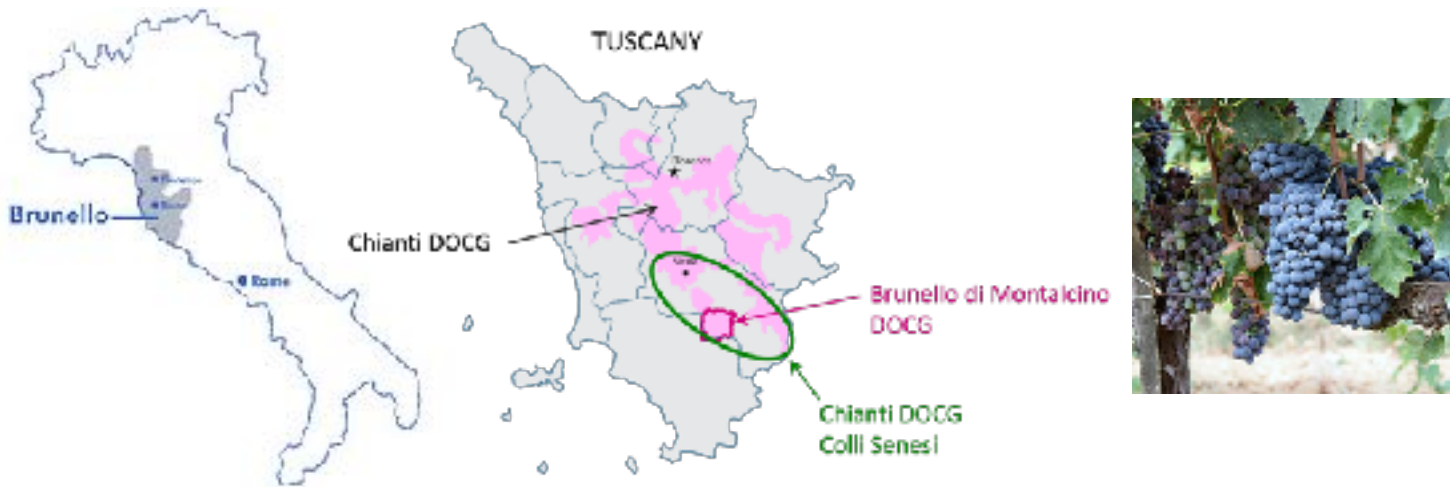


Brunello di Montalcino

November 14, 2017 Testing by Josée Larocque and Dave Sharpe



HISTORY

One of the first records of "Brunello" was a red wine made in the Montalcino area in the early 14th century. In the mid-19th century, a local farmer named Clemente Santi isolated certain plantings of Sangiovese vines in order to produce a 100% varietal wine that could be aged for a considerable period of time. In 1888, his grandson Ferruccio Biondi-Santi released the first modern version of Brunello di Montalcino, which was aged for over a decade in large wood barrels. By the end of World War II, Brunello di Montalcino had developed a reputation as one of Italy's rarest wines. The only commercial producer recorded in government documents was the Biondi-Santi firm, which had declared only four vintages up to that point: 1888, 1891, 1925, & 1945. By the 1960's there were 11 producers making Brunello. In 1967 the Consorzio del Vino Brunello di Montalcino is established and in 1968 the region was granted Denominazione di Origine Controllata (DOC) status. By 1970 the number of producers had more than doubled to 25, and by 1980 there were 53 producers. The Montalcino region was the first Italian wine region to be awarded Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita (DOCG) designation in 1980. By the turn of the 21st century, there were nearly 200 producers of Brunello di Montalcino, mostly small farmers and family estates, producing nearly 330,000 cases a year.

REGION & PRODUCTION

The Montalcino region is located in Tuscany, 80 km south-east of Florence, 40 km SE of Siena. On a territory of 24000 hectares, the vines occupies 3500 hectares, which 2100 ha for the DOCG Brunello di Montalcino. The rest of the land is planted for Rosso di Montalcino on 510 ha and 50 ha for Moscadello di Montalcino (muscat). In total there are 208 producers and 50 vine growers. On this 240 km of land, all producers are members of the Consorzio.

<http://www.consorziobrunellodimontalcino.it/index.php?lg=en>

Of all appellations, the Montalcino region produce 9 million wine bottles per year. 65% of the wine production of the Montalcino is exported which only 5% is sent to Canada. The USA purchases 25 % of the production, followed by Germany and Switzerland.

VARIETAL

Sangiovese is a red Italian wine grape variety that derives its name from the Latin sanguis Jovis, "the blood of Jupiter", the Roman god. Early theories on the origin of Sangiovese dated the grape to the time of Roman winemaking. It was even postulated that the grape was first cultivated in Tuscany by the Etruscans from wild *Vitis vinifera* vines. At least fourteen Sangiovese clones exist, of which Brunello / Sangiovese Grosso is one of the best regarded.

Early ampelographical research into Sangiovese begun in 1906 with the work of Girolamo Molon. Molon discovered that the Italian grape known as Sangiovese was actually several "varieties" of clones which he broadly classified as Sangiovese Grosso and Sangiovese Piccolo. The Sangiovese Grosso family included the clones growing in the Brunello region as well as the clones known as Prugnolo Gentile and Sangiovese di Lamole that was grown in the Greve in Chianti region. The Sangiovese Grosso, according to Molon, produced the highest quality wine, while the varieties in the Sangiovese Piccolo family, which included the majority of clones, produced wine of a lesser degree of quality. It's noted for having thicker-skinned berries and, because of this, Brunello produces wines with exceptionally bold fruit flavours, high tannin, and high acidity.

THE WINE

Brunello di Montalcino is produce with a single varietal, 100% of a local Tuscan type of Sangiovese – Sangiovese grosso called Brunello with a maximum production of 40 hl/ha. The wine has to spend a minimum of 2 years in oak barrel or cask, and a minimum of 6 months in bottles. Brunello di Montalcino wine can only be released to the market on the month of January of the 5th year following its harvest. For a Riserva, it's a minimum of 3 years in wood and therefore an extra year before releasing to the market. e.g. 2010 millesime could only be released from January 2015 on, or 2016 for a Riserva. Brunello di Montalcino wine has to follow specific minimal analytic data such as a minimum of 12,5% alcohol and as well specific organoleptic characteristics of the Sangiovese Grosso.

The highlight to the enduring popularity of Brunello di Montalcino is based in the fruit however, it's the tannins and acidity that extend the life of this wine so it reaches perfection a decade or more later. It's worth the wait.

TASTING NOTES

Young Brunello: Wines are packed with fruit and flower flavours including cherries, dried cranberry, wild strawberry, blackberry, violets, potpourri and liquorice. When you taste it, Brunello di Montalcino exudes earthy notes of espresso and tilled soil along with mouth-gripping tannins. It's a bold wine, but because of the high acidity it ends on a tart, astringent note that will have you licking the insides of your mouth. This astringency is why most reviews suggest a drink-by window several years after its release date.

Old Brunello: Now that the wine has aged and been softened by time, our Brunello is more ravishing than ever. With 10+ years of age, Brunello di Montalcino drops the fresh fruit flavors to reveal sweeter notes of dried figs, candied cherries, hazelnuts, and sun-baked leather. The tannins turn chocolatey and the acidity is succulent. I haven't met anyone drinking perfectly aged Brunello that doesn't think it's fantastic.

<http://winefolly.com/review/brunello-di-montalcino-its-worth-the-wait/>

Evaluation in stars of the vintages:	2009 ☆☆☆☆	2010 ☆☆☆☆☆	2011 ☆☆☆☆
2012 ☆☆☆☆☆	2013 ☆☆☆☆	2014 ☆☆☆	2015 ☆☆☆☆☆
			2016 ☆☆☆☆☆

WINE LIST

- 1 Castello Banfi Brunello di Montalcino 2012** 13% \$50 (D)
<http://www.banfiwines.com/wine/castello-banfi-brunello-di-montalcino-docg-2012/>
Colour: Intense ruby red with garnet reflections. Bouquet: Ethereal, violet, vanilla with hints of liquorice. Taste: Full, soft, velvety, with traces of spice.
- 2 Piccini Villa al Cortile Brunello di Montalcino, 2011** 14% \$36 (J)
<http://www.tenutepiccini.it> LCBO 2010 # 434696
Dark red colour, sustained and round w/complex notes of liquorice and ripe black cherry, powerful and classy. Full, ripe, spicy black-skinned fruit on the palate, smooth tannins expose great elegance. Chest-nutty fruit long aftertaste. Serve it at 18°C with game or matured cheeses.
- 3 Col d'Orcia Brunello-di-Montalcino, 2011** 14.5% \$52 (J)
<http://www.coldorcia.com/e-commerce/article/brunello-docg&brunello-montalcino-vintage-2011&v=4180> LCBO VINTAGES # 306852
Ruby w/ Violet hues, ample, complex with huge notes of ripe red berry fruits, and plum well balanced with the spice from the oak. Well-structured with soft ripe tannins perfectly balanced with the notes originating from the long ageing in the wood. Full and persistent aftertaste.
- 4 Tenuta Caparzo Brunello di Montalcino, 2010** 13.5% \$45 (D)
http://www.caparzo.it/schedeVini/english/CAPARZO_BRUNELLO.pdf
- 5 Castiglion del Bosco Brunello di Montalcino, 2010** 14.5% \$60 (D)
http://wine.castigliondelbosco.com/brunello_montalcino.php LCBO 2011 VINTAGES# 956391
Complexity, superb structure, and an inviting, mouth filling palate are the hallmarks of this Sangiovese grown in the 42-hectare Capanna vineyard facing towards the Mediterranean sea. A garnet-flecked ruby red, it releases generous, emphatic fragrances classic to Sangiovese, developing a near-endless progression notable for its beautiful balance.
- 6 San Giorgio Ugolforte Brunello di Montalcino, 2009** 14.5% \$54 (J)
SAQ # 12393155
From the far south east, just east of Casale Nuove dell'Abate. Sweet wood on the nose with somewhat spicy dark raspberry and cherry fruit on the layered over clay earth and streaked with vanilla. Rounded and polished on entry with cherries in alcohol on the palate, this freshens up a bit on the midpalate with slightly candied cherry flavours. The tannins are a bit on the soft side and the acid nicely present within the cherry fruits.
- 7 Donatella Cinelli Colombini Brunello di Montalcino Riserva, 2010** 14% \$ n/a (D)
<http://www.cinellicolombini.it/en/the-wines/casato-prime-donne/brunello-di-montalcino-docg-riserva>
Bright and intense ruby-red colour. Complex and intense nose with hints of ripe red jammy fruit, spice, vanilla, black pepper and tobacco. It has an intense yet balanced palate with great structure and a nice richness in polyphenols. A powerful "big" wine.

Total: \$297