

SITE SEARCH: Wine Reviews
Advanced Search

FOR:

Go →

LOGOFF

Manage My Subscription



The Independent Consumer's Guide to Fine Wines



Neal Martin's Wine Journal:
The Entertaining Thorn in the Side
of Wine Writing

HOME SUPPORT VIRTUAL TOUR SITE MAP CONTACT US BULLETIN BOARD

Explore Wines My Wines Hedonist's Gazette Article Archive Video Archive In the Cellar Wine Journal In Asia - Pacific E-Zine



Article Archive Antonio Galloni

Col d'Orcia: Brunello di Montalcino Riserva Poggio al Vento 1982-2006

May 14, 2012

In the Cellar:

- In the Cellar Home
- Antonio's Article Archive
- Visit the In the Cellar Forum
- About Antonio Galloni

Quick Links

- [What's New](#)
- [Weekly Wine Buys](#)
- [Gift Subscriptions](#)
- [Shop The Wine Advocate Store](#)
- [TWA Editorial Calendar](#)

Ratings On The Go [Robert Parker Mobi](#)

More Information

- [Executive Wine Seminars](#)
- [Cartoon of the Week](#)
- [Articles of Merit](#)
- [Find It Online](#)
- [Wine Education](#)
- [Glossary of Wine Terms](#)
- [The Vintage Chart](#)
- [The Wine Advocate](#)
- [TWA Rating System](#)

Our Reviewers

- [Robert Parker](#)
- [Antonio Galloni](#)

2006	BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO RISERVA POGGIO AL VENTO	96
2004	BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO RISERVA POGGIO AL VENTO	95+
2001	BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO RISERVA POGGIO AL VENTO	94
1999	BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO RISERVA POGGIO AL VENTO	95
1998	BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO RISERVA POGGIO AL VENTO	92
1997	BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO RISERVA POGGIO AL VENTO	93
1995	BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO RISERVA POGGIO AL VENTO	95+
1993	BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO RISERVA POGGIO AL VENTO	94
1990	BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO RISERVA POGGIO AL VENTO	93
1988	BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO RISERVA POGGIO AL VENTO	96
1985	BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO RISERVA POGGIO AL VENTO	93
1982	BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO RISERVA POGGIO AL VENTO	95
1977	BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO RISERVA	94
1975	BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO RISERVA	95
1999	BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO	93+
1995	BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO	92
1991	BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO	94
1990	BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO	95
1985	BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO	92
1980	BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO	94

Col d'Orcia is one of Montalcino's most historic wineries. The estate's modern-day lineage goes back to at least 1890, when records show the Franceschi family of Florence purchased the property, then known as Fattoria di Sant'Angelo in Colle. As early as 1933 Fattoria di Sant'Angelo in Colle presented its Brunelli at the Wine Exhibition of Siena, one of the first trade shows in Italy, decades before Brunello would become a prized, world-class wine.

Brothers Leopoldo and Stefano Franceschi inherited the property and subsequently divided their holdings in 1958. The terms of the separation prohibited the brothers from using the existing Fattoria di Sant'Angelo in Colle name. Leopoldo Franceschi christened his estate Il Poggione after the site where his cellar is currently located. Today Franceschi's grand children, Leopoldo and Livia, own Il Poggione. Stefano Franceschi named his farm Col d'Orcia (hill above Orcia) after the river that runs through the property. Stefano Franceschi later married into the royal family of the future King of Spain Juan Carlos. He and his wife had no children, and in 1973 Stefano Franceschi sold his property to the Cinzano family of Piedmont. The Cinzano family was active in the spirits business, and used their extensive sales network to distribute the early vintages of Col d'Orcia.

[Neal Martin](#)
[Lisa Perrotti-Brown MW](#)
[David Schildknecht](#)
[Mark Squires](#)
[Past Reviewers](#)

[Links](#)
[Educational](#)
[Retailer](#)
[Accessory/Storage](#)
[Other](#)

At the time of its purchase by the Cinzanos, Col d'Orcia was planted with a variety of crops, as was common, including wheat, tobacco, olives and grapes. One of the main buildings is in fact the mill of the old Fattoria di Sant'Angelo in Colle. In 1973 there were just a few hectares dedicated to grapes, but planting expanded during this time under the leadership of Count Alberto Marone Cinzano and reached 70 hectares by the early 1980s. In 1992 Marone Cinzano's son Francesco took over and continued to increase plantings to the current level of 140 hectares, of which 108 are Brunello-designated vineyards, making Col d'Orcia the third largest owner of Brunello vineyards in Montalcino. Over the last few years, Francesco Marone Cinzano has overseen a gradual and quiet conversion to biodynamic farming, one example of many quality-driven decisions that separates Col d'Orcia from Montalcino's other large producers.

Today Col d'Orcia makes two Brunelli, a straight bottling and the single-vineyard Riserva Poggio al Vento, which emerges from a seven-hectare site with a southwestern exposure that was planted beginning in the mid-1970s through 1990. The soils, which date to the Eocene period, are mostly rich in limestone and skeletal materials, a composition known in Tuscany as 'albarese.' The first Poggio al Vento was produced in 1982, prior to that a straight Riserva was made from a combination of the estate's vineyards. This article covers every vintage of Poggio al Vento, plus a number of other Col d'Orcia wines I tasted recently.

The Col d'Orcia Brunelli are distinguished for their ability to age exceptionally well. Vinification is traditional. The wines are fermented in stainless steel and cement and are aged in Slavonian and French oak casks. The Riserva sees four years in barrel today, although some of the older vintages spent more than 4 years in cask. One of the most fascinating aspects of this tasting was following the evolution of Poggio al Vento through the years. Up until 1993, the harvest always took place in early October. Since then, the harvest has moved up by as much as 3-4 weeks with the exception of 1995, which was also an October harvest. Another evolution was the introduction of French oak as a complement to Slavonian oak and the move to 25 and 50-hectoliter casks from larger 50 to 75-hectoliter casks, both of which were implemented with the 1997 vintage. From 1982 to 2006 there is also noticeable increase in dry extract levels and alcohol, which Marone Cinzano and long-time Estate Manager Edoardo Virano attribute to the change in climate and generally lower yields as the vines have aged. Because of his large production, Marone Cinzano strives for consistency with the straight Brunello, and therefore makes no secret of his use of other vintages to strengthen the final blend of that wine, which is allowed up to 15% under the regulations that govern the production of Brunello di Montalcino.

The 2006 Brunello di Montalcino Riserva Poggio al Vento bursts from the glass with an exciting array of sweet dark cherries, flowers, mint and licorice. All of the elements are in the right place. The 2006 combines power and finesse to a degree I have seldom experienced in the Col d'Orcia wines. Layers of fruit flow through to the huge, authoritative finish. Readers will be tempted to try the 2006 young, and so will I, to tell the truth. Although I would love to be wrong, the reality is that the 2006 isn't likely to be at its peak until age 20 or so. This is a fantastic showing from Col d'Orcia. Yields in 2006 were the lowest ever (with the exception of 1997), which explains much of the wine's richness and sheer power. Anticipated maturity: 2026-2046. The 2004 Brunello di Montalcino Riserva Poggio al Vento is developing beautifully. This is a decidedly feminine, graceful style of Poggio al Vento. The wine literally floats on the palate with gracious layers of fruit. Silky tannins support sweet red berries, flowers and spices on the mouthwatering finish. The 2004 is flat-out beautiful. This was a relatively generous harvest, and that comes through in the wine's medium-bodied structure. Anticipated maturity: 2014-2044. The 2001 Brunello di Montalcino Riserva Poggio al Vento is all nuance and class. Delicate scents of tobacco, crushed berries, dried flowers and spices are woven together in a perfumed Brunello that emphasizes elegance over sheer power. In 2001 the crop was reduced by 50% because of hail damage. Today 2001 looks to be a relatively early maturing vintage for the Riserva. Anticipated maturity: 2012-2021.

The 1999 Brunello di Montalcino Riserva Poggio al Vento is a dramatic, large-scaled wine. With time in the glass, the layers of flavor fill out beautifully. Dark cherries, cedar, licorice and tobacco are some of the aromas and flavors that emerge as the wine opens up. Firm tannins frame the powerful, vibrant finish. The 1999 is best cellared for another few years, but if opened today it needs at least a few hours of air. Anticipated maturity: 2014-2029. The 1998 Brunello di Montalcino Riserva Poggio al Vento comes across as a bit earlier-maturing in style, which isn't such a bad thing for readers who may also be holding some of the sturdier vintages. At the same time, the tannins are a little less polished than they are in the great years, and that is just part of the wine's DNA. Wild cherries, rosemary, herbs, licorice and leather are some of the notes that flow through to the finish. As good as the 1998 is, the finesse of the very

best years isn't quite there. Anticipated maturity: 2012-2020.

The 1997 Brunello di Montalcino Riserva Poggio al Vento impresses for its symmetrical, sensual personality. Powerful yet seamless tannins support layers of dark, sensual fruit in this textured, round Brunello. The wine's richness and depth are pure pleasure. There is more than enough structure for the 1997 to continue to drink well for a number of years. In 1997 spring frost reduced yields dramatically. The harvest took place on September 22, quite early at the time, but on the late side by today's standards. Anticipated maturity: 2012-2022. The 1995 Brunello di Montalcino Riserva Poggio al Vento (magnum) is a gorgeous, vivid wine loaded with class and personality. Black cherries, smoke, tobacco, licorice, flowers and menthol explode from the glass as this multi-dimensional wine shows off its considerable class and pedigree. Layers of flavor continue to build in the glass over time. A cool streak of minerality frames the inward, mysterious finish. In magnum, the 1995 is truly spectacular. The October 9 harvest remains the latest recorded for Poggio al Vento. Anticipated maturity: 2015-2035.

The 1993 Brunello di Montalcino Riserva Poggio al Vento is remarkably fresh, vibrant and youthful. Amazingly, the tannins are still a bit sturdy. Dark cherries, licorice, new leather and spices are some of the many notes that flesh out in this fat, rich Brunello. A wine of gorgeous contrasts, the 1993 is at once dense, yet austere, with one foot in the past and the other in the present. Anticipated maturity: 2013-2043. The 1990 Brunello di Montalcino Riserva Poggio al Vento boasts plenty of density and richness. Early tertiary notes in the bouquet suggest the wine is entering its early maturity, but the Col d'Orcia wines are so age worthy, it is hard to know if the wine will plateau for a number of years, or keep moving along its aging curve. The 1990 is a dense, extroverted wine very much in the style of the year. I don't find the level of elegance of the very finest vintages. Hints of sage, rosemary, licorice and tobacco add complexity on the finish. The combination of the hot year and 63 months in cask have resulted in a fairly forward, evolved wine by Col d'Orcia standards. Vintage 1990 was also the most generous crop recorded at Poggio al Vento. Anticipated maturity: 2012-2022.

The 1988 Brunello di Montalcino Riserva Poggio al Vento boasts exceptional polish and textural elegance. Dark cherries, eucalyptus, menthol, spices and leather come alive in the glass as this vivid, vibrant Brunello shows off its stunning pedigree. The 1988 possesses dazzling freshness, clarity and precision. This is a very much a 1980s wine built on length and energy rather than power. Anticipated maturity: 2012-2028. The 1985 Brunello di Montalcino Riserva Poggio al Vento is now fully mature. Tobacco, truffles, black cherries, leather and spices are just some of the aromas and flavors that take shape in the glass. I don't see much room for the 1985 to improve from here, but it is in a glorious place right now. Stylistically the 1985 is cut from the same cloth as the 1990. The 1985 spent 60 months in cask, a bit longer than the norm at the time, which was around 54 months. Anticipated maturity: 2012-2015. The 1982 Brunello di Montalcino Riserva Poggio al Vento is a showstopper. All of the elements have aged beautifully in this distinctive Brunello. At 30 years of age, the 1982 still possesses remarkable energy and exceptional overall balance. This is another sizzling Brunello from Col d'Orcia. Anticipated maturity: 2012-2024.

The 1977 Brunello di Montalcino Riserva is a revelation. Crushed flowers, autumn leaves, mint and sweet exotic spices are some of the notes that emerge from the Pinot-like bouquet. In a blind tasting, the 1977 could easily be mistaken for a Burgundy, until the Sangiovese acidity kicks in. There is still plenty of depth in the fruit, and little doubt the 1977 will make it to its 40th birthday. This is a remarkable achievement from Col d'Orcia. Anticipated maturity: 2012-2017. The 1975 Brunello di Montalcino Riserva is fabulous. It boasts striking inner sweetness in its perfume fruit. The richness and warmth of the year comes through beautifully in the wine's weight and generosity. Even today, 1975 is considered one of the hottest vintages ever in Montalcino. Col d'Orcia's Riserva has aged gracefully and still has plenty of fine drinking left. Tasting the wine is a revelation. Anticipated maturity: 2012-2022.

The 1999 Brunello di Montalcino is starting to show early signs of maturity in its bouquet. Worn-in leather, spices, licorice and tobacco meld into sweet dark cherries and plums in this full-bodied, intense Brunello. There is still more than enough fruit and sheer power to allow the 1999 to drink well for another 15-20 years, perhaps longer. The style is very much on the masculine, virile side of things. If opened today the 1999 needs time to come together in the glass. Anticipated maturity: 2012-2029. The 1995 Brunello di Montalcino emerges from the glass with hints of smoke, scorched earth, licorice and tobacco. Here, too, the aromas are more forward than the fruit, which remains big, powerful and virile. The tannins are quite firm, and the wine remains young, even after all these years. A huge, intense finish rounds things out. Today

the 1995 comes across as a bit awkward. It should be a little more composed in another 2-3 years. Anticipated maturity: 2015-2025.

The 1991 Brunello di Montalcino is silky, perfumed and absolutely beautiful. Floral aromatics meld into vibrant red fruit in this pristine, harmonious Brunello. The cool year yielded a mid-weight, graceful Brunello long on class. This is an astonishingly striking wine that is frankly hard to spit. Red berries, flowers and licorice linger on the breathtaking finish. Suffice it to say I would be thrilled to own the 1991. Anticipated maturity: 2012-2026. The 1990 Brunello di Montalcino impresses for its overall harmony. Everything is simply in the right place. The aromas, flavors and tannin have all matured evenly in this radiant, supple Brunello. Even at 21 years of age the 1990 remains a youngster, maybe with as much as another 20 years to go. Huge tannins frame the mouth-watering finish as the sheer vibrancy of Sangiovese saturates the palate with intense acidity. This is a great showing. Of course there is always an element of variation, especially among older wines, but I find it interesting that the straight 1990 Brunello appears to be aging more gracefully than the Riserva. Anticipated maturity: 2012-2025.

The 1985 Brunello di Montalcino bursts from the glass with an exotic mélange of dark cherries, worn-in leather, licorice, tar, smoke and earthiness. Today the 1985 comes across as a bit burly, with plenty of vintage 1985 exuberance, but also plenty of Sangiovese wildness. Hints of chocolate and espresso are layered into the finish. Overall, the 1985 is a beautiful if somewhat rustic wine. I imagine the wine will drink well for a number of years, but it won't get materially better. Anticipated maturity: 2012-2016. The 1980 Brunello di Montalcino is in fabulous shape. Stylistically it is somewhere between the 1990 and 1991 in terms of its richness. There is plenty of fruit, while the aromatics still haven't reached their full apogee of development. This is a decidedly old-style Brunello with some roughness around the edges. At the same time, it is impossible to ignore how well this wine – from a totally forgotten vintage – has aged. Anticipated maturity: 2012-2020.

—Antonio Galloni

eRobertParker.comSM is a service of eRobertParker, LLC

Email: info@erobertparker.com

Copyright © 2001-2012 - eRobertParker, LLC All rights reserved

Portions Copyright © 2001-2012 - The Wine Advocate, Inc.

Except as otherwise expressly permitted under the [Subscription Agreement](#) or copyright law, no copying, redistribution, retransmission, publication or commercial exploitation of this material is permitted without the prior written consent of The Wine Advocate, Inc.