

Castelnuovo dell'Abate, Province of Siena

Established: 1989

Owner: Claudio Tipa

Winemakers: Luca Marrone

Production: 40,000 bottles

Hectares under vine: 12

Viticulture: Biodynamic

Vegan Friendly



Established by Piero Palmucci in 1989, Poggio di Sotto quickly shot to fame to be one of Montalcino's cult wines. Piero's search for the perfect location was meticulous and he spent several years researching the regions soil types and climates to best suit Montalcino's Sangiovese Grosso.

He settled on Castelnuovo dell'Abate in the southern part of the region and collaborated with the University of Milan to assist in selecting the best clones. Although the climate here is warmer than other communes within Montalcino, the hot sea breezes from the Mediterranean are moderated by Monte Amiata and the Ombrone River generates cooling breezes at night. Biodynamic viticulture, high vine density, extremely low yields and extended cask ageing combine to produce what many refer to as 'the Burgundy of Brunello'.

Piero had an uncompromising commitment to Sangiovese in *purezza* and enthusiastically supported the creation of sub zones for Montalcino, saying "I would love for Castelnuovo dell'Abate to become an official sub-appellation so consumers can know that this Brunello is made in one of the sunniest parts of Montalcino where Sangiovese matures perfectly". The wines are characteristically light in colour, with complex aromas of red berry fruit, earth, leather and tobacco.

Firm acidity and silky yet substantial tannins give the wine a long-lasting flavour. One of the key differences here is that no distinction is made between grapes destined for Rosso or Brunello. The vineyards are picked and fermented according to the day of harvest, not necessarily the vineyard. The wine spends 4-5 weeks on skins and fermentation occurs naturally with no temperature control. At the end of the year the various parcels are blended and moved into botti (sometimes before malo is completed) and they are aged: two years for Rosso; four years Brunello; five years for Riserva.

In 2011, with no descendants, Piero sold his beloved estate to Claudio Tipa of nearby Colle Massari. Importantly, Claudio made no changes to Poggio di Sotto. The wines are, however, extremely limited and we recommend looking out for the new releases on our Italy Direct ex ship offers.

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Rosso di Montalcino DOC

2019 Shavings of cedar, blood orange, crushed cherries, dried flowers and stone dust form a mesmerizing bouquet as the 2019 Rosso di Montalcino slowly opens in the glass. There are depths of ripe textural fruits here, offset by zesty spices and bright acidity that sweeten the expression while energizing it as well. A web of fine tannins coats the palate through the finish, coupled with a core of primary concentration and sweet inner florals that seem to never truly fade.

What a glorious achievement from Poggio di Sotto. The 2019 spent a whopping 43 days macerating on the skins, followed by 29 months of refinement in cask. It's undoubtedly a baby Brunello. 95 points, Eric Guido

Brunello di Montalcino DOCG

2018 The 2018 Brunello di Montalcino captivates, opening slowly with an exotic array of sweet spices, cedar shavings, ashen stone, mint and hints of sage. It's luxuriously soft in texture, silky and refined, with depths of balsamic-tinged cherries accelerated by vibrant acidity and a hint of sour citrus that adds contrast. This finishes with impressive structure for the vintage, still lively yet classically dry, leaving nuances of tart berries offset by a burst of inner sweetness that punctuates quite well. This was a very difficult vintage with a massive amount of rain in August that made vineyard work very difficult, but also extremely important. That said, the team at Poggio did a fantastic job finding balance. Do make sure to give the 2018 a good amount of time, as I followed this for three days, through which it only got better and better. 94 points, Eric Guido

Brunello di Montalcino DOCG Riserva

2015 Poggio Di Sotto's 2015 Brunello di Montalcino Riserva is undeniably elegant and feminine, impressing with an alluring bouquet which mixes spiced black cherry with hints of sage, mint, dried roses and white smoke. It enters the palate soft, lifted and youthfully understated, cascading bright red fruits laced with minerals across a core of stimulating acids as nuanced tannins slowly build. An air of red currant, licorice and inner florals linger, as the 2015 Riserva flexes its structural muscle throughout the cheek-puckering finale. This will require quite a bit of cellaring to fill out and settle down, yet is sure to be worth the wait. I followed the 2015 Riserva over the course of four days and it never declined. 95 points, Eric Guido

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