

Brunello di Montalcino 2016 – one of the best vintages since 1990 – by Michèle Shah



It was great to get back on the road after so many months of not attending any 'live' tasting activity and drive to Montalcino, a picturesque cross-country drive that takes me about 1.30 minutes from my home in Tuscany (near Arezzo). We are still in lockdown, but I had all my papers and permits in order to go.

An icy wind greeted me on arriving in an empty Montalcino, which on a week-end is usually bustling with tourists, but this is the first time all the wine shops & restaurants were closed due to lockdown.



On special invitation from the Consorzio Brunello to Montalcino few members of the press were invited to taste the newly released vintage 2019 Rosso di Montalcino; the 2016 Brunello di Montalcino and the 2015 Riserva di Brunello di Montalcino.

I'd heard that the 2016 was a great vintage so I was very eager to taste the wines. It's probably one of the best vintages of Brunello that I've tasted in the past years. It's said to be comparable to 1990 vintage and if you are looking to cellar a vintage of Brunello, this is the one to put in down your cellar.

It's got all the qualities of a fine age-worthy Brunello, with amazingly finely woven tannins and great acidity. As I tasted through about 60 Brunello 2016 (only a third of those on offer!) I was struck by the consistency of the vintage. One that shows the distinction between the terroirs and subzones. Some of my favorites showing really fine elegance. What struck me particularly with the 2016 vintage is that a good number of lesser-known producers made consistently above average wines, with a consistent tannic structure and a great depth to them. Really vertical wines. The elegance of Sangiovese really singing out here.

As for the Riserva 2015, also from a great vintage, but a very different vintage in character to the 2016, is opulent in character, with lush, ripe fruit, more aromatic and more upfront compared to the more austere, reserved 2016.

Well that's just the beauty of vintage character that each one is different and will evolve over time in a different way. But these are certainly two great vintages to enjoy over the coming years.



My pick of Brunello di Montalcino 2016

Argiano
Altesino
Barbi
Camigliano
Campogiovanni
Capanna
Casanova dei Neri
Castiglion del Bosco
Cinelli Colombini
Col d'Orcia
Giodo
Il Poggione
La Lecciaia
Le Chiuse
Lisini
Poggio Antico
Poggio di Sotto
Petra
San Polo
Sesti
Talenti
Tenuta San Giorgio
Tenute Silvio Nardi
Roberto Cipresso



Tasting at Col d'Orcia- Brunello di Montalcino

Tasting and lunch at Col d'Orcia in Montalcino with Count Francesco Marone Cinzano. Col d'Orcia is a benchmark Brunello estate, its philosophy is based on sustainable biodynamic farming. The wines are super elegant and very age-worthy.



Among the wines I tasted at Col d'Orcia were:

Ghiaie Binache Sant'Antimo Chardonnay 2011 - still rocking!

Rosso di Montalcino 2012 - still extremely fresh and vibrant

Banditella Rosso di Montalcino 2010 - beautiful vintage and still very expressive and lush

Brunello di Montalcino docg 2006 - classic vintage, from a blend of vineyards, fresh with typical Brunello earthy notes

Poggio Al Vento - single vineyard Brunello di Montalcino Riserva 2001 docg - speechless! this was just amazing! still youthful, fresh silky tannins, absolutely elegance and complexity, lovely wine

Olmaia S. Antimo Cabernet DOC 1999 - blissful, youthful a wine of powerful expression but always with Tuscan sentiment and reserved elegance

Pascena Moscadello di Montalcino 1999 - this was an explosion of ripeness with hints of orange marmalade, apricots, nuts and balanced with smooth citrus finish.

Super thanks to this amazing day between the Vintage 2016 tasting of Brunello di Montalcino at the Consorzio and my visit to Col d'Orcia

