

Italy, Tuscany: Vino Nobile di Montepulciano

MONICA LARNER

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A few months back, I traveled to beautiful Montepulciano, Tuscany, to learn more about a very interesting new group called the Alliance Vinum (www.thealliance.wine). The alliance consists of seven like-minded producers (Salcheto, Poliziano, La Braccasca, Dei, Boscarelli and Avignonesi) who are united in a desire to elevate the quality and the marketing power of the Vino Nobile di Montepulciano appellation. If this alliance is successful in its mission, I believe it will become an important model for other smaller Italian appellations to follow.



This report is a teaser of sorts. In reality, this is a part one, with a second segment of reviews to be published at the end of January. I was initially hesitant to divide them up, but these notes were written, edited and proofed, so why not get them online sooner?

If you are a fan of Vino Nobile di Montepulciano, as I am, I encourage you to hold out for the more detailed profile of the Alliance Vinum and its exciting membership to be published in one month's time. In the meantime, happy reading.

MONICA LARNER

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Across the world of wine, important regions face a widening identity crisis that pits large-volume commercial wineries against small, family-run boutique estates. These businesses are linked by geography but rarely by ideology.

Because of this divide, it is increasingly common to find breakaway growers' associations formed with the express purpose of protecting like-minded quality producers of similar size and market aspirations. We saw this in Valpolicella, with the creation of the Famiglie Storiche d'Arte ("Amarone Families") founded in 2009. The Families stood united in opposition to some of the relaxed farming guidelines favored by the larger cooperatives that dictate local appellation laws. The Families saw that they would never have enough power to influence Consorzio politics. Ultimately, they determined that if you can't beat 'em, don't join 'em. In a controversial move, they broke away from the Consorzio to create their own group with direct access to European Union promotional funding and other important government recognitions. A similar split occurred in the Soave region, which—like Valpolicella—is home to both large-volume co-ops and tiny family estates.

The latest breakaway group to be formed in Italy is the Alliance Vinum (www.thealliance.wine)

in the Vino Nobile di Montepulciano appellation. Six wineries have banded together to bring the international spotlight to this often overlooked corner of beautiful Tuscany. Vino Nobile too often falls in the shadows of its immediate neighbors, Chianti Classico and Brunello di Montalcino. Following two years of planning, the Alliance is finally ready to articulate its mission and manifesto.

I visited with the Alliance members at the end of last year and tasted wines from across the appellation (non-Alliance and Alliance members alike) to score the wines you see published in Part 1 and Part 2 of this report. I learned of the enthusiastic and focused dedication shared by all six Alliance members.

I also had the opportunity to taste through samples of 100% Sangiovese expressions (one sample from each estate) that will soon be released as part of a special Alliance series. These wines are symbolic of the quality and winemaking approach aspirations of the Alliance members. This series will underline the word Nobile, or “Noble,” as well as the appellation Vino Nobile di Montepulciano. Representing the 2015 vintage, the six wines were unfinished when I tasted them. You will not find reviews here, but I plan on returning to Montepulciano to officially score the Alliance cuvées just as soon as they are ready to be evaluated.

In the meantime, I’d like to give you a brief introduction to the six wineries that make up the Alliance Vinum.



Salcheto

Michele Manelli (pictured above, on the left) farms 48 hectares of certified organic vines and has adopted a fully sustainable approach to his vineyard and winery functions. For example, his winery is void of light bulbs. Instead, reflective shafts penetrate deep underground into the winery and bring in sunlight, thanks to an exchange of mirrors and pipes. Michele’s Alliance comrades look to him to create a sustainability model that can be applied across the group’s membership. Vines range from 12 to 20 years in age, and the winery produces 300,000 bottles per year. Salcheto uses a wide range of oak vessels (Slavonian, French and American) to age its wines. Paolo Vagaggini is the winemaking consultant. Michele’s funky, alternative personality is a great draw for millennials and young Vino Nobile enthusiasts.



Poliziano

Poliziano represents a classic and more conservative approach compared to the wild bunch over at Salcheto. The estate is owned by Federico Carletti (pictured above with his wife Anna) and counts 130 hectares of vines that are currently being converted to organic farming practices. The wines are made by internal winemaker Fabio Marchi under the guidance of consultant Carlo Ferrini. Some 700,000 bottles are produced annually. Larger oak casks are used, but French barrique is preferred for the top-shelf wines. Looking back through the Wine Advocate database, Poliziano is consistently among the highest scoring estates.



La Braccessa

La Braccessa is owned by the Antinori family and is undoubtedly one of the most powerful wineries in Montepulciano, inside and outside of the Alliance. Albiera Antinori and General Manager Renzo Cotarella took a courageous stand when they joined this group of six. The property includes 100 hectares of vines and makes 350,000 bottles per year. The estate boasts red clay soils that make powerful and structured wines. Vines are 20 years old, on average. To my palate, La Braccessa makes the most contemporary style of wines in the Alliance, with rich fruit flavors and soft tannins.



Dei

Caterina Dei (pictured above) runs one of Montepulciano's signature estates. Her family made its fortune mining travertine and marble. The new Dei winery makes generous use of those materials and is certainly one of the area's most important architectural sites. Caterina's family farms 52 hectares with an annual bottle production of 220,000. Vines are between 15 and 23 years of age and are planted over three soil types: alluvial, clay and limestone. The distinctive house style varies between traditional and contemporary.



Boscarelli

Podere Boscarelli is run by Nicolò and Luca De Ferrari. Luca is pictured above. Of the six Alliance wineries, this one is perhaps the most traditional and old-school in character. I visited on one of the last harvest days of 2017, and the cramped outdoor fruit reception area reminded me of the Bartolo Mascarello winery in Barolo or one of the small artisanal estates you see on Etna. Boscarelli exudes similar charm and character. The estate's top vineyard site is the Il Nocio cru with white, limestone soils. Most of the estate's vines were planted at the end of the 1980s, and Boscarelli farms 20 hectares of vines. Sangiovese is grown here, as is Mammolo (pictured above), Canaiolo and Colorino.



Avignonesi

Virginie Saverys and her rambunctious Basque partner Maximilien de Zarobe (in the photo above) are the architects of the Alliance concept. The couple purchased this estate outright in 2009, and they have since embarked on an ambitious renewal program that has brought enthusiasm not just to this single estate but, I would argue, to the region in general as well. The property and its 161 hectares of vines are organically and biodynamically cultivated, which they've done since 2010. Avignonesi makes 550,000 bottles per year, including the high-end *Vino Nobile di Montepulciano Grandi Annate* and the spectacular *Vin Santo di Montepulciano Occhio di Pernice*.

NV Dei • Sancta Catharina

Rating: 89
Price: NA
Drink Date: 2017 - 2024
Reviewed by:
Monica Larner
Issue Date: 29th Dec 2017
Source:
234, The Wine Advocate

I found no visible vintage on this bottle. The NV Sancta Catharina is a blend of Sangiovese with Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah and Petit Verdot. The wine is black and impenetrable in appearance. Smoke, tar, black licorice, cola and black fruit all rise heavily from the bouquet. There is very little primary fruit to behold. But the wine offers plenty of smoky darkness and richness instead.

Producer: Dei	From: Italy, Tuscany, Toscana	Color: Red
Type: Table	Sweetness: Dry	Variety: Proprietary Blend

2016 Avignonesi • Rosso di Montepulciano

Rating: 88+
Price: NA
Drink Date: 2017 - 2019
Reviewed by:
Monica Larner
Issue Date: 29th Dec 2017
Source:
234, The Wine Advocate

Avignonesi's 2016 Rosso di Montepulciano is loaded tight with bursting primary fruit. The wine is vinous and raw with bight cherry, blackberry and cassis. In the mouth, the wine is impeccably clean, fresh and easy going. The quality of fruit is simple, but super precise nonetheless. I highly recommend this bottle for informal drinking occasions.

Producer: Avignonesi	From: Italy, Tuscany, Rosso di Montepulciano	Color: Red
Type: Table	Sweetness: Dry	Variety: Sangiovese

2016 Dei • Rosso di Montepulciano

Rating: 87
Price: NA
Drink Date: 2017 - 2019
Reviewed by:
Monica Larner
Issue Date: 29th Dec 2017
Source:
234, The Wine Advocate

The 2016 Rosso di Montepulciano is a thin and streamlined expression with a very informal personality. The bouquet shows some ripe fruit aromas with hints of jammy strawberry and raspberry. You get sweet almond flavors as well. It shows clean and precise lines that would pair nicely next to roast chicken or pork.

Producer: Dei	From: Italy, Tuscany, Rosso di Montepulciano	Color: Red
Type: Table	Sweetness: Dry	Variety: Sangiovese

2016 Salcheto • Chianti Colli Senesi

Rating: 87
Price: NA
Drink Date: 2017 - 2020
Reviewed by:
Monica Larner
Issue Date: 29th Dec 2017
Source:
234, The Wine Advocate

The 2016 Chianti Colli Senesi is an entry-level red wine with an easy and accessible approach. The wine's aromas of dark berry, moist earth and pressed violet would pair nicely next to a plate of pasta with homemade tomato sauce. The bouquet offers offbeat aromas of tea bag, honey and dried apricot. The mouthfeel is fresh and breezy.

Producer: Salcheto

From: Italy, Tuscany, Chianti, Colli Senesi

Color: Red

Type: Table

Sweetness: Dry

Variety: Sangiovese

2016 Salcheto • Obvius Bianco

Rating: 86+
Price: NA
Drink Date: 2017 - 2019
Reviewed by:
Monica Larner
Issue Date: 29th Dec 2017
Source:
234, The Wine Advocate

This is an unfiltered blend of Trebbiano and Vermentino (packaged in a screwcap bottle) that is made in a natural and non-interventionist's approach. The 2016 Obvius Bianco opens to a cloudy appearance with pretty golden highlights. The bouquet is redolent of yeasty aromas that recall baked croissant with summer peach and honeydew melon. This is not a wine for everyone, but it is a wine for those who follow the important sustainability philosophy practiced at Salcheto. Personally, I got a kick out this wine because I've never tasted anything quite like it.

Producer: Salcheto

From: Italy, Tuscany, Toscana

Color: White

Type: Table

Sweetness: Dry

Variety: Proprietary Blend

2016 Salcheto • Obvius Rosso

Rating: 87
Price: NA
Drink Date: 2017 - 2019
Reviewed by:
Monica Larner
Issue Date: 29th Dec 2017
Source:
234, The Wine Advocate

Salcheto is a fully sustainable and organic winery that is recognized as one of the first to follow this growing philosophy in the Montepulciano region. You really get a good sense of that in the 2016 Obvius Rosso. This is a pure expression of Sangiovese (in a screwcap bottle) that offers a pristine quality of fruit. You taste the rawness of the fruit juice here. Very little technique is used in the winemaking and the wine offers a totally untouched interpretation of the grape. Its appearance is nicely concentrated and rich. The bouquet shows those telltale "natural" winemaking aromas of raw cherry and cola. There is a bright point of sourness on the close. Drink this wine within the next two years.

Producer: Salcheto

From: Italy, Tuscany, Toscana

Color: Red

Type: Table

Sweetness: Dry

Variety: Sangiovese

2014 Avignonesi • La Tonda

Rating: 89
Price: NA
Drink Date: 2017 - 2022
Reviewed by:
Monica Larner
Issue Date: 29th Dec 2017
Source:
234, The Wine Advocate

This is a wine that you will not find in commercial release. The 2014 La Tonda sees fruit sourced from an experimental vineyard that is planted to numerous clones of Sangiovese in a perfectly circular vineyard with equally spaced vineyard rows. I tasted bottle number 1,764 of only 2,500 bottles made. The bouquet here is fresh and vibrant with wild berry and blueberry aromas followed by mild cinnamon and spice.

Producer: Avignonesi	From: Italy, Tuscany, Toscana	Color: Red
Type: Table	Sweetness: Dry	Variety: Sangiovese

2014 Avignonesi • Merlot Desiderio

Rating: 91
Price: NA
Drink Date: 2018 - 2025
Reviewed by:
Monica Larner
Issue Date: 29th Dec 2017
Source:
234, The Wine Advocate

The 2014 Merlot Desiderio is a bold and forthcoming red wine that peels back with thick layers of aromatic intensity. The bouquet is deeply endowed with black cherry, toasted espresso and sweet mocha. This is a soft and luscious wine that wraps thickly over the whole palate, from front to back. The finish is a bit leaner than that bold bouquet would have you initially think.

Producer: Avignonesi	From: Italy, Tuscany, Toscana	Color: Red
Type: Table	Sweetness: Dry	Variety: Merlot

2014 Avignonesi • Vino Nobile di Montepulciano

Rating: 91
Price: NA
Drink Date: 2017 - 2025
Reviewed by:
Monica Larner
Issue Date: 29th Dec 2017
Source:
234, The Wine Advocate

The queen of the ball is the 2014 Vino Nobile di Montepulciano. This wine shows grace and elegance, and it pulls itself together with a profound sense of firmness and textural compactness. The quality of fruit is sweet and accessible, but the wine also reveals ethereal tones of grilled herb and blue flower that add to its good complexity. Avignonesi shows great results in a difficult vintage.

Producer: Avignonesi	From: Italy, Tuscany, Vino Nobile di Montepulciano	Color: Red
Type: Table	Sweetness: Dry	Variety: Sangiovese

2014 Boscarelli • Vino Nobile di Montepulciano

Rating: 90
Price: NA
Drink Date: 2017 - 2025
Reviewed by:
Monica Larner
Issue Date: 29th Dec 2017
Source:
234, The Wine Advocate

Stylistically speaking, this wine stands apart from its peers. It shows a deep inner core of dark fruit that is solid and compact. The 2014 Vino Nobile di Montepulciano from Boscarelli is recommended to anyone curious to taste this historic Tuscan appellation. The fruit here is bright and vibrant. The wine offers ample depth and volume.

Producer: Boscarelli

From: Italy, Tuscany, Vino Nobile di Montepulciano

Color: Red

Type: Table

Sweetness: Dry

Variety: Sangiovese

2014 Dei • Vino Nobile di Montepulciano

Rating: 90
Price: NA
Drink Date: 2017 - 2024
Reviewed by:
Monica Larner
Issue Date: 29th Dec 2017
Source:
234, The Wine Advocate

The 2014 Vino Nobile di Montepulciano is bright and tonic with a zesty fruit profile. This wine shows a higher degree of inner energy and freshness that must be due to the cooler conditions of the summer growing season. It offers good depth with dark fruit nuances of plum, prune and black currant. The wine's aromatic intensity makes a positive impact on the senses.

Producer: Dei

From: Italy, Tuscany, Vino Nobile di Montepulciano

Color: Red

Type: Table

Sweetness: Dry

Variety: Sangiovese

2014 La Braccasca • Vino Nobile di Montepulciano

Rating: 88
Price: NA
Drink Date: 2017 - 2024
Reviewed by:
Monica Larner
Issue Date: 29th Dec 2017
Source:
234, The Wine Advocate

This wine shows deft winemaking that is played exceptionally well in a difficult vintage. The 2014 Vino Nobile di Montepulciano is a rich and opulent expression of Sangiovese that is neatly tucked together in terms of intensity and persistence. The wine boasts a balanced and contemporary winemaking approach. Black cherry and blackberry wrap over the palate.

Producer: La Braccasca

From: Italy, Tuscany, Vino Nobile di Montepulciano

Color: Red

Type: Table

Sweetness: Dry

Variety: Sangiovese

2014 Salcheto • Vino Nobile di Montepulciano

Rating: 89
Price: NA
Drink Date: 2018 - 2023
Reviewed by:
Monica Larner
Issue Date: 29th Dec 2017
Source:
234, The Wine Advocate

The 2014 Vino Nobile di Montepulciano is slightly shy and subdued in terms of its aromatic intensity. It needs a little extra time to open and find its voice. Once it does, it offers dark berry and dried cherry aromas with measured spice and leather in pleasantly supporting roles.

Producer: Salcheto

From: Italy, Tuscany, Vino Nobile di Montepulciano

Color: Red

Type: Table

Sweetness: Dry

Variety: Sangiovese

2013 Avignonesi • Vino Nobile di Montepulciano Grandi Annate

Rating: 94
Price: NA
Drink Date: 2017 - 2027
Reviewed by:
Monica Larner
Issue Date: 29th Dec 2017
Source:
234, The Wine Advocate

Grandi Annate is a wine that has made a most impressive turnaround. The 2013 Vino Nobile di Montepulciano Grandi Annate shows the confidence and the pride of its current incarnation. To my nose, this wine speaks the precise language of the appellation. The bouquet is broad and accessible with Sangiovese-driven tones of dried cherry and moist earth or tobacco. But like many of its peers, the bouquet here is more horizontal if you will instead of being vertical. The tightness of the wine's textual composition is what stands out most and there is a hint of cherry sweetness that adds to the volume and density you feel on the finish.

Producer: Avignonesi

From: Italy, Tuscany, Vino Nobile di Montepulciano

Color: Red

Type: Table

Sweetness: Dry

Variety: Sangiovese

2013 La Braccasca • Vino Nobile di Montepulciano

Rating: 89
Price: NA
Drink Date: 2017 - 2024
Reviewed by:
Monica Larner
Issue Date: 29th Dec 2017
Source:
234, The Wine Advocate

The 2013 Vino Nobile di Montepulciano offers a full to mid-weight approach with dark berry and ripe cherry aromas. The bouquet is driven by rich fruit aromas with spice, leather and sweet chewing tobacco at the back. The tannins are well integrated within the fruity extract this wine boasts at its core.

Producer: La Braccasca

From: Italy, Tuscany, Vino Nobile di Montepulciano

Color: Red

Type: Table

Sweetness: Dry

Variety: Sangiovese

2013 La Braccasca • Vino Nobile di Montepulciano Riserva Vigneto Santa Pia

Rating: 92
Price: NA
Drink Date: 2017 - 2025
Reviewed by:
Monica Larner
Issue Date: 29th Dec 2017
Source:
234, The Wine Advocate

The 2013 Vino Nobile di Montepulciano Riserva Vigneto Santa Pia is a modern and accessible wine that sheds its territorial character in favor of bright cherry aromas, soft texture and luscious flavors of spice and tobacco. The wine is smooth and opulent with deep layering in the mouth.

Producer: La Braccasca

From: Italy, Tuscany, Vino Nobile di Montepulciano

Color: Red

Type: Table

Sweetness: Dry

Variety: Sangiovese

2013 Salcheto • Vino Nobile di Montepulciano

Rating: 91
Price: NA
Drink Date: 2017 - 2025
Reviewed by:
Monica Larner
Issue Date: 29th Dec 2017
Source:
234, The Wine Advocate

This is a well-made wine with lots of density and depth. The 2013 Vino Nobile di Montepulciano is darkly saturated and rich in appearance. The style adopted here is contemporary and exuberant, but the wine still holds firm to its territorial identity. The consistency is firm but yielding. Dark cherry and blackberry aromas rose to the top with spice, tar and smoke at the back.

Producer: Salcheto

From: Italy, Tuscany, Vino Nobile di Montepulciano

Color: Red

Type: Table

Sweetness: Dry

Variety: Sangiovese

2012 Avignonesi • Grifi

Rating: 90
Price: NA
Drink Date: 2017 - 2026
Reviewed by:
Monica Larner
Issue Date: 29th Dec 2017
Source:
234, The Wine Advocate

The 2012 Grifi is a tasty blend of Sangiovese and Cabernet Sauvignon in equal measure. The wine delivers a slightly evolved profile with robust and luscious fruit at its core. This is especially true in terms of the bouquet where the wine reveals earthy intensity backed by savory and leathery overtones. However, the wine is pleasingly elegant and finessed overall. When you dig a little deeper, you can taste some of the heat and the jammy fruit of the vintage. There is a distant point of sweetness on the finish.

Producer: Avignonesi

From: Italy, Tuscany, Toscana

Color: Red

Type: Table

Sweetness: Dry

Variety: Proprietary Blend

2012 Boscarelli • Vino Nobile di Montepulciano Riserva Sotto Casa

Rating: 92
Price: NA
Drink Date: 2017 - 2025
Reviewed by:
Monica Larner
Issue Date: 29th Dec 2017
Source:
234, The Wine Advocate

The 2012 Vino Nobile di Montepulciano Riserva Sotto Casa exhibits pretty concentration and a well-structured consistency, yet the wine does not tread too far from its territorial roots. This is an evolved expression of Sangiovese, yet the bouquet is authentic and true to the grape. You get forest fruit, spice, lilac and candied cherry. Fruit is sourced from a historic parcel located among tall trees between the estate's residence and the boutique winery.

Producer: Boscarelli	From: Italy, Tuscany, Vino Nobile di Montepulciano	Color: Red
Type: Table	Sweetness: Dry	Variety: Sangiovese

2012 Dei • Vino Nobile di Montepulciano Riserva Bossona

Rating: 90
Price: NA
Drink Date: 2017 - 2024
Reviewed by:
Monica Larner
Issue Date: 29th Dec 2017
Source:
234, The Wine Advocate

The 2012 Vino Nobile di Montepulciano Riserva Bossona shows some tertiary definition with dried fruit, prune, tar and smoke. In character, the wine is slightly brambly and wild. This is an elegantly streamlined and polished expression that offers lots of Sangiovese typicity. Wet earth and moist tobacco play an important role, aromatically speaking.

Producer: Dei	From: Italy, Tuscany, Vino Nobile di Montepulciano	Color: Red
Type: Table	Sweetness: Dry	Variety: Sangiovese

2012 Salcheto • Vino Nobile di Montepulciano Riserva

Rating: 92
Price: NA
Drink Date: 2018 - 2026
Reviewed by:
Monica Larner
Issue Date: 29th Dec 2017
Source:
234, The Wine Advocate

The Salcheto 2012 Vino Nobile di Montepulciano Riserva is a little thinner and more precise compared to the previous vintage. The wine opens to mid-weight consistency and displays pretty aromas of wild berry, cassis and dried cherry. The 2012 vintage is steady and well assembled, although the high notes are more muted. However, you can count on the bouquet to deliver authentic and true Sangiovese aromas. There are pretty notes of balsam or medicinal herb on the close.

Producer: Salcheto	From: Italy, Tuscany, Vino Nobile di Montepulciano	Color: Red
Type: Table	Sweetness: Dry	Variety: Sangiovese

2012 Salcheto • Vino Nobile di Montepulciano Salco

Rating: 92
Price: NA
Drink Date: 2018 - 2027
Reviewed by:
Monica Larner
Issue Date: 29th Dec 2017
Source:
234, The Wine Advocate

The 2012 Vino Nobile di Montepulciano Salco shows great textural richness spread over a style that is both meaty and concentrated (when compared to its peers on the Sangiovese scale). The bouquet is broad, far reaching and complete. It offers a pretty sense of moderate opulence with dark fruit flavors, spice and leather. Campfire ash and smoke play minor, but interesting roles. The finish is slightly gritty in texture.

Producer: Salcheto	From: Italy, Tuscany, Vino Nobile di Montepulciano	Color: Red
Type: Table	Sweetness: Dry	Variety: Sangiovese

2011 Boscarelli • Vino Nobile di Montepulciano Il Nocio

Rating: 93
Price: NA
Drink Date: 2017 - 2025
Reviewed by:
Monica Larner
Issue Date: 29th Dec 2017
Source:
234, The Wine Advocate

The 2011 Vino Nobile di Montepulciano Il Nocio is a local benchmark. This expression from a warm vintage shows lots of balsam and medicinal herb that add a veil of mysterious complexity to the fruit-forward ensemble. This wine excels in terms of mouthfeel, thanks to a polished and focused feel that makes a direct and lasting impact on the palate. This wine offers a fascinating and convincing window onto Sangiovese's (from Montepulciano) aging trajectory.

Producer: Boscarelli	From: Italy, Tuscany, Vino Nobile di Montepulciano	Color: Red
Type: Table	Sweetness: Dry	Variety: Sangiovese

2011 Dei • Vino Nobile di Montepulciano Riserva Bossona

Rating: 89
Price: NA
Drink Date: 2017 - 2022
Reviewed by:
Monica Larner
Issue Date: 29th Dec 2017
Source:
234, The Wine Advocate

The Dei 2011 Vino Nobile di Montepulciano Riserva Bossona is a little overdone for my tastes, with very ripe fruit that is boosted by lots of oak. The wine's appearance is dark, rich and syrupy with evident concentration and extraction. The bouquet oozes forth with jammy black fruit aromas backed by sweet cinnamon, clove and Spanish cedar. The overall effect is heavy and bold.

Producer: Dei	From: Italy, Tuscany, Vino Nobile di Montepulciano	Color: Red
Type: Table	Sweetness: Dry	Variety: Sangiovese

2011 La Braccasca • Cortona Syrah Bramasole

Rating: 90
Price: NA
Drink Date: 2017 - 2022
Reviewed by:
Monica Larner
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Source:
234, The Wine Advocate

The 2011 Cortona Syrah Bramasole is a soft and velvety wine that is endowed with extra layers of black fruit, spice, tobacco and bitter chocolate. There is a savory and spicy character here that would pair perfectly next to a piece of grilled meat with gristle, salt and rosemary. The wine shows some budding tertiary qualities with smoke and crushed white peppercorn.

Producer: La Braccasca

From: Italy, Tuscany, Cortona

Color: Red

Type: Table

Sweetness: Dry

Variety: Syrah

2011 Salcheto • Vino Nobile di Montepulciano Riserva

Rating: 91
Price: NA
Drink Date: 2017 - 2026
Reviewed by:
Monica Larner
Issue Date: 29th Dec 2017
Source:
234, The Wine Advocate

Salcheto's 2011 Vino Nobile di Montepulciano Riserva leaves the gate in high gear. This is a beautifully dense and extracted wine that shows muscle and power without being too heavy or overdone. The bouquet delivers pressed fruit and blackberry preserves with oak spice, tar and smoke. The effect is brooding, mysterious and dark. The wine ends with sweet tannins and ripe fruit intensity.

Producer: Salcheto

From: Italy, Tuscany, Vino Nobile di Montepulciano

Color: Red

Type: Table

Sweetness: Dry

Variety: Sangiovese

2011 Salcheto • Vino Nobile di Montepulciano Salco

Rating: 93
Price: NA
Drink Date: 2017 - 2026
Reviewed by:
Monica Larner
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Source:
234, The Wine Advocate

Michele Manelli of Salcheto is a man with a vision. His sustainable approach has become its own school within this Tuscan appellation. The 2011 Vino Nobile di Montepulciano Salco is a very well made wine that is soft, rich and divine. This wine opens to an inky dark and impenetrable color. It sits heavy on the palate with firm density and thick waves of ripe fruit. Salcheto advocates one of the latest harvests in the appellation.

Producer: Salcheto

From: Italy, Tuscany, Vino Nobile di Montepulciano

Color: Red

Type: Table

Sweetness: Dry

Variety: Sangiovese

2002 Avignonesi • Vin Santo di Montepulciano

Rating: 97
Price: NA
Drink Date: 2018 - 2045
Reviewed by:
Monica Larner
Issue Date: 29th Dec 2017
Source:
234, The Wine Advocate

This is an impossibly delicious wine born under one very lucky star. The 2002 Vin Santo di Montepulciano undergoes such a long aging regime in tiny oak vessels, everything must line up perfectly if the wine is to show this level of quality and perfection. Any minimal spoilage or oxidation in any single barrel could mean destruction. I tasted this sample in a precious 100 milliliter bottle. The bouquet puts forth a stunning array of honey, candied fruit, dried apricot and brown sugar aromas.

Producer: Avignonesi
From: Italy, Tuscany, Vin Santo di Montepulciano
Color: White

Type: Sweet
Sweetness: Sweet
Variety: Proprietary Blend

2002 Avignonesi • Vin Santo di Montepulciano Occhio di Pernice

Rating: 98
Price: NA
Drink Date: 2018 - 2050
Reviewed by:
Monica Larner
Issue Date: 29th Dec 2017
Source:
234, The Wine Advocate

You'd need a 110-point scale (rather than a 100-point scale) to do justice to this spectacular creation. The 2002 Vin Santo di Montepulciano Occhio di Pernice (100 milliliters) is divine and delicious on all conceivable levels. The bouquet offers dried fruit, dark tar, honey, toasted chestnut and maple syrup in seamless succession. The mouthfeel is so thick and dense, you'd almost wonder if you could get a spoon to stand up straight in the glass. The finish is endlessly sweet and succulent.

Producer: Avignonesi
From: Italy, Tuscany, Vin Santo di Montepulciano
Color: Red

Type: Sweet
Sweetness: Sweet
Variety: Sangiovese