



Your Source of Wine for Every Occasion

Notes From The Cellar "NFTC" Newsletter July 09, 2009

 Forward to a Friend

Brunello fans - a terrific Rosso to drink earlier at a very pocket pleasing price!

I hope all our readers had a chance to enjoy some good times over the July 4th holiday weekend. Last week the new Wine Advocate was released. In its opening remarks under the title "2004 Brunello Montalcino: A Vintage Full of Surprises" Antonio Galloni started his review with the following salvo: "The much-anticipated 2004 Brunellos are now in the market and the moment of truth has arrived. Do the wines justify the hype or not? Like all things that involve Brunello di Montalcino, the answer is not a simple one. My first impression of the wines from bottle was not particularly positive as I encountered a number of disappointing wines from well-known producers. Then an interesting thing happened. I tasted Brunello after Brunello from lesser-known properties that were in many cases outstanding....."

Maybe Antonio is reading the NFTC. Over 4 months ago on February 26 2009 your's truly titled the NFTC: "Reality Check: Barolo 2005 & Brunello 2004 -Are they worth it?" Here is a small sample of what I said at the time : " Italy and in particularly Tuscany have been the beneficiaries of multiple glowing reviews of the 2004 vintage, and for good reason. The overall quality has indeed been great and many producers especially in the mid price levels (\$30-80) have made wines of tremendous quality and value. The Brunellos from Montalcino are released on average a year or more later than most Tuscan wines. As some of the most coveted wines of the region their prices benefit from the frenzy and hype bestowed on the other good Tuscan wines which get into the market place earlier. Over the last few weeks I have started to see an unusually large amount of offers from retailers across the US singing the praises of the upcoming 2004 Brunello vintage (a further indication of what a tough market it is out there). Now that I got to taste many of the wines I must admit that I am a bit underwhelmed..... I am sure that I will come across some other good finds from the 2004 vintage; especially from some of the lesser known small estates as those can offer tremendous values....."

You can review my entire write up here

Through careful vetting, by the time a wine makes it to these pages to receive a glowing review, many others that were not so impressive to me, I just don't bother to try & sell. I try and shy away from the hyperbole, offering you the goods "straight" based on actually tasting the wines. Our readers are better off, as they can weave through all the hype and BS that gets thrown around these days by desperate

retailers. Sure being brutally honest and skipping many wines probably results in less overall sales, but only recommending wine that I would drink myself, results in appreciative customers. I am often asked these days -how is the wine business in this economic climate? -As I stated here before -there are tremendous opportunities right now, yet you have to be selective. It's a great time to be an informed buyer. How does that relate to Brunello -well over the past few months we have only offered you a very small selection of these wines, yet they have turned out to be some of the highest rated wines of the vintage. Those who took advantage ended up with great wines at great prices.

Onwards to today's find. Antonio & I agree there is tremendous value from Montalcino from some of the early released wines known as the Rossos . The term Baby Brunello gets tossed around quite a bit when describing the wines. After all they are made from the very same grapes and grown in the same vineyards as the Brunellos. They are aged less, and released earlier. Made in a fresh style that makes them more approachable for early consumption. But you have to be careful as many wineries use very young newly planted vines and not their top grapes for their Rosso which can be uninspiring.

The trick is to find those who are meticulous producers -here is where a Rosso can literally mean a declassified Brunello, released early to offer a wine that consumers can purchase at a lower price providing much needed cash flow to the winery. I wrote last year about some excitingly good Rosso released from the excellent 2006 Vintage, and it looks like 2007 may turn out to be a better overall year. Great for us as this puts a lot of pressure on wineries that would rather bottle more of their wines as Rosso (rather than sell the juice which happens often in the lesser vintages). After all there is only that much of the stuff they can age for Brunello and the Reservas, The high priced wines are a tough sell and storage space at the wineries as well as long term aging increases cost. So today we bring in a real treat: the Rosso from Pierri Agostina, which happens to be one of the finest and most reasonable wines released from Montalcino this year. A wine that you can easily enjoy now and over the next 10 years while you wait for those Special Brunellos to hit their prime (which in a vintage such as the now released 2004's may take 12-15 years or longer). Oh yes, and one of the best parts -it's priced at less than half the tariff of your average regular Brunello.

\$\$\$ Today's Wine Deal \$\$\$

AGOSTINA PIERI Rosso Di Montalcino 2007

\$28.50 /bottle

-save more with our cash discount

\$27- /bottle.

Special pricing: **\$160/6 pack**



the best deal: with our cash discount at \$153/6 pack (that's only \$25.50 a bottle!)

(note: image is from the 2006 vintage)

In Jun of 2001, I went to a tasting of Italian wines -it was the first time I encountered this wine. It was from an "off vintage" in Tuscany; the 1998. Never mind the vintage, I thought as I tasted the wine - this is good stuff. I decided to purchase a small stash. I enjoyed every bottle of this wine. In fact my last bottle was consumed during a gathering of some of my wine drinking crew, in October of 2007. At age 9, it was still delicious, -so much for an off vintage. Needless to say it was a great intro to the wines of Pieri Agostina...

A relative new comer, owner Francesco Monaci is the nephew of famed producer Giancarlo Pacenti. His dream of making a great wine from the Motalcino area became a step closer when he purchased a superb vineyard property in 1991. In just a few short years his wines became famous. While his Brunellos are top notch (The new 2004 just got one of the highest ratings from Galloni at 94 points) It's the Rosso which is always a superb value. In a previous vintage (1995) It was the first Rosso ever to obtain the coveted top award the Tre Bicchieri (3 glass) from Italy's top professional wine rating publication; Gambero Rosso (a review by the folks at Slow Food-English versions are available, and it has been a trusty travel companion whenever I am fortunate enough to travel there).

Upon closer examination the success of Pieri's Rosso is no surprise, after all this is one estate where the Rosso is being treated with the same care and attention to detail as the Brunello. The fruit is from low vigor clones, tended and hand harvested by members of the family. Attention to detail is paramount.

So when I was offered both the 2004 Brunello and the 2007 Rosso, it was an easy call: at less than half the price of the Brunello, the 07 Rosso is the killer deal: once again one of the highest rated from what is starting to look like a superb vintage for the region. My **tasting notes** say: "Fresh small red berry fruit, accompanied by some mint and spice cabinet aromas. Very easy going, silky texture and very elegant - this has nice definition yet maintains great delicacy. It goes down so easily, that it gives a false impression of lightness, yet there is a nice wave of extract that makes its presence known on the nice balanced finish. There is plenty of material here for more bottle development. Polished and very tasty."

Here is **Galloni's review from the just released Robert Parker's newsletter:** Jun 2009, **91 Points**, Drink: 2009 - 2017 release price \$28. "The 2007 Rosso di

Montalcino flows with layers of dark red fruit, menthol, spices and minerals, all of which meld together seamlessly in a wine of extraordinary grace. Silky, refined tannins frame the long, sensual finish as the wine continues to gain richness in the glass. This is a sublime Rosso that readers won't want to miss. Anticipated maturity: 2009-2017. Once again Agostina Pieri has produced two wines that deliver the goods, both in terms of quality, but also in value, something that isn't easy to say these days about the wines of Montalcino."

Those of you who love a good Brunello, yet would like to have a wine that can be enjoyed earlier and at a fraction of the price, should not hesitate to stock up. If you are not familiar with Brunellos and always wondered what these wines were all about, yet the cost and aging requirements made you hesitate -well here is a perfect opportunity to find out what it's all about, at a price easy on the pocket book. Salute!

Note: we have a small amount on hand with more coming. I will be away for an extra long weekend, but will check my E-mails to confirm your interest. Grazie.

**Thanks for all your support and referrals.
Tell your friends, share the wine, & spread the good vibe. Cheers!**

Paul David, Chief Fermented Grape Taster.

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