Winemaker: Luca Brunelli
Generation: 1st

BRUNELLI

Rosso di Montalcino DOC

From Luca Brunelli's tiny hilltop estate, this Rosso di Montalcino could stand as the classic prototype, both for its dignified structure and its approachable, wonderfully bright fruit. In America, we do not drink a lot of Rosso di Montalcino, but we should. And Luca's is a powerful reminder why: it is muscular yet friendly; serious but never ostentatious. We can hardly imagine a better wine for everyday enjoyment. Bright cran-cherry and slate aromas couple with smooth, integrated tannins and a thoughtful, composed finish.

WINEMAKER BIOGRAPHY

From his high-altitude estate in Montalcino, Luca Brunelli has quietly ascended the ranks of the Brunello community. With some of the loftiest wines - and lowest yields - in our portfolio, we've always known he was destined for artisanal greatness!

ENOLOGIST

Luca Brunelli

TASTING NOTES

Color	Clean ruby red
Nose	Deep floral aroma with hints of spice and mint
Palate	Medium to full bodied, with nice acidity and balanced tannins
Finish	Structured, smooth tannins with medium+ balanced finish

VINEYARD & VINIFICATION

	12
Vineyard Location	Rosso di Montalcino DOC, Tuscany
Vineyard Size	4 ha
Varietals List	100% Sangiovese Grosso
Farming Practices	Organically farmed (non-certified), including dry-farmed; grapes picked by hand
Elevation	300 m
Soils	Medium mixture with remarkable fossil presence
Maturation Summary	Bottled for 4 months
Alcohol	14.0 %
Acidity	5.4 g/liter
Residual Sugar	0.5 g/liter
Annual Production	20,000 bottles

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MARTOCCIA DI LUCA BRUNELLI

With one of the highest cellars in Montalcino, not only is the view from Luca Brunelli's hillside estate breathtaking, but you could catapult a stone from the town's famous fortress (one of the last to fall in Siena's wars against Firenze) and be assured a hit. In a bit of sweet irony, along with the altitude come some of the lowest yields in the entire Brunello DOCG. Taking the bonsai approach to his craft, Luca is a master when it comes to sculpting small plants with excruciatingly low yields. His Sangiovese Grosso vines only grow 20 inches high, for example, with the lowest grapes often a mere 6 inches off the ground! Permitting only 4 clusters per plant for his Brunello, it is physically impossible for him to get even 1 bottle from each vine. Just to put things in perspective, this means his Brunello has lower yields than some of the most expensive Right Bank Bordeaux.

Like the lion's share of Small Vineyards estates, Martoccia di Luca Brunelli is a dedicated organic farm in practice, but not certified. Dry-farming, sustainability, and picking by hand are all simply a way of life. While all of the fruit is estate-grown, Luca's vines themselves are non-contiguous (half belonging to the Brunello DOCG, with the other half situated in the nearby Montecucco district). For the steep sites devoted to his coveted Brunello (250-500 m) Brunelli's soil type is both typical and atypical at once. At its baseline, there is the usual clay-and-fossil mixture we tend see in this region (Sangiovese loves clay, in part because calcium carbonates lend it good acidity). In addition, however, many of Luca's vines benefit from an added feature: large pieces of quartz litter the topsoil on his SW-facing slope. Luca takes full advantage—we already know he trains his vines extra low to the ground to assure concentration. But at that altitude, he is also positioning his low-hanging fruit to receive a little extra ripeness as the sun is refracted off the quartz! It's one way he manages to get 14% alcohol and yet maintain such tautness and freshness in his wines.

As a quick aside, the name featured on Luca's stunning labels, 'Martoccia', is that of the original farm Luca's parents worked so hard to purchase, and the property, while small, has written records going all the way back to the Middle Ages.

BRUNELLI

REGION

TUSCANY

One of the most recognizable regions in the world, Tuscany has an enological history dating back to the era of the Etruscans. Like Piedmont, Tuscany's daily life is interwoven with its food and wine... In sum, vino is a daily facet of the Tuscan lifestyle. With winding roads, sculpted cypresses, and romantic hilltop towns, Tuscany's beauty is legendary, and for many, Florence - once the epicenter of the Renaissance - provides a cultural heartbeat. That said, while the rolling hills of Colli Fiorentini help form a baseline in the minds of many Americans, the region is also home to Italy's Apennine mountain range (stretching from north to south), the wild, southern Maremma district, and a gorgeous, rugged coastline. In the end, Tuscany is topographically quite diverse, and wine zones range from warm and coastal to surprisingly high, continental, and cool.

As one of Italy's most prolific and historic wine regions, it's no wonder Tuscany has so many dedicated and regulated wines. There are currently 42 DOC's and 11 DOCG's. The latter include, of course, Chianti, Chianti Classico, Brunello di Montalcino and Vino Nobile, all predicated on the single red grape that dominates Tuscan production: Sangiovese. Roughly two-thirds of the vines in Tuscany are devoted to this noble varietal, which also happens to be Italy's most planted grape overall. Beyond this, winemakers have been increasingly supplementing vineyards with Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon (both with a 300+ year history in the region). For better or worse, white varieties generally take a distant back seat to the reds, with Trebbiano Toscano being the most widely planted and Vernaccia and Vermentino enjoying more prestige.

ROSSO DI MONTALCINO DOC

Like its big brother, Brunello, Rosso di Montalcino must be crafted from 100% Sangiovese Grosso, and shares the same defined territory in Montalcino and the surrounding hamlets (roughly 700 acres). Wines must register at 12% alcohol or more, and age for at least 1 year (with 6 months in oak) before release. Fresher in style, a Rosso can range from bright and light-hearted to dark and well-structured, depending upon altitude, ageing and the winemaker's motivations. Steeped flavors of dark cherry, wild berry and earth spice can be expected, but with softer tannins that make the wines far more accessible in their youth.

In 2015, some of the requirements surrounding both the DOC and DOCG were strengthened – moves made to help guarantee the quality level in an area where the number of producers keeps growing. (Today there are over 200 winemakers in a zone which had fewer than 20 in the mid-20th Century). For example, the minimum vine density went from 3000 per hectare (the traditional average in Italy) to 4000. That year also saw the deletion of the maximum elevation restriction of 600 meters, originally conceived as grapes from higher altitudes were not thought to ripen enough for DOC-caliber wine. The effects of global warming have changed circumstances, however, and today there is actually a case to be made for higher altitude grapes higher that maintain their tannic and acidic prowess. Beginning with the 2016 vintage, it also became permissible to use screwcaps on Rosso di Montalcino (although corks remain the mandate for Brunello).