

## 2007 Brunello di Montalcino, 95-point Vintage

Wine Enthusiast gets a first chance to score the newest Tuscan wine releases.

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It's been decided: The 2007 vintage of Brunello di Montalcino is a lovely expression of variety and territory—a true celebration of this austere yet sophisticated red wine from southern Tuscany. *Wine Enthusiast Magazine* was among the first to blind taste through the new vintage and found it to be indeed one of the most exciting vintages since the start of the millennium.

Following an intense tasting of some 250 wines at the local vintners' association headquarters in Montalcino, *W.E.* awarded the 2007 vintage 95 points on our 100-point scale. The 2006 vintage earned 93 points last year, and both vintages were given a maximum five stars by the Consorzio del Vino Brunello di Montalcino.

"It's a nice problem to have," says Paola Gloder, manager of Poggio Antico. "Two great vintages, both on sale at the same time, with Brunello di Montalcino and Brunello di Montalcino Riserva." Riserva wines are released one year after Brunello di Montalcino. The 2006 Riservas are now headed to the market.

So what sets 2007 apart? The strong cola or menthol-like notes of licorice, dried ginger, cured meat and white pepper, or as the Italians refer to these characteristics, *note balsamiche*. These delicate and compelling aromas are unique to Sangiovese. It's a pleasure to find such harmony and consistency in a single vintage.

"Between the two vintages, I prefer 2007," says Giacomo Neri of Casanova di Neri. "We had a very dry summer, without much rain, and temperatures that were warm but not exceedingly so. These conditions created these beautiful balsamiche aromas that are so evident in 2007."

The 2006 vintage was characterized by higher acidity and long aging potential. But overall, the wines are sharper, linear and more austere. On the other hand, the 2007 vintage is softer, rounder and more opulent, and shows incredible aromatic intensity. It also delivers firm structure and power for long cellar aging. Sangiovese Grosso is a naturally acidic variety, with freshness that's very well balanced in 2007.

### 94 La Fortuna 2007 Brunello di Montalcino

A distinctive nose with a vein of sweet spice that holds up the rest. You'll find rum cake, cinnamon bun, Christmas spice and chocolate-covered cherry. It's soft, plush and rich on the finish with a lingering note of sweetness that drives its cheerful personality.

**abv:** 15% **Price:** \$49