Winemaker: Luca Brunelli
Generation: 1st

BRUNELLI

Poggio Apricale IGT Rosso Toscana

Clean, bright, and pretty, Poggio Apricale is the everyday offering from high altitude Brunello producer, Luca Brunelli. Built on a foundation of Sangiovese Grosso, this ripe, unoaked rosso supplies terrific “grip” for such a freshly-styled wine. Classic Tuscan aromas of morello cherry, sage, blackberry, and warm terra cotta fill the glass, along with a supple, approachable mid-palate. A small production wine from a very small estate, this is artisanal wine at its charming, low yield best.

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	Brilliant ruby red
Nose	Deep aroma with nice acidity
Palate	Fresh and young red wine with hints of cherry, raspberry and black fruit Medium bodied
Finish	Supple mouth feel with smooth tannins and long finish

VINEYARD & VINIFICATION

	12
Vineyard Location	Toscana IGT, Tuscany
Vineyard Size	4 ha
Varietals List	85% Sangiovese Grosso 10% Merlot 5% Colorino
Farming Practices	Organically farmed (non-certified), including dry-farmed; grapes picked by hand
Elevation	300 m
Soils	Medium mixing with the presence of large quartz
Maturation Summary	Bottled for 4 months
Alcohol	14.0 %
Acidity	5.45 g/liter
Residual Sugar	.05 g/liter
Annual Production	24,000 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.

TOSCANA IGT

Italy's first, most famous, and most broadly used IGT, this label allows for wines to be made in any village in any of Tuscany's 10 provinces, from Firenze to Grosseto. Likewise, wines can be made in virtually any style, using a long list of varieties, freeing producers from the stiff regulations surrounding DOCs and DOCGs. Its creation revolved around the advent of 'Super Tuscans' and the need for an official tier of wine in between the DOC and Italy's lowly "Vino da Tavola", which doesn't even allow a vintage to be printed on the bottle.

During the late 1960s, around the same time that Italy's DOC system was established, a number of famous producers in southern Tuscany – including the town of Bolgheri – began making expensive, high-quality, modern-style wines, often incorporating Bordeaux varietals. As well-made as they tended to be, these so-called 'Super Tuscan' blends had no historical precedent, and therefore didn't qualify for any of Italy's new appellations. As their wines gained in international acclaim (and price), and with no other recourse than to label their wines 'Vino da Tavola', producers began petitioning the government for another option. Finally, in 1992, the Italian government conjured a new wine classification category: Indicazione Geografica Tipica (IGT). This created a successful middle ground, allowing wines to print their vintage, varietal (as long as the wine contains at least 85%) and region of origin. Beyond this, very few regulations exist to constrain the winemaker. France's version is VDP (Vin de Pays) and the EU as a whole now uses the equivalent IGP category on wine labels.