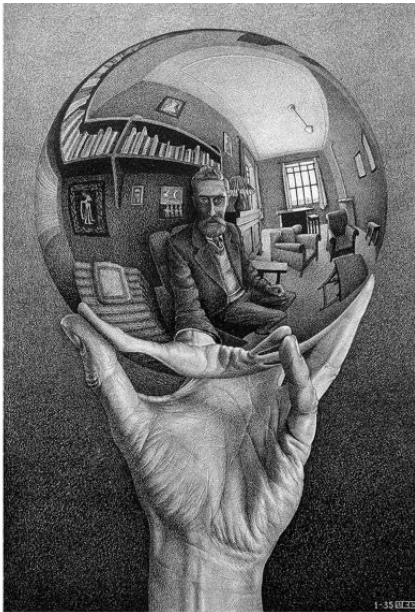


[Long form] Montalcino: the most galactic wine paradox in the universe

by Paolo De Cristofaro



A motorist is listening to the radio when the broadcast is interrupted for an urgent communication, "Attention, there is a madman driving the wrong way on the highway!" And he, while dodging one car after another, "Just one? Must be two hundred!"

It is older than the phylloxera epidemic, yet it always makes me laugh. It probably has something to do with the typical process of projective identification: we've all felt like that driver at least once in our lives, and it happens to me every time **Brunello** is mentioned, limiting the coming out to the vinous sphere. In this case I should say it happens to US, since the long form stems largely from the reflections shared with the friends of **Tipicamente Wine Club** during the two evenings dedicated to the large **Horizontal Montalcino 2010**.

If you are interested in strictly oenological annotations, you can stop reading here and possibly refer to the usual "Pill" that serves as a concise record of our gatherings [1]. If, on the other hand, you have time (and inclination) for a broader-spectrum discussion of the most paradoxically successful district there is: make yourself comfortable and enjoy.

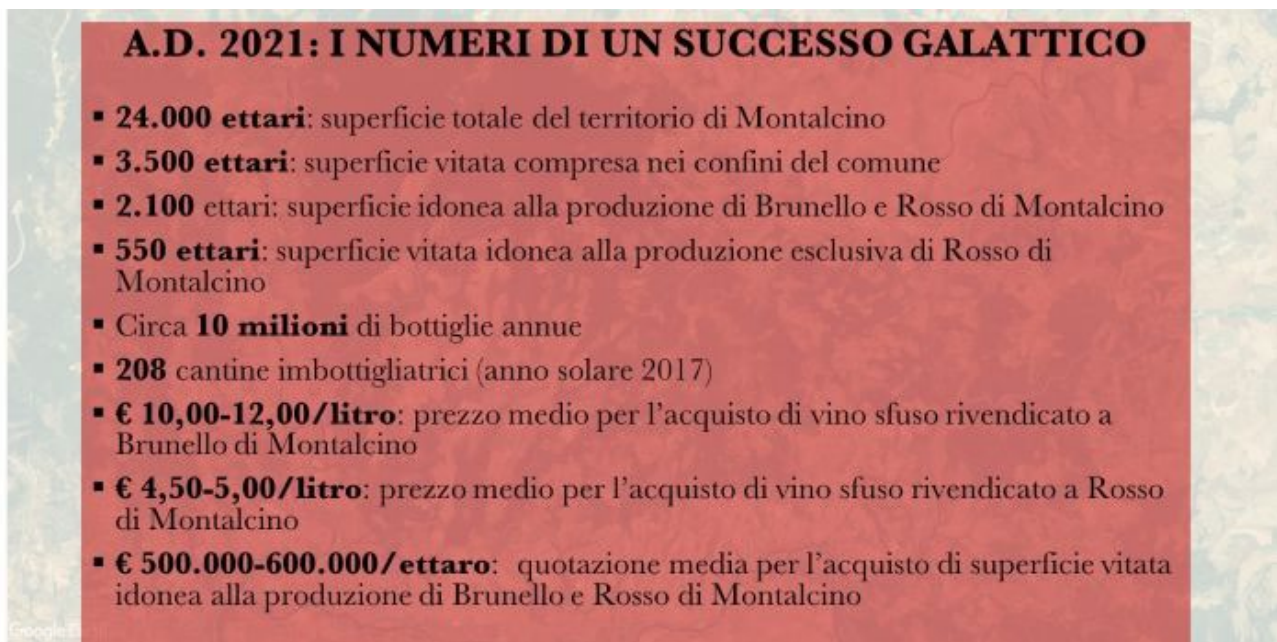


Everybody loves Brunello

We know very well that we represent the minority of the minority of the minority, you don't need to remind us. Everyone loves Brunello, and the fan base is constantly expanding, as, moreover, the first enthusiastic reports on 2019, the latest vintage released by specification, indicate. And we love it too, we'd better, because only a fool would deny the role and value of Montalcino's iconic wine. A bit like that wrong-way driver on the highway, however, we look around and remain disoriented, experiencing divergent sensations in our drinking journey. We can't always get fully in tune with the dominant style in the appellation's contemporary landscape, and we can't seem to truly cross paths with tablemates willing to talk about it, like an Alcoholics Anonymous support group.

Straining but not too much, it is as if the distinctive traits that have contributed and contribute to making Brunello a true global superstar, are the same ones that sometimes alienate the tiny niche to which we belong. Width, maturity, structure, intensity, warmth: **Sangiovese** di Montalcino regularly honours its transversal reputation as an "important" red, recognized as such at first glance even by the neophyte, without needing who knows what sensory literacy courses. For the complex aromas, the powerful body, the alcoholic richness, first and foremost, along with the other characteristics that differentiate it to the naked eye from simpler, everyday bottles.

A very strong expressive identity, at least as strong as that conveyed by a universally familiar territorial brand, impossible to confuse or forget. Among the 20 most-used Italian words in the world according to the **Dante Alighieri Society** (the top five are *pizza*, *cappuccino*, *spaghetti*, *espresso* and *tiramisu*), "Brunello" calls out a fascinating, but also challenging type. Not only because of the prices: a wine that requires a series of attentions and expedients to which those affected by the "tired drinker syndrome," as Antonio defines it with formidable effectiveness, are not always disposed. All the more so in a phase such as this, in which successive climatic, agronomic and interpretative changes seem to be hardening the textural and "southern" temperament of Montalcino Sangiovese, dampening its more tense and soaring counterweights. Strengths can easily turn into limitations when too much is triggered, and this is one of the elements we question.



Brunello vs Brunello: surfing between two millennia

The most Mediterranean of continental reds and at the same time the most continental of Mediterranean reds: the magic of the greatest Brunellos in history is all condensed in this special fusion, which no other Italian district has been able to offer at such high levels. I am thinking especially of the best successes of the 1980s and early 1990s, the golden age of Tuscan wine, at least for those of us with that idea of elegance, classicism, and perspective in mind. When compared to the nobler *Supertuscans* of Chianti Classico and Montepulciano, Montalcino's outliers really appeared to be a kind of squaring of the

circle: the "sunniest" of the "cold ones," able to hold together sweetness and austerity, flavor and rigor, pulp and backbone in an unparalleled way.

As already pointed out, the scenario has since gradually changed and the third millennium has illuminated a much more international, even *New World-style* face of Sangiovese grosso at certain junctures. Of course, this did not happen only in Montalcino: a theme addressed many times, including in our podcasts [2], so we will not repeat ourselves. The point is that, if a certain stylistic era appears to have been archived forever in several historical districts, regardless of the will of the producers, for Brunello it is a transition that risks weighing more heavily, considering its most important identity lintel.

Beyond sensory details, in fact, there is no doubt that Brunello's planetary notoriety is also largely linked to its reputation as a "great aging wine." In common feeling it is surely "the" quintessential Italian red, along with Barolo, with which to challenge the most iconic Bordeaux, Rhone, and Rioja on the terrain of longevity. A reputation built first and foremost thanks to the numerous vintages of the twentieth century found in perfect shape after ageing for more than a decade, celebrated by auction houses and collectors (starting of course with the legendary Biondi Santi Reserves). Without neglecting the fundamental role of a disciplinary that places emphasis precisely on the time element: there is no other Italian appellation that provides for the "base" type to be marketed after more than 4 years (5 for the *Riserva*), two of which in wood.

The same specification over which, however, companies in the area are also increasingly debating, without a real "solution." On the one hand, one cannot blame those who argue that it would be madness to touch it, considering the founding value mentioned earlier. On the other, it is undeniable that the more than four-year minimum aging period, two of which in wood, had a precise function when the hard core of the appellation was drawn from Sangiovese that were rough and angular to say the least, while it is legitimate to wonder whether it is entirely adapted to today's climatic, viticultural and oenological conditions.

«L'esercizio dell'arte agraria nel montuoso e sassoso territorio di questa comunità è laborioso pel villico, dispendioso pel possidente, ma l'uno e l'altro restano in qualche modo ricompensati dalla salubrità dell'aria che costà in estate si respira in mezzo a una valle non da per tutto egualmente salubre.

Le laboriose fatiche del villico, e le spese dal proprietario fatte sul pietroso terreno di Montalcino sogliono essere retribuite, quando le stagioni non lo impediscono, dall'abbondanza e squisitezza dei frutti che cotesto suolo produce, dalla quantità dell'olio, dal numero crescente dei gelsi, e soprattutto da quel graziosetto, quel sì divino Moscadelletto di Montalcino, che il Redi destinò alla delizia delle dame».

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Compilato da Emanuele Repetti, socio ordinario dell'I. e R. Accademia dei Georgofili e di varie altre (1839)



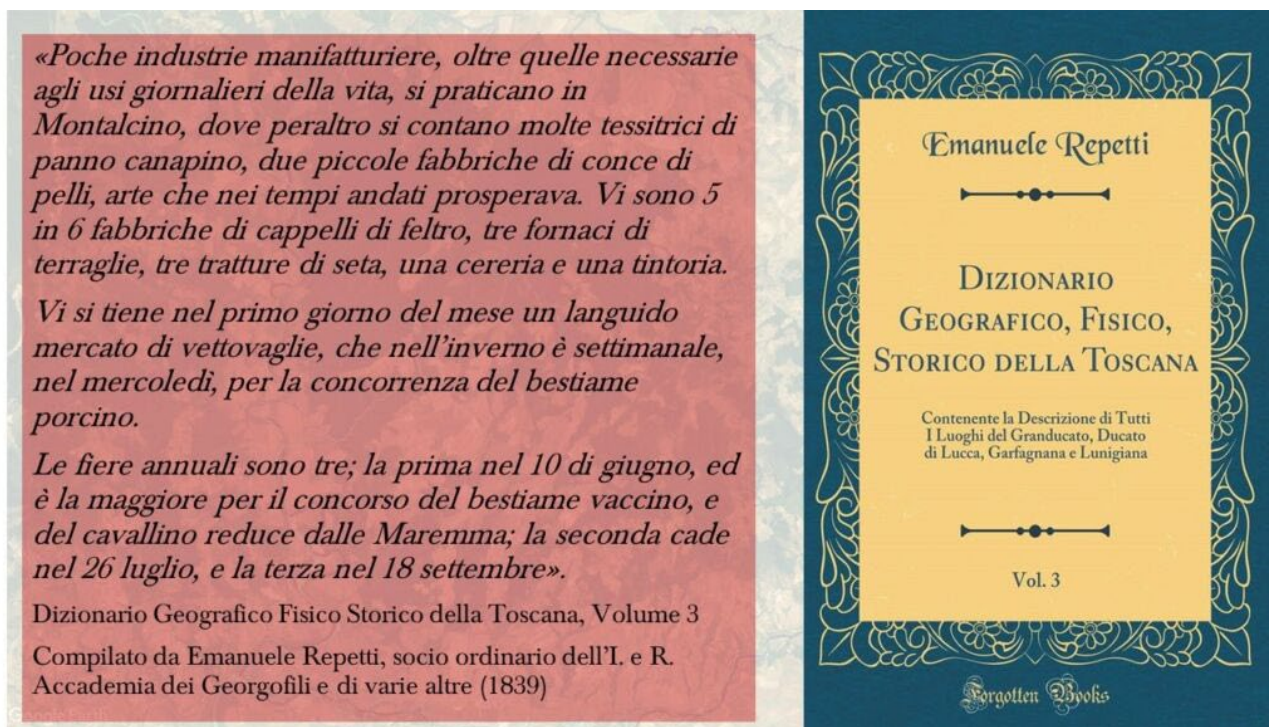
Is Brunello still an aging wine?

In my experience and sensibility, the Brunellos of the 2000s - with some exceptions - are wines that come to market already extremely ready, in several cases too much so. As we know, this does not mean that they are necessarily destined for consumption in the short term and that they cannot sail a few more decades on that mature completeness. However, there is an increasing frequency of vintages in which the huddle appears crowded with wines that cross that threshold: cooked rather than tertiary, exhausted rather than placid, ballasted, and static rather than summery and Tyrrhenian.

It is a trend that seems to involve much less Rosso di Montalcino, which has become increasingly popular with a certain segment of the public in recent years, and not only because of its more affordable costs. And it is probably one of the reasons why the Brunello specification finds itself despite itself among the suspects in this line of inquiry: Spanish *Gran Reserva* and a few other appellations aside, it carries with it the distinctly more horizontal and "oxidative" maturation protocol among those adopted by the great European reds.

In other words: can the prince of Tuscan reds still be considered an aging wine, in its strictest sense? That is, a type that not only can, but somehow **MUST** age for a long

time in the bottle before reaching the pinnacle of harmony and complexity? Judging by the evolutionary state evidenced by most Brunellos as early as 10 to 15 years after harvest, the answer may not be a flat no, but neither is it a firm yes, as far as we are concerned.



The triumph of contradictions and anachronisms

The "cross and delight" protocols are just one of the countless manifestations of the inextricable tangle of apparent contradictions and anachronisms that make Montalcino a true unicum in the European viticultural landscape.

It is at least singular, for example, that Brunello's fame is closely linked to the idea of the great aging wine, even though its worldwide success comes from wines that are decidedly more ready and approachable in the short and medium term, as well as having less defined evolutionary potential, than those that marked its pioneering epic. It is worth reiterating it is a process that affects almost all the most prestigious areas of the *Old World*, but the optimal drinking window for the best Montalcino wines is being anticipated more than elsewhere (*New World* pieces included).

Just as striking is that its final entry into the *Champions League of European Wine* coincides with a historical phase on paper that is anything but favorable for this model

of red wine. We recalled it at the beginning: with its growing glyceric opulence, Brunello is certainly not the prototype of the *vin de soif* and more generally of the "wine of the 10s," all played on aromatic freshness, vertical development, gracefulness and souplesse of drinking. Instead, it remains the red to be given as a gift and uncorked on memorable occasions, and it is evident that it would make no sense to deviate from these stylistic binaries, if we agree that they are a founding element of its triumphant recognizability.

On closer inspection, in short, these are antinomies that have more to do with fuzzy projections of certain tribes of drinkers, in which we fully include ourselves, than with objective production issues. It is as if sometimes we expect something that Brunello has perhaps never been and certainly cannot be today: a "contemporary" ease that it is not fair to ask of a "nineteenth century" wine and that, as mentioned, belongs more to the Rosso, for physiological reasons.

While it is true that Brunello has never been the bottle to gulp down in solitude away from meals, it would still be a mistake to disregard some of the indications coming from even the most steadfast admirers of the Montalcino area. Those who complain above all about the growing difficulty in identifying culinary traditions and gastronomic spaces that are fully functional in enhancing the rich rose of Brunellos as soon as one moves away from the Tuscan hills. Brutalizing: fine dining kitchens do not seem to be friends of the great Italian reds, as many fine sommeliers and dining room managers testify.

Costs and road safety legislation certainly have something to do with it, just as there is no doubt that in more prosperous and established markets (the United States in the lead) that of "gastronomic versatility" is a much less felt issue. However, the fact remains that, even in the infamous shared home tastings, a fine Brunello hardly ever pops up when there are fewer than 5-6 of us and no meat on hand. A pity, because - as with the best reds from Aglianico - it has happened to me so many times to totally enjoy at the table, calmly, wines that in technical tasting had left me much more lukewarm.



And then came the 2010 vintage

It is no coincidence that the need to share some wider-ranging reflections arose after the extensive horizontal 2010. It was a very positive group test, among the best in recent years on the Montalcino theme, with very few wines that did not live up to their blazon, excellent confirmations on a vintage that is justly celebrated, at least in those parts, and a rather homogeneous average level calibrated upward. Still, there were few enthusiastic faces around me and one could sense a general struggle to focus on the main territorial and stylistic differences, unlike what usually happens. Above all else, I think the tablemates expected something more from the "tips," those really capable of

breaking away from the group of good guys in terms of finesse and depth: legitimate expectations, if one aspires to play in the world championship of "monsters."

Beyond the technical and evaluative aspects, a retrospective on the 2010s also helps us to reconstruct some crucial passages for the events of the territory. First and foremost, by recalling the historical phase in which the vintage comes out on the market: we are in 2015, exactly sixty years after what is considered by many the totemic vintage of the appellation, celebrated also by **Wine Spectator** with the inclusion of **Biondi Santi's Brunello Riserva 1955** [3] among the ten most important wines of the 20th century. A vintage that recalls at the same time one of the most difficult periods ever for the Montalcino community, far beyond production issues, between post-war reconstruction, depopulation of the countryside and the profound changes due to the end of sharecropping.



Crediti foto: web (vi preghiamo di segnalarci i crediti specifici, in modo da inserirli in didascalia)

A watershed year in many fields, 2015 represents in many ways its symbolic alter ego. The release of the 2010s marks Brunello's definitive entry into the *Avengers of world wine*: it doesn't happen overnight, but the awarding of **Wine Advocate's 100/100** rating to no less than three 2010 Brunellos, the first time ever for Montalcino, undoubtedly stands as one of the key moments. It is in fact the highest award of the

newsletter founded by **Robert Parker** (edited in Italy by **Monica Lerner**), which in the globalized wine industry of the Third Millennium becomes a rating similar to a stock market index [4]. It was first awarded to Tenuta Nuova from Casanova di Neri and Madonna delle Grazie from Il Marroneto, later joined by Bassolino di Sopra from Pian dell'Orino (and later, with the 2016 vintage, Gianni Brunelli and again Madonna delle Grazie). These are all estates born after 1970, according to the records of the Brunello Museum.

And again speaking of key moments: around the same months the French holding company EPI Group acquired Biondi Santi. This is certainly not the first purchase involving major investors from outside Montalcino, just think - in no particular order - of Casisano (Tommasi Family Estates), Castello Romitorio (Sandro Chia), Castiglion del Bosco (Ferragamo Group and later Rosewood), Le Macioche (Cotarella family), Mastrojanni and Podere Le Ripi (Illy), Poggio Antico (Atlas Invest), Poggio di Sotto (Tipa Group), Argiano (André Santos Esteves), Podere Brizio - Poggio Landi (Alejandro Bulgheroni Family Vineyards), San Polo (Allegrini), Val di Suga (Bertani Domains), and the list could go on and on. However, the transfer to foreign hands of the winery where tradition has it that Brunello was "invented" (this is not exactly so, but this is not the right occasion to talk about it), is charged with a profoundly different meaning: the feeling that something epochal is being accomplished on that day is very powerful.



Archiving *Brunellopoli*

Compounded by the peculiar economic situation following the great financial crisis of 2008, the 2010 vintage marks a before and after for middle-class drinkers. It is the phase when the great European wines make violent price hikes, both on the starting lists and in the subsequent speculative steps of the various trade chains. First Burgundy and Bordeaux, then Rhone and Barolo; finally, Montalcino, where the escalation takes on an even more profound value considering what happened only a few years earlier.

2010 is not simply the vintage of the definitive "leap of species" in terms of communication and media, but also and above all the one that allows the district to leave behind the so-called "*Brunellopoli* scandal" [5]. Summing up to the maximum, we are talking about the investigation conducted by the *Guardia di Finanza* (Finance Guard) between 2007 and 2008 on a series of Montalcino wineries, accused of having cut their Brunello with other varieties not allowed by the disciplinary (in particular Merlot, Cabernet, Petit Verdot and Syrah). At the end of the investigation, 17 people and 7 wineries are reported to the Prosecutor's Office of Siena, while more than 1.3 million liters of Brunello di Montalcino are downgraded to IGT.

It is certainly a controversial case, but one that affects only a tiny part of Montalcino's production makeup. Yet it ends up in the spotlight for a long time, basically for two macro reasons. On the one hand because it is brought to national attention by the weekly magazine *L'Espresso*, which in the days of Vinitaly 2008 publishes an investigation baptized "VelenItaly," within which is contained the article on the affair (which actually has little to do with the main topic on the cover). On the other hand, the affair seems to lift the veil on something that so many are speculating, hinting at, half-mouthedly whispering about, without any real systemic rethinking. On the contrary, scrolling through the lists of the wines that were in vogue at that stage, and tasting them again today, it becomes crystal clear that a few more "colored" and "international" Brunellos were welcome by critics and operators. With exceptions, as usual.

At first, the combination of the judiciary investigation and the journalistic fuss has an extremely negative impact on Montalcino and its wines. In hindsight, we might even venture to argue that it played a saving role: from there on, straight bar on Sangiovese, two nodal Consortium Member Assemblies rejecting any proposal to change the

specifications (28/10/2008 and 8/11/2011) and the arduous but inexorable ascent back to that Olympus where Brunello shines as a star of first magnitude.



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Mobile hierarchies

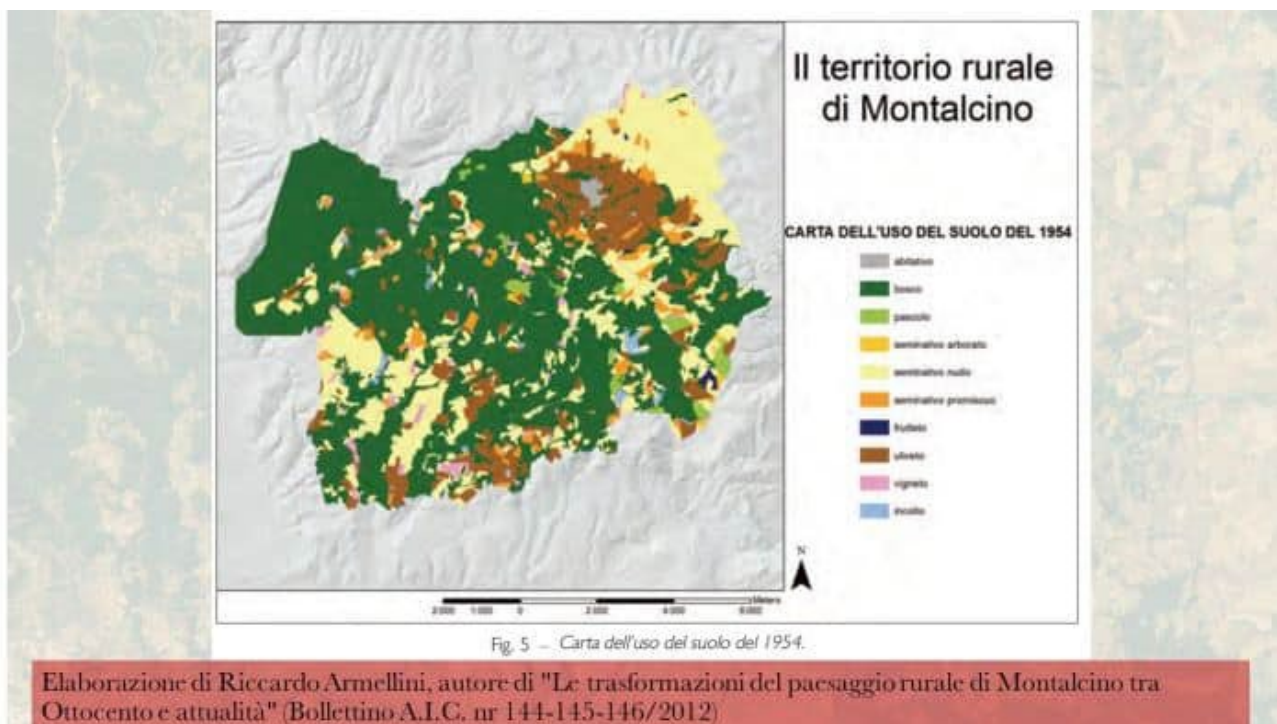
Can you imagine Burgundy suddenly finding itself without the *domaines* de la Romanée Conti, Madame Leroy's, and Armand Rousseau's? Or Bordeaux without the five *Château Première Cru Classé*? Or perhaps the Langhe of Barolo without Giacomo Conterno, Bruno Giacosa and the Mascarello, Gaja, Roagna or whoever? Because something not too distant has happened in Montalcino, hyperbole aside, if we think about the corporate and technical transformations that have affected some of the most iconic realities, starting with Biondi Santi, Soldera and Poggio di Sotto.

Yet another apparent paradox: the intercontinental boom of Brunello and its terroir materializes precisely when the absolute leaders, the long undisputed landmarks, the makers of the most highly rated and sought-after wines by wine enthusiasts and collectors, are missing or changing. Thus, bringing to the fore as never before a plural district, where a large group of companies fight for the top of the pyramid, dividing the favor of the public and the press, without there really being any names capable of bringing everyone together. As happens nowhere else, Montalcino's hit parade appears

to be profiled by about fifty labels, a shortlist from which the various publications draw to indicate their favorite Brunellos, not infrequently completely changing choices from one year to the next.

This is a phenomenon that can be interpreted in diametrically opposite ways, depending on the angle of observation. At first glance we would say that this is great news, because it means that the appellation, the district, the Montalcino brand are stronger than the individuals and any "micro" specificity. On the other hand, this lack of fixed points can also be framed as indicative of confusion, both in the critical perspective and in the reading of sub-areas, styles, vintages. The most effective example comes to us precisely from the three wines awarded with the 100 Parker Points: to assign them to producers as stylistically distant as Alessandro Mori (Il Marroneto), Giacomo Neri and family (Casanova di Neri), Caroline Probitzer and Jan Erbach (Pian dell'Orino) is to make explicit the idea that there is no ONE expressive model of reference in the Brunello universe, but that it can somehow all fit into it. For better or for worse.

At times it almost seems as if each tasting panel has its own prototype of a Brunello in its head, which with decreasing frequency anchors itself to those of other groups. This, too, is a more general trend, but the polarization of judgments evident in Montalcino is doubly striking, considering that homogeneous upward calibration from which we have been moving.



Mapping Montalcino?

Perhaps I am wrong, but I am convinced that Brunello's shifting hierarchies are also tied in knots to the real unresolved knot of its superstar years. It is since I have been professionally involved in wine, quite a few vintages ago now, that I have been hearing reasoning about the advisability of "zoning" (a misleading term, to say the least) within the appellation. It is a fact that, to date, Montalcino remains one of the very few territories ideally affiliated with the *Club of Galacticos* that has not yet endowed itself with a second-level mapping: to be clear, the one that in France takes the form of cru - classified or not - and in Italy has been concretized through the *Menzioni Geografiche Aggiuntive* (MGAs) of Barolo and Barbaresco, the UGAs of Soave and Chianti Classico, the future *Pievi* of Vino Nobile di Montepulciano and the *Nomeranze* of Dolceacqua, and so on.

The Consorzio del Vino Brunello di Montalcino started a feasibility study a long time ago and it is quite understandable that there is a real acceleration only now. As long as the area consisted of just a few realities and struggled first and foremost for survival (I am referring to the 1950s-70s), it made no sense to discuss macro-areas and sub-areas. Today that it is fully integrated into the European elite, a reflection on the "next thing" is inevitable, even more so when looking at how the oft-mentioned competitors are structured, starting with the transalpine ones. It's like winning the *Scudetto* and then moving on to play the Champions League: you have to strengthen yourself further if your ambitions are not to figure as a mere supporting player.

Again, however, there are no objectively "right" or "wrong" recipes. I have found myself changing my mind several times on the issue, and I think there are very valid arguments for taking a new step in this direction, but also for deciding to leave everything as it is. I will try to summarize them briefly below.

Mapping Montalcino: why yes

Because the Brunello and Rosso di Montalcino production area covers a very large territory (24,000 square kilometers), where vines are now grown almost everywhere.

Because in Montalcino coexist areas that from an environmental and climatic point of view are practically Maremma, alongside areas of high hills with a more "*Chiantigian*" profile, if you'll pass me the stretch.

Because over time the area planted with vines has grown from a few dozen hectares (64 in 1967, when the DOC came into force) to the current 2,100 (and about 3500 in total, counting Rosso di Montalcino, Sant'Antimo and IGT) [6].

Because there is a considerable increase with each vintage in the number of wines bearing on the label mentions of *contrade*, toponyms, vineyards, parcels.

Because macroscopic expressive differences can become apparent among the most distant wines, geographically and stylistically.



Mapping Montalcino: why not

Because Brunello is also a denomination with a very strong "blend" spirit. There are numerous wines that arise from territorial blends, both due to patrimonial and production factors.

Patrimonial factors: few historical single-body properties, further segmentation in the post-sharecropping period (*Mezzadria*).

Production factors: especially since the 1990s, at the time when the supply chain became definitively specialized, it is considered an added value to have vineyards strategically located in different areas to balance the vintage effect, all the more so in the face of a capricious variety like Sangiovese.

Because a specification that calls for such prolonged aging contributes to a wine profile for which it becomes more difficult to read the expressive nuances that differentiate macro-areas, zones, crus, in relation to what happens with types that originate from shorter mandatory aging, more set on youthful traits.

Because the Brunello di Montalcino brand is stronger than any names, of area, *contrada*, *podere*, single vineyard, estate brand, and so on, and it makes sense that it should remain the only official mention.

Mapping Montalcino: why neither yes nor no

Because geographic mapping can be done anytime, anyhow, anywhere, regardless of its use on a label, starting with data to distinguish, describe and possibly group geographic units according to criteria of homogeneity (historical, environmental, cultural, community: there is no one-size-fits-all way).

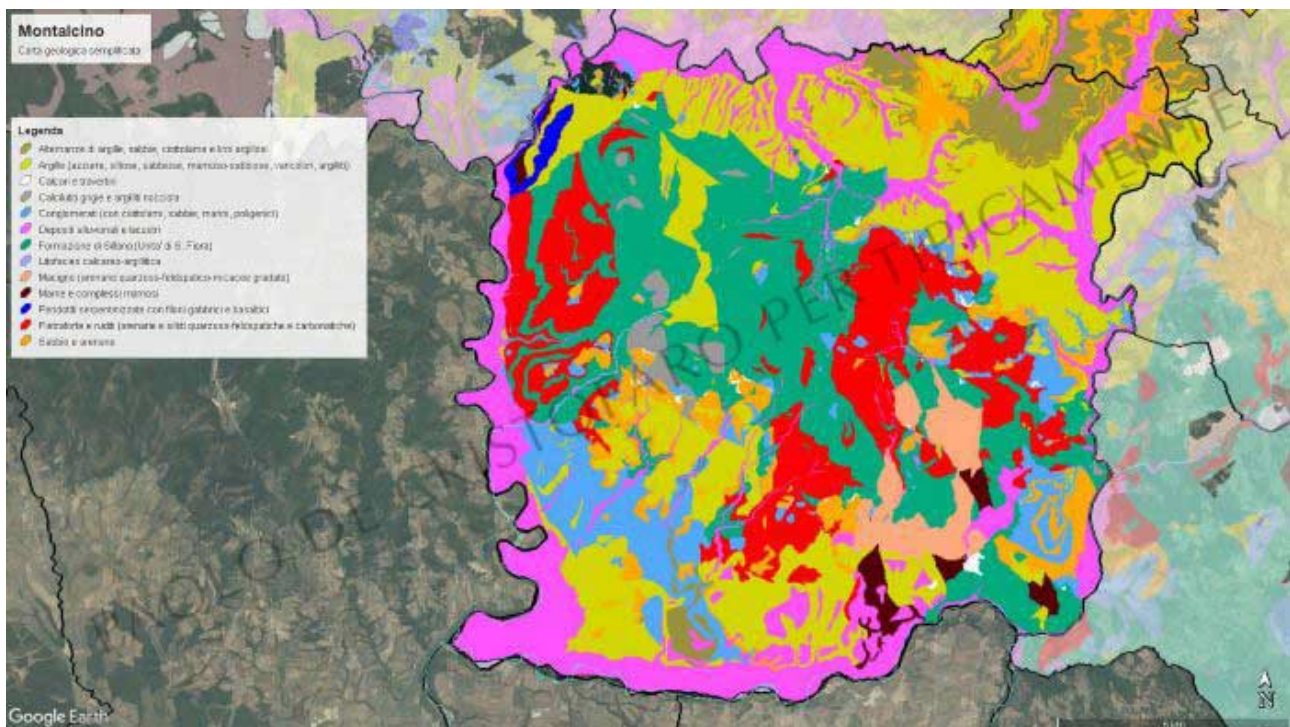
Because "expressive" mapping is slippery, to say the least, if it does not hold up to the test of facts, if the territorial differences that become apparent in wines net of viticultural, vintage, or stylistic variables are not investigated and verified in depth, in a consistent and repeatable manner over time.

Because in Montalcino the time seems ripe for the first step, urged on various fronts, but there is little chance of adopting a geographic mapping that does not cover all areas horizontally and equally, both for economic and patrimonial reasons and for agronomic and production reasons.

Because bottles in hand, one easily oscillates between opposite impressions. On the one hand, it seems rather easy to trace certain characters back to their respective macro-

areas of origin, and there are certainly circumscribed areas that mark the wines in a recognizable way (I am thinking of the Montosoli hill, but also of I Canalicchi, Tavernelle-Santa Restituta, Sesta, Piancornello, mentioning only the first ones that come to mind). On the other hand, the cards are constantly reshuffled, since it happens just as frequently to find important similarities between wines that are born in completely different places from the geo-pedoclimatic point of view, just as there can be enormous differences between wines that take shape in very close areas.

Because, summing up, such work makes sense only by fully sharing intentions and perspectives, even in light of what has happened in other areas.



What about tomorrow?

If there is one thing, I think I have learned in twenty-odd years of drinking, it is how unpredictable wine is: wine understood in its broadest sense, with all the environmental, human, sensory ramifications possible and imaginable. Which makes Nostradamus-like divinatory exercises even more useless, unrealistic, and grotesque than usual, let alone when we are dealing with the realm of Brunello, which is a black belt of unpredictability.

As is evident from some of the passages recalled in this lengthy focus, what stands out most, when delving into the Montalcino epic in detail, is its aptitude for overcoming

difficult times. Indeed, the more complicated situations become, the more this community seems to draw the energy to rise from its ashes and climb back up the slope. The numbers do not lie: after World War II, Montalcino was one of the poorest towns in Italy, with more than 10 percent of the resident population living on benefits between 1951 and 1970 and receiving medical/pharmaceutical assistance paid for by the municipality [7]. In the space of thirty years - from 1951 to 1981 - the population actually halved, from over 10,000 inhabitants to just over 5,000 [8-9]: very hard times, as Enzo Tiezzi also recounts in this fine interview with **Winesurf** that we recommend you catch up on [10].

Yet in the short span of time everything, or almost everything, changes. The acquisition of Poggio alle Mura (later renamed Castello Banfi) by the American Mariani family in 1977 consolidated the "buying campaign" in the territory inaugurated in 1973 by the Marone Cinzano family at Col d'Orcia and which continued unabated in the decades to follow. In 1978 the bottles claimed to Brunello and Vino Rosso from the Brunello vineyards exceeded one million for the first time, and by the mid-1980s Montalcino was already the seventh-largest municipality in the province of Siena by per capita income (source: *Monte dei Paschi di Siena Report* on the provincial economy). We know the rest of the story.

Never bet against Montalcino, we would, in short, conclude, refreshing the lesson. And that is why, when we ask ourselves today how and where this territory and its most important wine will be in ten-twenty-thirty-hundred years from now: we instinctively answer that they will always be there fighting at the top, precisely because of this incredible ability to absorb shocks. All united around Mister Brunello, consecrated forever as an entity greater than a collective name of frightening strength.



In conclusion

And yet questions remain, not only because of the "technical" issues we have tried so far to examine. On paper, reasoning entirely theoretically, the Montalcino area would not exactly be favored by the ongoing agronomic and climatic changes. It is equally true, however, that at this stage "Mediterranean" terroirs seem paradoxically (again) to respond better than "continental" ones to the warmer, drier, and schizophrenic weather patterns of recent seasons. One struggles, however, to discern an approach aimed at identifying common paths and countermeasures, and more generally at intercepting thinking more about the future than about this glorious present.

It is perhaps the plan that raises the most doubts. What if the Brunello community is extraordinary at reacting to the most insidious obstacles, but less trained to handle honors and triumphs? Judging, for example, by the speed and sometimes short-sightedness with which even minimally dissonant voices are branded as "unwanted": the question seems legitimate.

Again, this is certainly not unique to Montalcino, it goes without saying. Today it takes very little to end up on ideal "blacklists" if one expresses oneself in less than enthusiastic terms about the territory, wine, producer, or consortium of the day. And yet around here

the mechanism appears more explicit and less underplayed than elsewhere, as if we feel an obligation to defend, at any cost and by any means, a good that is too great and perhaps a little unexpected, at least in terms of the speed and force with which it has arrived. Which may not necessarily be a bad thing: you play it straight. Let us return, however, to the starting point. Even through these promotion and communication choices, grasping the underlying vision, guessing where the Brunello production sector imagines itself to be in a few years from now, well, it becomes more and more complicated, at least for us counter-drivers.

[1]

[Dai Social] Pillole di Wine Club #43 | Orizzontale Montalcino 2010

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[2]

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<https://www.tipicamente.it/2020/04/podcast-vino-al-vino-50-anni-s1-e2-montalcino/>

[Podcast] Vino al Vino 50 Anni Dopo [S3 E4] | Vino grande Vino

<https://www.tipicamente.it/2021/04/podcast-vino-al-vino-50-anni-dopo-s3-e4-vino-grande-vino/>

[3]

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<https://www.tipicamente.it/2017/01/tipicamente-racconta-1-brunello-montalcino-riserva-1955-biondi-santi/>

[4]

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[6]

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Federica Viola

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