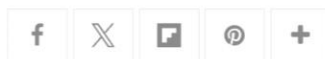


7 Stellar Brunello di Montalcino Wines to Drink Now

The 2020 vintages are delicious, stunning, and easy to drink.

By MIKE DESIMONE AND JEFF JENSSEN



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Many wine experts (including ourselves) consider Brunello di Montalcino DOCG to be the peak expression of the Sangiovese grape. And when it comes to grape nomenclature, the name “Sangiovese,” derived from the Latin *sanguis Jovis*, or blood of Jove—the Roman king of the gods—makes it even more impressive. Brunello translates as “the brown one” in local Tuscan dialect, which is how wines made in Montalcino from this little brown-colored grape came to be called Brunello di Montalcino DOCG.

We recently tasted a wide range of Brunello di Montalcinos, and for this week’s wine recommendations, we concentrated on the 2020 vintage because we found the wines to be delicious, stunning, easy to drink, and age-worthy. Although many of us have put it out of our heads, 2020 was a time of crisis in the world due to the Covid pandemic, but many winemakers in the northern hemisphere found this to be a wonderful time to be outdoors in the vineyard. They had time to watch the vines very closely and monitor grape and leaf growth without any outside distractions. The weather also cooperated with early summer rain and good water reserves to get them through the warm summer growing season, and the daytime temperatures remained moderate with plenty of nighttime cool breezes. The harvest was relaxed without the threat of rain, so vineyard workers could pick the grapes at their optimal ripeness. This combination of factors with the relaxed atmosphere in the cellars provided ideal conditions to produce excellent wines. Here are seven of our favorite 2020 Brunello di Montalcino wines.

Frescobaldi 2020 CastelGiocondo Brunello di Montalcino Tuscany Italy



The first members of the Frescobaldi family moved to Florence in the year 1,000 and are known for many accomplishments, including constructing the first wooden bridge over the Arno River. Today, Lamberto Frescobaldi's bridge has been rebuilt and is known as the Ponte Santa Trinita. The Frescobaldis are known for growing Sangiovese grapes and making excellent wine, but their family was one of the first to bring Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Pinot Nero, and Chardonnay to Tuscany. The 2020 CastelGiocondo is made from Sangiovese and has aromas of cherry, red plum, and vanilla. It is well rounded in the mouth with velvety tannins and flavors of dried cranberry, red cherry, and black plum.