

## **Brunello di Montalcino**

I tasted this range of Brunello di Montalcino at the annual event staged by the Consorzio in New York in January 2013. The 2008s showed well, with only a few wines lacking in concentration. The 2007s were substantially richer and more generous, owing in part to Riserva status but also, I believe, to the personality of the 2007 vintage. The Consorzio gives 2008 4 out of 5 stars whereas 2007 merits the full 5 stars.

### **Argiano 2008 \*\*(\*)**

*Transparent garnet brick (a surprisingly pale, evolved color). The nose is high toned and reveals spicy red fruits with a suggestion of compote. The taste is focused and offers appealing complexity and expression while lacking the density and concentration expected of a top Brunello. The aftertaste is dominated by a leathery, leafy tone. It's unclear how this will age.*

### **Banfi 2008 \*\*(\*)**

*Transparent brick to the eye. Aromatically, this 2008 has low intensity and shows spicy, baked small red fruits together with oxidative notes. The palate seems fresher and delivers modest concentration in a stylish, elegant framework.*

### **Belpoggio 2008 \*\*\*(\*)**

*Pale dark red brick. The nose is attractive, fine and subtle. There are small red fruits, spice and a warm lift. The taste offers good concentration and is well-integrated. Belpoggio's 2008 normale is stylish and long with a fine acid frame and fine-grained tannins. Already approachable, the wine will keep well for the medium term.*

### **Camigliano 2008 \*\*\*(+)**

*Pale brick garnet. The aroma is subtle, fine and warm with moderate concentration and notes of red fruit. On the palate, the wine is stylish and well-calibrated with an attractive creaminess. This 2008 is enjoyable now.*

**Camigliano Riserva 2007 \*\*\***

*Pale dark brick. Very restrained aromatically with a measure of warmth and spicy small red fruits. The palate has an elegant feel though seems somewhat diffuse. This example falls short of the concentration of a Riserva and the standard of the 2007 vintage.*

**Canalicchio di Sopra 2008 \*\*\*(\*)**

*Pale dark garnet brick. The nose is warm, lifted and creamy. There are attractive, forthcoming notes of dried spice and small red fruit. The palate gives a creamy, silky impression. The wine is particularly expressive and very well-balanced, finishing soft and also fresh and clean. A very successful 2008.*

**Canalicchio di Sopra Riserva 2007 \*\*\*(\*+)**

*Pale dark garnet brick. Aromatically, this 2007 appears reserved yet pure with a restrained complexity from barrel maturation. The wine has presence and style on the palate. It is layered with an elegant profile and considerable aromatic complexity in the finish. A touch of tannic grip provides definition. A lovely expression which will benefit from bottle aging.*

**Capanne Ricci 2008 \*\*\*(\*)**

*Pale dark red with clear garnet rim. Warm, enticing mélange of wild and dark red fruit to the nose with very good concentration. The taste is ample, accessible and offers a sweet fruit undertone. The wine is balanced with a clean, fresh finale. Well done.*

**Capanne Ricci Riserva 2007 \*\*\*(\*)**

*Pale dark red with brick rim. The aroma is marked by toasty, creamy and roasted overtones, then reveals small red fruits. In the mouth, this Riserva clearly has generous fruit, but the oak is dominant. Warm, lasting, creamy finish.*

**Castello di Velona 2007 \*\*\*\***

*Pale dark red brick. Baked red fruits to the nose, solid and full. The palate is warm and expansive, with a very generous presence. There are ripe, soft tannins and a fine backbone of acidity. This 2007 can be enjoyed in the near term.*

**Castello di Velona Riserva 2007 \*\*\*(\*+)**

*Pale dark brick. The aroma is reserved initially, then reveals an undercurrent of small red fruits. The taste is similarly held in with notable underlying concentration. There is a firm yet ripe structure. This Riserva has substance and aging potential.*

**Castello Romitorio 2008 \*\*\*(\*)**

*Pale dark red with clear purple rim. Restrained aromatically with inflections of small red fruits. The palate follows, mostly in reserve, offering generous ripe fruit and a ripe structure. Youthful and attractive, will keep.*

**Castello Romitorio Riserva 2007 \*\*\*\*(+)**

*Pale dark red brick. The aroma is pure and boasts mature dark red fruit and youthful restraint. The taste is similarly understated, with considerable strength in reserve. This has depth and a solid but not aggressive structure. The final impression is of a fine backbone of acidity.*

**Collosorbo 2008 \*\*\*\***

*Pale garnet red. Appealing, complex aromatics distinguished by small red fruits, spice and oak accents. The palate delivers considerable intensity and expressiveness. There is impressive richness and dimension along with a textured quality. The flavors are persistent and the wine displays first-rate equilibrium.*

**Collosorbo Riserva 2007 \*\*\*\*(\*)**

*Pale dark red. Alluring nose of sweet red fruits with noteworthy intensity. In the mouth, the Collosorbo Riserva is concentrated and poised. There is impeccable fruit and wood integration, and the wine has a very long and layered finish. An exceptionally stylish, compelling example.*

**Il Marroneto 2008 \*\*\*(\*)**

*Pale dark brick red. The aroma is expressive and offers scented red fruits and a peppery highlight. In the mouth, this 2008 shows good focus and intensity together with a sinewy quality. The wine remains reserved and hints at the promise of a long, generous finish. More backward than most of the 2008s.*

**Il Marroneto “Madonna delle Grazie” 2008 \*\*\*\*(+)**

*Pale dark red brick. In its multi-faceted, high-toned aroma, this single vineyard expresses sweet small red fruits and vanilla with distinct concentration. The palate gives an initial impression of being concentrated and tightly wound, then reveals an expansive aromatic profile. The aftertaste is long and precise. There is firm tannic grip and elevated acidity. This is a wine for the cellar: at least a decade before it should be touched.*

**Il Poggione 2008 \*\*\*(\*)**

*Pale red brick. The wine offers real interest aromatically with its accented, spicy, red-fruit profile. The palate is focused, well-defined and very youthful. There is noteworthy intensity and reserve. First-class normale.*

**Il Poggione 2007 \*\*\*\*(+)**

*Moderately dense dark brick red. The nose displays a warm generosity as well as depth and mature dark fruit. The taste is similarly ripe, ample, and full. The wine gains in strength in the mouth, ending with a powerful but well-matched structure. A serious normale making an interesting comparison with the 2008.*

**Il Poggione « Vigna Paganelli » Riserva 2007 \*\*\*\*(\*)**

*Moderately dense very dark brick red. The aroma is closed at first, then reveals richness and breadth, with controlled ripe red fruits and a vanilla accent. The taste is distinguished by its substance and weight. The wine is layered, chewy, long and already complex in the finish. Top-notch example.*

**La Fortuna 2008 \*\*\*(\*)**

*Pale dark brick red. Restrained, ripe dark red fruit and solid concentration to the nose. There is excellent volume and dimension in the mouth, if youthfully held back. The finish is long and expansive.*

**La Fortuna Riserva 2007 \*\*\*(+)**

*Dense very dark brick red. Quite ripe and ample to the nose with an element of cherry compote. The wine is large-scaled, chewy and very ripe in its taste. There is a faint vegetal note. This is a big Brunello but misses a degree of purity and elegance.*

**La Magia 2008 \*\*\*(\*+)**

*Moderately dense dark red brick with faint purple rim. The nose is inviting in its pure, inviting fruit accents complemented by a warm, creamy quality. The palate is sensual, ample and giving, with excellent balance and overall mouthfeel. The wine leaves a soft, round finale. Lovely, harmonious wine.*

**La Magia Riserva 2007 \*\*\*\*(\*)**

*Moderately dense dark red. The Riserva shows a great deal of restraint as well as depth in its aroma, with evident warm, ripe, high-class red fruits. The taste is characterized by its attractive, generous and mature fruit qualities. The wine gains in warmth and generosity across the palate and is well-knit, with elevated but ripe acidity and tannin balancing its rich fruit. Outstanding potential.*

**Le 7 Camicie 2007 \*\*\*\*(+)**

*Moderately dense plus very dark brick with a light tawny cast. The aroma is ample and ripe, offering very ripe dark red fruits and an oaky complement. The nose is inviting and warm with spicy and roasted highlights. The taste is similarly marked by a sweet ripeness and is notably full and expansive. There are spice and wood accents and very fine acidity in the finish. A distinctive style.*

**Palazzo 2008 \*\*\*\*(+)**

*Pale dark brick. The aroma is forward and reveals a generous mix of ripe red fruits and oak spice, with ample lift and a creamy quality. Ripe and mouth-filling, this 2008 delivers noteworthy integration and a lasting, nuanced, creamy aftertaste with fine, elegant acidity. An excellent normale.*

**Palazzo Riserva 2007 \*\*\*\*(\*)**

*Pale very dark brick. There is impressive concentration and complexity to the nose, which is full and deep. Fruit and oak are married beautifully. The palate delivers layered flavors and gains in complexity and expression. There is striking length: the finish goes on and on, and leaves a multidimensional and particularly generous impression. Both Palazzo wines testify to serious winemaking.*

**Sassetti Livio-Pertimali 2008 \*\*\*(\*+)**

*Pale dark brick with faint brown at rim. The aroma possesses sweet, toasty, leathery overtones with hidden concentration. On the palate, this 2008 is more revealing, offering excellent volume, body and staying power. There is a ripe structure backing the wine's richness.*

**Sassetti Livio-Pertimali Riserva 2007 \*\*\*\*(\*)**

*Moderately dense very dark brick. Largely held in aromatically, showing controlled ripeness, depth and nascent complexity. The taste has a sensual and generous feel. The wine starts slowly and then opens and lasts, offering a fresh, well-knit finish. A very classy Brunello with solid aging potential.*

**Tenute Silvio Nardi 2008 \*\*\*\*(+)**

*Pale dark brick. Spicy, open and lifted mélange of red fruits and oak. The palate shows beautiful balance and composure. There are inflected red fruit notes, and the finish is long and fresh. Finely tuned and precise.*

**Uccelliera 2008 \*\*\*(+)**

*Pale very dark brick. Attractive aroma with spicy and leathery highlights. The palate is rather tightly constructed and mid-weight, missing some concentration at the center. Firm, well-defined finale. This may come out more with time.*

**Uccelliera Riserva 2007 \*\*\*(\*+)**

*Moderately dense plus very dark brick. Ripe, substantial nose dominated by barrel maturation. The palate has considerable body and a sense of overall equilibrium. The attack is muted, and the wine reveals more of its potential in the finish. There is reserved concentration and a fresh frame holding it in. Needs cellaring to show its quality.*