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# Brunello di Montalcino 2006—a 93-point vintage

Get a first peek at the scores of the newest wine releases.

BY MONICA LARNER



At the dawn of the New Year, wine producers in Montalcino line up at the Consortium to pick up the pink DOCG ribbons that officially proclaim the wine they have been so carefully safeguarding and aging over the past five years: Brunello di Montalcino. It's ready to be shipped to market and reviewed by the wine press.

Following an intense blind tasting held at the Consortium headquarters in Tuscany, Wine Enthusiast is pleased to confirm that 2006 does indeed deliver on its promise of an excellent vintage. Using our 100-point scale, we award it 93 points.

Overall, 2006 stands out in terms of quality and elegance. This is not an overblown or overpowering vintage. Instead, as a group, the wines show balanced acidity, tight tannins (that in most cases will require from 5 to 10 years of cellar aging to soften) and beautiful aromas that speak highly of Sangiovese Grosso (the clone of Sangiovese used to make Brunello). Those nuances include fresh wild berries, cassis, dark cherry, almond, moist earth, tobacco and pressed blue flowers.

The impressive consistency of the vintage should also be underscored. You'll see from the notes posted below that most samples scored above 90 points and many of these are grouped in the 92 and 93 point range. The quality and consistency found in this vintage could not come at a more apt time.

Three years ago, Montalcino suffered from an alleged blending scandal (an undisclosed number of wineries were reportedly investigated for illegally using outside grapes, such as Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon). Although full details of the investigations were never disclosed, "Brunellogate," as the scandal was dubbed by the Italian press, delivered a painful blow to the image and confidence of Brunello.

The 2006 vintage, on the other hand, loudly speaks the language of Sangiovese and its territory. In my mind, this vintage marks the symbolic end to those years of suspicion.

Below you'll find scores and abbreviated notes for 126 samples of Brunello di Montalcino from the 2006 vintage. Note that for many wines, U.S. pricing is yet to be established. Full reviews will be published in the April, 2011 issue of the Wine Enthusiast Magazine.

Tomorrow, read reviews of vineyard-designate 2006 Brunello and 2005 Riservas.

To check out backstage at Brunello footage, [click here](#).

94

**Valdicava 2006 Brunello di Montalcino, \$NA. Cellar Selection.**

This Brunello needs at least another 5-10 years of cellaring. It's rich and complex, with tight, solid tannins.

93

**Biondi-Santi Tenuta Greppo 2006 Brunello di Montalcino, \$NA. Cellar Selection.**

Immediate elegance and harmony with light touches of almond, wild berry, white chocolate and dark spice. Very clean and fresh.

93

**Canalicchio Franco Pacenti 2006 Brunello di Montalcino, \$NA.**

Loads of pure cinnamon stick and nutmeg make for a sweet and penetrating nose. Clove, smoke and mature fruit appear on the close.

93

**Castelgiocondo 2006 Brunello di Montalcino, \$53.**

This Brunello opens with ripe fruit and cherry aromas. It offers a smooth, rich finish and great persistence on the finish.

93

**Castello Romitorio 2006 Brunello di Montalcino, \$45. Editors' Choice.**

Very rich, round and plush, with excellent dimension and staying power. Smooth fruit flavors color the long fade.

93

**Castiglion del Bosco 2006 Brunello di Montalcino, \$55.**

Plush and softly textured, this modern expression boasts generous tones of black fruit with smooth tannins.

93

**Collosorbo 2006 Brunello di Montalcino, \$60.**

A thick, masculine expression with loads of rich spice and tobacco. Integrated oak notes are expressed as vanilla and tobacco.

93

**Corte Pavone 2006 Brunello di Montalcino, \$NA. Cellar Selection.**

Austere and sophisticated with dark chocolate and black cherry intensity. Needs time to age. Drink after 2015.

93

**Fornacina 2006 Brunello di Montalcino, \$55.**

Palatable and plush, opulent and rich. Smoky graphite notes come on the heels of plush red fruit, cherry and mesquite.

93

**Il Paradiso di Frassina 2006 Brunello di Montalcino, \$45.**

Here's an inky black Brunello with ripe raspberry, resin, cola and tar. Tight tannins follow a polished mouthfeel.

93

**Il Poggione 2006 Brunello di Montalcino, \$80.**

A dark, hearty wine with deep, modern extraction. Rich aromas of cinnamon, mesquite, chocolate and rum cake.

93

**La Fortuna 2006 Brunello di Montalcino, \$45. Editors' Choice.**

Pleasurable and seductive, with loads of rich softness. Packed tight with personality and depth with chocolate and cherry. Good value.

93

**La Mannella 2006 Brunello di Montalcino, \$NA.**

Inky and dense, with loads of rich opulence. Bright fruit tones and lingering spice make a beautiful balance.