

# CIACCI PICCOLOMINI D'ARAGONA

Montalcino

My introduction to this estate was in 1989 when I was presented with a bottle of Ciacci Brunello 1984, perhaps the worst ever vintage for the zone. Moreover, this came at a time when I had no interest in taking on a new producer from Montalcino. To say that I had no anticipation of being moved is understatement. But the wine was remarkable – rich and clean, deep yet clear in expression. I simply can't resist the temptation when the quality is outstanding and Ciacci has never disappointed.

The estate consisted of 1250 acres; huge by Montalcino standards, but unfortunately, only a dozen of these were vineyard. Giuseppe, a man with vision, immediately began the process of transforming the property into an archetypal Tuscan agrarian masterpiece, adding choice honey and virgin olive oil to the product list. In reorganizing the land, the first decision was to emphasize the Pianrosso area for new vineyards. This spectacular precipitous tract of land faces south and down to the shimmering Orcia River. This is the southeastern corner of the Montalcino appellation, where the galestro soil is enriched by iron insolubles that yield characteristics to Ciacci's wine. The vineyards are all organically fertilized, and the microclimate here is so favorable as to allow the avoidance of systemic

antiparasitic treatments. The crops are held 25% lower than those admitted by the appellation laws, thus enhancing the concentration in the wines. The vinification and aging cellars were overhauled as well; out with the old barrels and in with the new, including assorted



woods and sizes of smaller cooerage. The coming of age of Paolo Bianchini, Giuseppe's son and Italian National Amateur Cycling Champion, has redoubled the intensity of the Ciacci renovation. The Bianchini tandem has accomplished much: 65 acres of vineyards in production, 23 acres recently planted, 100 acres of Olive grove, and swarms of bees buzzing over acacia, chestnut, clover eucalyptus, sunflower and a thousand other blossoms. Not to mention the estate's ranking among the elite of Montalcino.

Ciacci's Brunello is deep, racy, rich and tightly knit; extremely generous in fruit and soft tannins, mellowed by a long wood aging that laces the fruit with hints of cedar, vanilla and licorice. A wine of great intensity, elegance and longevity. The Rosso di Montalcino is more friendly, exuberant and youthful, yet powerful, lush and round on the

Tuscany palate, with concentrated Sangiovese berry-fruit. "Ateo" (meaning Atheist) a non-D.O.C. wine produced since 1989, was conceived almost in defiance of the laws that govern the production of Brunello: aged in barrique and always less than two years and thought it will always be at least half from sangiovese, substantial percentages of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot will also be employed. Unlike Brunello's fixed dogma, the guidelines for making Ateo are and will remain flexible, thus allowing for the particular nature of the harvest.

Starting with the 1998 vintage Ciacci has produced a Syrah titled "Fabius" after the Palazzo's architect. Aged in barriques of French and American oak for 10 months, and about the same in bottle, this potent, deep-pigmented wine borders on the extravagant. But this impression of excess is vanquished, redeemed by a wealth of soft tannins and a winning, blithe personality.

## Ateo

Zone: *Castelnuovo dell'Abate*  
Varietals: *Sangiovese, Cab. Sauvignon, Merlot*  
*Vineyard extension and production are vintage dependant and may vary between 15,000-20,000 btl/s.*

## Brunello di Montalcino & Rosso di Montalcino

Zone: *Castelnuovo dell'Abate*  
Crus: *Pianrosso*  
Varietal: *Sangiovese*  
Vineyard Ext: *19 hectares*  
Average Prod.: *50,000 bottles*

## Brunello di Montalcino "Riserva"

## Sant'Antimo Rosso "Fabius"