

W.E. Takes on 2007 Brunello Selezione and 2006 Brunello Riserva

Wine Enthusiast rates the buzzed about vineyard designates and Riservas.

BY MONICA LARNER



Last week, *Wine Enthusiast Magazine's* Italian Editor, Monica Lerner, tasted more than 135 samples of 2007 Brunello di Montalcino, 25 Brunello vineyard designates or Selezioni, and 95 Brunello di Montalcino Riservas. *W.E.* also received 41 samples of Rosso di Montalcino from 2010 and 2009, thanks to the Consorzio del Vino Brunello di Montalcino, the local vintners' association.

Now, we bring you the top 40 wines representing Brunello 2007 Selezione and 2006 Riserva, with abbreviated reviews below. The two vintages in question—2006 and 2007—represent different expressions of Brunello. 2006 is compelling with its firm composure, high acidity and a sharp, tonic mouthfeel. These are streamlined, elegant wines with enormous potential for long cellar aging; they're well built yet still sharp at this young age. In fact, the 2006 Riservas should not be opened for another five to ten years, at minimum.

The 2007 vintage, on the other hand, delivers buxom beauty with softer lines, enormous richness, impressive structure and opulence in the mouth. The acidity is not as sharp as 2006, but Sangiovese is a naturally acidic variety, with freshness, balance and thicker extractions.

The fruit component in this vintage is rich with crème de cassis, black currant and wild berry. While past vintages have been dominated by bold cherry, the 2007 is definitely more nuanced. These wines are ready to drink sooner than is typical for the wines of the region, but they also show excellent aging potential because of their firm, velvety structure. The tannic ripeness makes them generous and approachable.

Most estates performed consistently well in 2006 and 2007, though there was more variability in 2006 in certain locations. For example, vineyards in the lower, slightly warmer subzones of the Montalcino denomination tended to show more balance in 2006. The 2007 vintage, with its cool summer and dry conditions, showed positive results across the Montalcino area, even in the coolest, north-facing subzones.

94 Tenuta Vitanza 2006 Brunello di Montalcino Riserva

Inky black concentration is followed by beautiful tones of black mineral, licorice, peppercorn and ripe fruit. This is a dark, brooding Brunello with an elegant, dry nose followed by opulent flavor layers that build momentum. Round, rich and well structured. Drink after 2018. Vintners Estate Direct Importing.

abv. 14.5% Price: \$75