Marchesi
ANTINORI
26 GENERAZIONI

Cont'Ugo 2012

Classification
Bolgheri DOC Rosso

Vintage
2012

Climate
The early months of the year 2012 were rather cold and were marked by abundant snowfall during the month of February, an unusual phenomenon along the Tuscan coast. Bud-burst took place in a regular fashion, but with a relatively small number of potential grape bunches. The final period of spring and the initial period of summer were hot and dry, limiting as a consequence the growth and development of the bunches and leading to a small production per vine. This weather, in addition to the low fertility, led to a 20% reduction in the size of the crop. If the crop was small in size, quality was higher than might have been expected in so torrid a vintage – excellent grapes, a bracing acidity, and, above all, high level tannins. The 2012 vintage demonstrated, once again, that the Bolgheri appellation can produce excellent wine even in the hottest years. The morphology of the terrain and the nearby presence of the sea succeed in mitigating high summer temperatures and preventing the vine stress which can compromise a balanced and proper ripening of the grapes.

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Vinification

The choice of the grapes was made from the over 100 acres (40 hectares) of Merlot in the estate's vineyards. After hand picking and a careful selection in the cellar, the grapes fermented in temperature-controlled stainless steel tanks for a period of 25 days. Fermentation temperatures were regulated on the basis of the ripeness level of the various lots: some at lower temperatures to maximize aromatic freshness, others at approximately 86° Fahrenheit (30° centigrade) to fully bring out structure and richness. The different styles of Merlot went separately into oak barrels for aging. The malolactic fermentation took place in barrel – 30% new - as well and was completed by the end of the year. After eight months of oak aging, the wine was blended and was then put back into barrels for a final four months of aging. Bottling preceded a six further months of bottle aging before commercial release.

Historical Data

The Guado al Tasso estate is located in the small, but prestigious, Bolgheri appellation on the coast Tuscany's Upper Maremma, some 60 miles (100 kilometers) to the southwest of the city of Florence. This appellation has a relatively short history (it was created in 1994) but can boast a worldwide fame as a reference point wine on the international scene. The estates covers an area of about 320 hectares (790 acres) planted to vines, in a splendid plain surrounded by hills known as "the Bolgheri amphitheater" for its particular geographical conformation. The Guado al Tasso vineyards consist principally of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, and Vermentino grapes; this last cultivated with both with white and red varieties. There is also a small presence of Grenache, Petit Verdot, Viognier and Sémillon. They enjoy a mild climate due to the nearby presence of the Mediterranean Sea, constant breezes mitigate summer heat, and the rigors of winter clear the sky and maintain a high degree of solar light and radiation. Cont'Ugo is produced exclusively from Merlot grapes in order to interpret the territory of Bolgheri from a new perspective. The vineyards, situated at an altitude between 150 and 200 feet (45-60 meters) above sea level on clayey-loam soils prevalently of alluvial origin, gave Cont'Ugo great depth and complexity while conserving the fragrance and richness of fruit which are typical of Merlot.

Tasting Notes

The nose of the wine shows intense notes of plums, cherries, and raspberries in addition to wild berry fruit and spices. The palate is distinguished by its roundness and amplitude. A wine of great drinking pleasure and depth, characterized by a finish and aftertaste bursting with fruit.

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