

# Diamond Series



## Valdicava

It is a historical fact that the wines produced in the hills south of the City of Sienna in Central Italy have been of particular quality since the Fifteenth Century. However, it is only during the past century and a half that the wines of Montalcino (about 30 miles south southeast from Sienna) have gained preeminence among Italy's highest caliber wines.

A great deal of credit can be given to the founder of the modern Brunello movement, Ferruccio Biondi-Santi, who, in the late Nineteenth Century is credited with abandoning the process of uvaggio or the mixing of different grape varieties in favor of a single variety, the Sangiovese, to produce a single, distinctive wine.

The name Brunello literally means little brown wine, and refers directly to the Sangiovese Piccolo, a variety of Sangiovese that produces small berries that lead to incredible flavor profiles for the grapes.

In 1953, Martini Bramente bought an old estate called Valdicava in the famous Montosoli Valley (home to the very finest Brunello wineries). He began selling his grapes to the original Biondi-Santi Winery whose wines were already famous throughout Europe and other parts of the world.

By 1968, Bramente ventured out into the winery end of the business and produced the first Valdicava Brunello. It wasn't until fifteen years later that his grandson, Vincenzo Abbruzzese, took over the business that Valdicava's estate wines began spiraling unswervingly upward.

Abbruzzese, now in his late 40's, left a law enforcement background and literally put his heart and soul into the winery. By then, the consorzio (Consorzio del Vino Brunello di Montalcino) formed by the brunello vintners to control quality in the region was in place, a fact that allowed the legend of Brunello di Montalcino to become a reality within the Italian wine

world. Without the consorzio's ultra tight, ultimate control parameters, it is doubtful the region's wines would have achieved such success in so short a period of time.

A hands-on owner both on the growing and producing side, Abbruzzese slowly gathered an all-important staff to help guide Valdicava to the top. He stopped at nothing to insure his wine's success. His winemaking philosophy and methods of production became renowned within the confines of Montalcino and was copied by other aggressive wineries and winemakers.

Valdicava's method was a study in directness and persistence. First, he took grapes from nine different single vineyards and crushed each into separate barrels. Then he selected the best to be included in the Valdicava Brunello based on each wine's flavor

profiles. The result was a formidable wine of great intensity that would age for a number of years both in the barrel and bottle.

"It was a hard job to accomplish, but in my heart I knew we could do it," recalled Abbruzzese. "Our soils and methods of growing are very thought out and make use of the land and surroundings. When I started, I had a distinct wine in mind, and I now firmly believe we have achieved our goal."

If critical acclaim is any measure of success, then the Valdicava Brunello di Montalcino sits in rarified air. In addition to numerous International awards and scores, his recent Wine Spectator scores put him near the

head of the Brunello class. His latest release scored a perfect 100, one of only two Brunellos to receive such a score in the history of the publication.

Through it all, Vincenzo Abbruzzese has remained on an even keel. Visitors to the winery are amazed that the place is a basic working winery, practically devoid of many of the subtle nuances that are found at other equally famous wineries.

### Brunello di Montalcino



VALDICAVA 2003



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Vincenzo Abbruzzese — Owner



The emphasis at Valdicava is strictly on business and professionalism, with little importance paid to visitors or the many tourists who frequent the area.

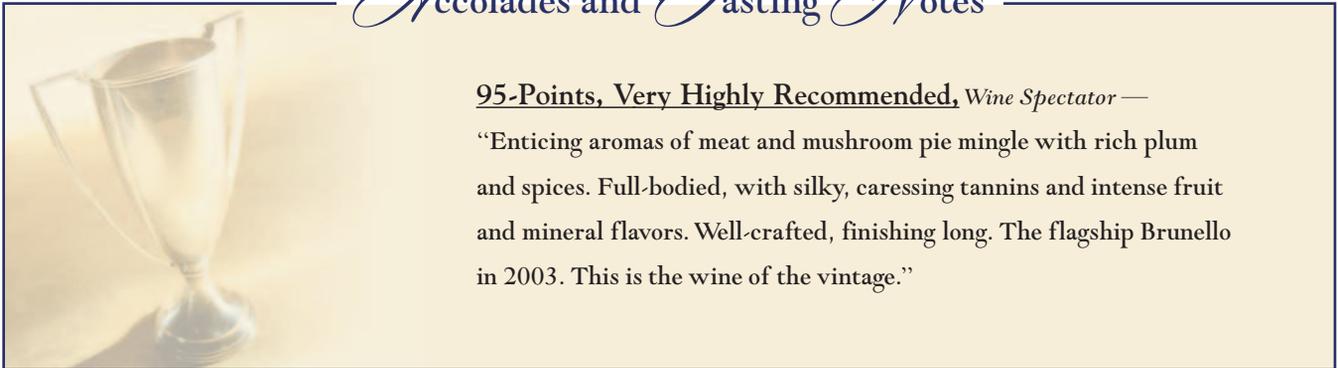
“We have our job to do,” added Abbruzzese, “and making our wines the best they can be is our main concern. Anyone who visits can always try and make an appointment, but we really aren’t equipped for visitors.”

In many ways, Valdicava is a purist winery in every sense, and a model that many other wineries and winemakers would prefer to mold themselves after. Valdicava has risen to the very top of the Italian wine industry and seems destined to stay there for some time, that’s if Vincenzo Abbruzzese has his way about it.

We salute this month’s *Diamond Series* Selection from Italy’s storied Montalcino Region.

Bravo Valdicava Brunello!

## Accolades and Tasting Notes



**95-Points, Very Highly Recommended, *Wine Spectator* —**

“Enticing aromas of meat and mushroom pie mingle with rich plum and spices. Full-bodied, with silky, caressing tannins and intense fruit and mineral flavors. Well-crafted, finishing long. The flagship Brunello in 2003. This is the wine of the vintage.”

## Reorder

It's not often a winery can continually release 95+ rated vintages, but it's become a regular occurrence at Valdicava, including an impossible 100-point-rated wine for their 2001 vintage. The concept at Valdicava is to first nurture a great respect for the tradition and flavors of Montalcino, while at the same time valuing their own individual character. With just 800 cases produced, the 2003 Brunello di Montalcino is a stunning Italian masterpiece with a rare, legendary reputation.

Winery Direct: \$136.00

**Diamond Series Price:**  
3 bottles-\$125.00 / bottle  
6 bottles-\$119.00 / bottle  
12 bottles-\$110.00 / bottle  
(Plus shipping)

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