

# A TUSCAN TRADITION

After seven generations, Biondi-Santi continues to make magnificent wines. BY EUNICE FRIED

**IT BEGAN IN THE LATE 1800S** with Ferruccio Biondi Santi, who built on the work begun by his grandfather, Clemente Santi, and produced the first Biondi-Santi Brunello di Montalcino. Today, seven generations later, the Biondi Santi family still produces the wine at its Tenuta Greppo estate in the Montalcino commune of Tuscany, with the wine still considered among the greatest of Tuscan wines.

Brunello di Montalcino is a product of the Sangiovese Grosso grape, generally recognized as resulting in a long-lived wine. Biondi-Santi's Brunello di Montalcino is particularly known to age well into the decades, especially its riserva, the version into which the family puts much of its effort. The riserva, the Biondi Santis say, represents the heart of the family, and they retained the wine's style throughout the years, producing its riservas from the family's oldest vineyards. As might be expected for wines of this caliber, Biondi-Santi is not inexpensive, ranging, depending on the vintage, \$150–600 or more.

At a recent dinner with the current head of the wine company, seventh-generation Tancredi Biondi Santi, we began the meal with his Brunello di Montalcino 2013 and 2012. The 2013 displayed the wine's general finesse and elegance plus a sturdy yet smooth structure and a most appealing taste. Even at this age, it displayed the promise of a long life. The 2012 displayed hints of ripe berries, cherry and herbs and showed balance and refinement.

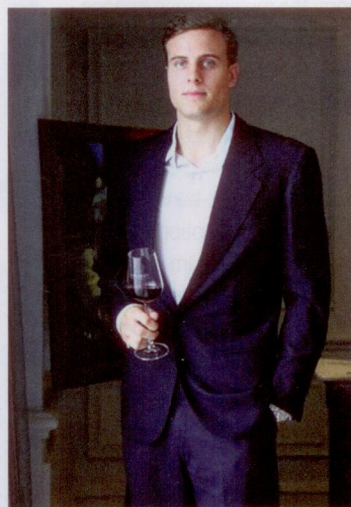
As the meal progressed, we moved to the riservas. Biondi-Santi's 2011 Riserva proved a magnificent blend of ripe fruit aromas and bright acidity, a wine that can be enjoyed now and will no doubt mature into an even more satisfying wine.

The 2006, a particularly good vintage, displayed the scent of wild berries blended with spice, an exceptionally well-balanced, delicious wine.

And finally, the extraordinary 1995 — elegant, complex, well-structured, sumptuous and memorable.

As an elder Biondi Santi once said, time can be a wine's best friend or its worst enemy. Considering the many empty glasses at the end of the dinner, time and Biondi-Santi wines definitely have become the best of friends.

*Italy, the largest wine producer in the world, averages nearly 5 million tons of wine production a year.*



**HEART OF THE FAMILY:**  
Biondi-Santi vineyard (top), bottle of Biondi-Santi Riserva 1995, and Tancredi Biondi Santi

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