

Banfi in Montalcino: A beautiful story

It was 1978 when the two Mariani brothers, John and Harry, purchased their first vineyards around Montalcino in southern Tuscany, and began the project that eventually became Castello Banfi.

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Banfi vineyards Credit: I Franchini

By the time of the last acquisition in the region, in 1983, the estate had grown to nearly 3,000 hectares, one third of which comprises a constellation of single vineyards, with the remainder occupied by olive groves, wheat fields, plum trees, forest and scrub. Since then, forty years of extraordinary passion, of ongoing and compelling challenges, and of unique success have gone by. In just four decades, Banfi has played out a beautiful story that can be told through the four pillars that have accompanied it: pioneering, research, innovation and sustainability.

Exploring new frontiers and looking to the future, while remaining firmly anchored in traditions and origins is the spirit that has always inspired Banfi, which has always been a firm believer in the enormous winemaking potential of the territory of Montalcino and its native grape, Sangiovese, for the production of Brunello. Pioneering at Banfi, means innovations in the cellars, as well as the development of a modern concept of hospitality. It also means the formation and spread of a culture of wine, which reaches its peak in the projects of the Banfi Foundation, in particular with Sanguis Jovis – Alta Scuola del Sangiovese.



Cristina Mariani-May. Credit: Gianni Rizzotti

Cristina Mariani-May, the third generation of the family and CEO, says: “From the day we started tilling ground in Montalcino, the goal has been to elevate all Brunello – to do whatever we could do for Banfi and for our neighbours to raise the quality and awareness of Brunello di Montalcino worldwide. We believe in educating people about the beauty of Montalcino, and one highly successful strategy has been in attracting people to the town through our hospitality centre, Il Borgo. Once people visit Montalcino, experience the people, the food, the culture and the landscape, and drink the amazing wines that we all make, us and our neighbours, it sticks with them – they become lifetime fans and ambassadors of Brunello.”

We deal with knowledge, study, research, and experimentation, with the aim of discovering and defining a unique territory in the world and enhancing company business. For Banfi, research represents a cross-cutting and ever-changing concept, from the vineyard to the cellar. In fact, many different research projects have been carried out and reported on in the publication *The Pursuit of Excellence*.

However, the results of the research must be transformed into concrete, modern innovations that are perfectly integrated with the environment in which the company operates. Innovations come both in the vineyards and in the cellars, and aim to skillfully use avantgarde technologies to help make elegant and balanced wines, while respecting the territory of origin.



Credit: A Brookshaw

Banfi is the guardian of a fantastic territory in which it has been operating for 40 years. Its commitment, as certified in the annual Sustainability Report is to preserve and deliver to future generations a territory even healthier, more intact and even better to live in than the present territory.

“As a company whose product comes from the land, we know that success comes with respect for the environment,” says Cristina Mariani-May, “our work for sustainability must continue to evolve, taking into account the fact that every action must be socially fair, safe for the environment and economically sustainable. Operating in a sustainable way should improve our relationship with the environment without, however, hindering the quality of production. Our responsibility is to this place and all that it has represented for centuries and will continue to represent for hundreds more years to come.”

In 2018 the company celebrated its 40th anniversary with a series of events in Italy and around the world, the last of which will be held in London in March 2019. In recent years, love for Tuscany has led Banfi to new, promising areas in the region, such as Bolgheri, Maremma, Chianti and Chianti Classico. The bond with Piedmont, which dates back to the same years as the foundation of Banfi in Montalcino, is much older.

Poggio alle Mura, Brunello di Montalcino DOCG 2014



Poggio alle Mura, Brunello di Montalcino DOCG 2014

Brunello from estate vineyards that long-established zonation studies have identified as the most suitable for Sangiovese.

A cold and rainy year when meticulous grape selection was completely fundamental. Defoliating the vines gave good ventilation to the grapes and the vineyard was often double picked during the harvest. Even in the cellars we worked with the utmost care, our state-of-the-art sorting systems allowing us to select only the best grapes, and very short post-fermentation macerations prevented the extraction of unripe tannins. Ageing was 30% in large French oak casks of 90 and 60 hl and 70% in 350 lt French oak barriques.

The result is an elegant and balanced Brunello, with a good length, complex and sweet aromas and smooth but significant structure and a nice touch of acidity on the finish.

Good with rich and complex dishes like braised wild boar, but also good with very savoury food such as aged cheeses or meats. Complexity makes it also possible to drink as a meditation wine.

Alcohol: 14%

Suggested serving temperature: 16-18°C

First vintage produced: 1997