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Castiglion del Bosco Hits Its Stride

Fashion mogul Massimo Ferragamo taps the potential of his Montalcino estate

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He may be more familiar with Madison Avenue than Montalcino, yet Massimo Ferragamo, the chairman of his family's fashion empire, is making excellent wines from his 4,900-acre estate in Tuscany's Brunello di Montalcino.

With 141 acres planted to Sangiovese for Brunello di Montalcino, [Castiglion del Bosco](#) produces three wines: Brunello di Montalcino, the single-vineyard Campo del Drago and Millicento Riserva. An additional 12 acres is devoted to Rosso di Montalcino.

Ferragamo purchased the estate in 2003. Located in the northwestern part of the zone, an isolated tract of wild forest surrounds the vineyards, all part of the Val d'Orcia Artistic, Natural and Cultural Park. "It was a much larger project than I thought, but I wanted to get into Brunello di Montalcino, and I wanted a vineyard with great potential, but I knew it would take time," the impeccably groomed Ferragamo told me during our meeting at [Vinality](#). The vines are more than 20 years old now and show less stress than in the early years. Some new planting took place after he bought the estate in 2003 and the vineyards are farmed organically.

Since the debut vintages, winemaker Cecilia Leoneschi has decreased both the predominance of *barriques* and the amount of new oak. As a result, the wines show greater purity of fruit, finesse and vibrant structures. The early wines, through the 2008 vintage, were aged solely in *barriques*, 30 percent of which were new. From the 2009 to the 2011 vintages, casks were introduced and 50 percent of the Brunello di Montalcino and Campo del Drago aged in large oak, the other half in *barriques*, 25 percent new. Since the 2012 harvest, both wines are fermented in stainless steel, then aged two years in a combination of 70 percent large cask and 30 percent *barriques*. Twenty-five percent of the *barriques* are new.

The Castiglion del Bosco Brunello di Montalcino 2012 offers a fresh aroma of cherry, with accents of iron and tar matched to a smooth texture.

The Campo del Drago comes from a 3.7-acre parcel at the highest part of the vineyards, reaching nearly 1,500 feet. It always produces the richest and ripest grapes and is the last parcel to be harvested. The 2012 is pure, revealing strawberry and cherry flavors, elegant and building to a long, mineral-tinged finish.

The Millicento Riserva is only aged in 33-hectoliter casks, but sees an additional year in bottle. The 2011, the second vintage of this bottling, is more discreet in aroma, yet rich with plum and cherry on the palate, underlined by vibrant acidity. Though more subtle than the 2012s, it is compelling.

Ferragamo restored buildings on the property, creating an exclusive resort complete with an 18-hole golf course designed by Tom Weiskopf. What better way to cap off a day of golf in the Tuscan countryside than dinner with Castiglion del Bosco's wine. "It's a continuous evolution and we're still improving," he exclaims.