

## Cortona Syrah

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This is fun, a new DOC from Italy that seems to make sense. (Unlike those weird little neighbourhood names that seems to have sprouted in the nether regions and are even occasionally awarded a DOCG.) The first examples of Syrah grown in the region round the southern Tuscan town of Cortona are just emerging on to the international marketplace and very delicious they are too.

For some of us Cortona was made famous by those books by the American romantic who did a sort of *Year in Provence* on the region with her best-selling *Under the Tuscan Sun*. The pioneers of Syrah round this town in the far south of Tuscany between Arezzo and Perugia were the d'Alessandro brothers whose Il Bosco from an estate once known as Manzano was for long Italy's finest Syrah. (Much finer, IMHO, than for example the delightful Paolo di Marche's L'Eremo at Isola e Olena.) Even in the early 1990s Il Bosco had a sleekness that most north Rhône lacks - a sweetness plus structure.

Now that Massimo d'Alessandro has his Syrah vineyards planted at 10,000 plants per hectare and a serious quantity of grapes being harvested, there is a real determination to ratchet up the quality of Il Bosco even further. Roughly 30 per cent of the vines, the younger plots, are being devoted to a second wine **Cortona Syrah 2002 Tenimenti Luigi d'Alessandro**, which is given practically the same treatment except it has just eight months in oak. The first release, then called **Vescovo 2001**, is widely available in Germany but is being sold by UK importers [WineSearcher](#) but at much higher prices. And surely Antinori's many importers worldwide will be/ are offering this wine?

I think we can expect to see more Cortona Syrahs seeping out of the woodwork in years to come, but Tenimenti Luigi d'Alessandro and La Braccasca are, as the French say, the *bonnes adresses*.