

Il Poggione 2003 Brunello di Montalcino

24 Nov 2008 by Jancis Robinson

From €24.29, £19.99, \$38.99, 45 Swiss francs and Can\$57.95 a bottle.

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Ooh, ah - fancy recommending a 2003 Brunello...!

Longstanding visitors will know all about the [controversy](#) surrounding this particular vintage of Brunello di Montalcino, over which one very loud whistle was blown alleging that a high proportion of such wines did not, as the law stipulates, contain 100% Sangiovese, called Brunello in the Montalcino zone. The charge was, and remains, that many producers have been including the foreign and illegal likes of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot in their Brunellos to help their wines appeal more to the international, and especially American, market. As a result, several wines were very publicly impounded by the authorities, most notably Castello Banfi's 2003 Poggio alle Mura.

All sorts of recriminations and nastiness have ensued, as you will see if you read any of the articles related to that cited above. Which makes it all the more delightful that it is now possible to buy at a relative bargain price **Il Poggione 2003 Brunello di Montalcino**, which is clearly made in vast quantity to judge from the number of stockists that winesearcher is able to find. As Monty Waldin points out from Montalcino, the Poggione vineyards are sandwiched between those of Col d'Orcia (which was hived off from Il Poggione), Argiano and Banfi (which was hived off from Argiano). This wine really does taste of the sunbaked Montalcino zone in southern Tuscany and has no shortage of Sangiovese character. In Germany and the UK Poggione is selling at a particularly attractive price. In the US, prices are all over the place but one retailer at least is currently offering it at \$38.99 and a Brunello at less than \$40 is really not to be sniffed at.

Top marks too in the UK for Majestic Fine Wine's buyer, who is managing to offer this wine at less than £20 a bottle. Apparently quite a number of his shop managers contacted him to double check the price, £19.99 – which compares extremely favourably with the £30 that Majestic will be asking, early in 2009, I'm told by Banfi's PR representative in the UK, for Banfi's controversial 2003 – supposedly 'cleared' by the authorities. According to *L'Espresso*, however, some questions are now being raised about this. Below are my tasting notes on these two wines, the first of which purple paggers will have seen already in my recent [tasting notes](#) on Majestic's impressive new fine wine range.

Il Poggione 2003 Brunello di Montalcino 17 Drink 2009-13

Lively dark crimson. Very roasted and come-hither on the nose. Very true Montalcino style – I can't spot anything other than Sangiovese! – but good refreshment on the finish too. Picked up in lieu of impounded Banfi at a good price. GV 14.5%

Castello Banfi, Poggio alle Mura 2003 Brunello di Montalcino 15.5 Drink 2009-13

Polished, 'softened' nose with just a hint of Sangiovese farmyard notes about it. Very baked palate indeed. Hint of mocha. Quite a bit of acidity. Very 2003. Not much fun – no caressing of the palate - more of a brisk sandpaper scrub. But at least there are no very obvious Bordeaux strangers in here! Naughty heavy bottle. 14%

You choose...

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