

Soldera loses six vintages

4 Dec 2012 by Walter Speller

As reported last night on [our forum](#) by ever-alert Purple Pagers, the iconic Montalcino estate [Case Basse's](#) entire cask production of 2007-2012, some 600 hl in total, has been destroyed. The act, confirmed by Gianfranco Soldera himself (pictured here by Jon Wyand), has been condemned as meaningless vandalism since a motive is yet to emerge. According to the blog [Il Fatto Quotidiano](#), an unknown person accessed the cellar during Sunday night by 'smashing in a French window made of unbreakable glass', after which he or she opened the taps of the casks in which the last six vintages of Case Basse were maturing. It is thus that 626 hl of one of Italy's most heralded and costly wines ran straight into the sewage system.

Speculation abounds. The fact that nothing else was either destroyed or stolen makes this senseless and horrible act look like a settling of scores. A former Milanese insurance broker, Gianfranco Soldera moved to Montalcino in 1972 where he founded Case Basse. The Brunellos he has produced since then have been described in superlatives and Soldera himself has never hidden the fact that he sees his wine as one of the most important in the world.

Abrasive and controversial, Soldera has been selling his wine, produced in tiny quantities, only to a select group of buyers 'who understand it'. He was also one of the strongest and loudest opponents of plans, now finally laid to rest, to change Brunello from a 100% Sangiovese wine by allowing the inclusion of foreign grape varieties, after the Brunellogate scandal emerged in the spring of 2008. It is being whispered in the region that his fierce opposition has made him enemies, but the act itself was described by one Brunello producer as 'the worst thing anyone could do to you'.