

CASTELLO BANFI

30 YEARS OF RESEARCH ON SANGIOVESE

CLONAL SELECTION, ZONAZIONE (SOIL CLASSIFICATION), AND WOOD AGEING.

Castello Banfi was founded 30 years ago, at which time there was not much research on Sangiovese. That put this noble grape at a disadvantage with regard to other important varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, which had been researched for centuries at such major wine institutions as the University of Bordeaux.

In 1982, Castello Banfi started a joint project with the University of Milan aimed at studying scientifically the characteristics of Sangiovese.

Whereas before, the emphasis in field selection was on finding higher yielding clones, the focus now shifted to improving quality.

Studying the different terroirs at our estate, we discovered more than 600 different Sangiovese clones, an incredible challenge, but also a unique resource and opportunity.

We found Sangiovese to have a much broader family than typical French varieties, with great variations and very sensitive to different geo-climatic conditions. This variability is even reflected in the names given to this grape. Within Tuscany alone, it is called "Sangiovese" in Chianti, "Brunello" in Montalcino, "Prugnolo Gentile" in Montepulciano, and "Morellino" in the Maremma.

From the initial number of more than 600 presumed clones, we chose to concentrate first on 180 and then, after the micro vinification of these clones, we selected only 15 of them, which we believe represent the best characteristics of this incredible grape.

Because experience has shown that the strength of Sangiovese lies in its diversity, we have chosen to maintain polyclonal vineyards, in which a combination of the 15 selected clones are planted in order to obtain Sangiovese's complementary characteristics (fruitiness, phenol, floral, astringency, structure, tipicity, and flavour sensations of red fruit, apples, violet, spice and tobacco) in our wines.

Parallel to our research on clonal selection, we also worked on assessing the full potential of our estate. We discovered that it could be divided into 29 major soil zones that range from almost pure clay to a mixture of rock-and-sand soils.

Since 1992, Castello Banfi began planting its new Sangiovese vineyards and matched the selected clones (3 to 4 types per vineyard) with the most suitable soils. Having different clones planted in each vineyard has allowed not only for vineyards with greater stability but for wines with more complexity.

In addition to our studies on soils, or "Zonazione," and on clonal selection, we have also worked on another aspect of winemaking that is critical for producing great wine: wood ageing. The more powerful Brunello that we obtained through clonal selection demanded a longer, yet more refined, time in wood.

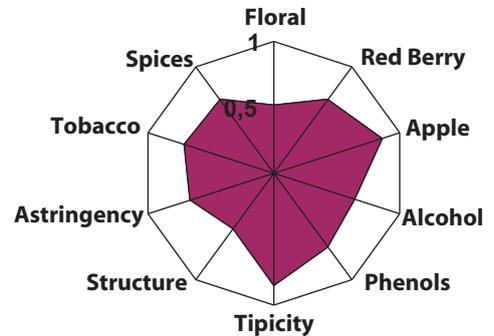
We found that French oak was better suited than the traditional Slavonian oak for the maturation of our new Brunello. We also developed a unique process for preparing our barriques that involved longer seasoning of the wood staves and a slower than usual toasting period.

In the exceptional vintage of 1997, we harvested the first result of all this work: Brunello di Montalcino Poggio alle Mura. This Brunello perfectly reflects its terroir, preserving tradition while introducing innovation. It is a wine with extraordinary concentration, structure, and length. Power and elegance admirably combined.

CLONAL SELECTION STUDIES ON SANGIOVESE BRUNELLO

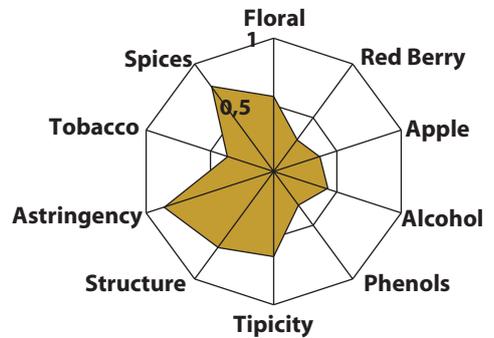
CLONE JANUS 50

JANUS 50 is the backbone of the wine with its well developed tannins and its consistency in delivering a well balanced product even in less than exceptional vintages. It contributes to all the aromatic aspects that characterize the terroir of Brunello di Montalcino, with its complex fruity bouquet and good structure.



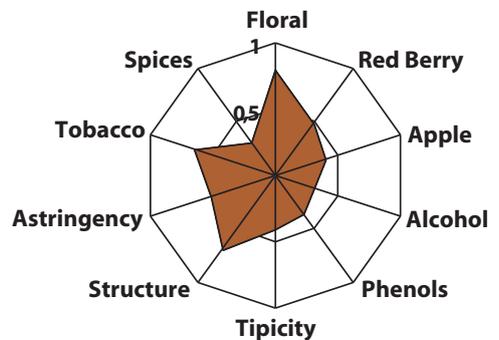
CLONE JANUS 10

JANUS 10 has a bright ruby colour which is typical of Sangiovese. It has an intense perfume with notes of violets, cassis, black pepper and hints of tobacco. It is extremely elegant and with its smooth body allows for a perfect integration of the other clones, imparting to the wine a beautiful spicy character that significantly increases its complexity and overall quality.

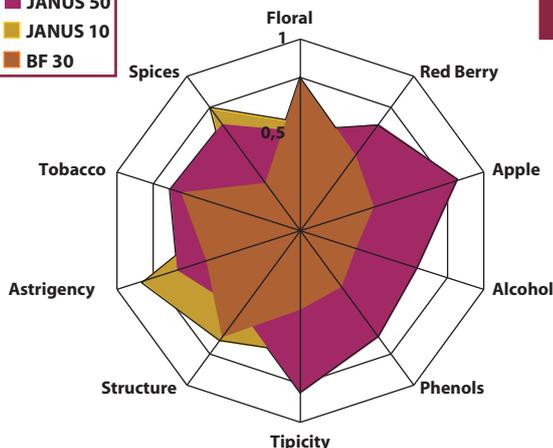


CLONE BF 30

BF 30 has a wonderfully intense deep garnet colour with purple hues. This clone strongly contributes in both the structure and the floral aromas, giving power and finesse to the wine. Perfume of violets, ripe fruit, tart cherries with hints of smoke. Notes of tobacco are more or less pronounced depending on seasonal conditions.



■ JANUS 50
■ JANUS 10
■ BF 30



CLONAL BLEND

Janus 50 - 50%, Janus 10 - 20%, BF 30 - 30%

The result of joining these three clones together is a Brunello that attains the result of perfectly matched elegance and power. It has a deep and intense colour quite unheard of for a Sangiovese. Aromas of red fruits, plums, cherries and ripe blackberries, well balanced with hints of vanilla.

On the palate the wine opens with pleasant notes of licorice, tobacco and black olives. The tannins are thick and silky, extremely rich but not overpowering, a sure sign of an enormous ageing potential.