



#### WINEMAKER

Luca Nannetti

#### VARIETALS

Sangiovese

#### FEATURES

Bottle, Cork

#### ABV

15%

#### AVAILABLE SIZES (L)

0.750

#### SCORES & RATINGS

- 91 VINOUS, 2015
- 92 JAMES SUCKLING, 2018
- 93 JAMES SUCKLING, 2017



## Verbena

# Brunello di Montalcino 'Le Pope'

ITALY, TUSCANY, LE POPE



#### WINERY OVERVIEW

Situated in the Montalcino countryside, among vineyards, olive groves and gentle hills that form the backdrop of this peaceful corner of the world, is the Verbena farm. You can walk around the family farm to have a closer look at country life; to see the vineyards and olive groves and appreciate the loving care paid to them.

Verbena is owned by Luca and Elena Nannetti and their two daughters Martina and Emma. They are one of the original Montalcino families who have been in the region for many generations. The property where their winery and agritourism business is located is a family farm that started in 1972 by Luca's family. In 1980, they planted vineyards and in 1985, they released their first Brunello di Montalcino. Luca works in the vineyards, Elena runs the business side of Verbena, and Martina is working in the cellar while Emma is beginning university.

There is a big microclimate differentiation in Montalcino, so they use three separate vineyard sites to achieve different results. There are three areas of vineyards with three different types of soil and three different expositions: 1. Around the farm at 420m elevation with a north-east exposure. This site benefits from a cool climate which gives the grapes an intense fragrance, 2. Southern Montalcino at 400m elevation in the subregion of Castelnuovo dell'Abate, where the exposure is south-easterly and the climate is warmer, giving the grapes a high alcohol content, and 3. Le Pope, the highest vineyard, at 635m above the town of Montalcino. Le Pope was passed down from Elena's father. It was named after her, with 'Pope' meaning "little girl." This 2.5-acre plot of Sangiovese produces one of Montalcino's prized Brunellos, 'Le Pope.' It is considered a jewel amongst the Montalcino wine district with its uniquely cooler microclimate, allowing for a slow maturation, perfect acidity, and ideal pH balance.

Paolo Caciorgna joined Verbena as their consulting winemaker in 1999. Luca and Elena's daughter Martina studied for 5 years to achieve a degree in Viticulture and winemaking. She then furthered her training with an Enotecnic degree specializing in winemaking. Martina worked harvests at three wineries to gain additional experience, and she is now part of the winemaking team alongside Paolo.

Fermentations of grapes from each vineyard are kept separate until it's time to blend, and then they decide which vineyards to blend and which oak to use. Verbena uses 3 types of oak: Austrian oak, Slavonian Botti and French oak. 'Le Pope' is only aged in Austrian oak barrels which are 3,200L. They started using Austrian oak in 2015 and find that is elegant and sweeter than the others, so they reserve it for their 'Le Pope' wine. Brunello di Montalcino Riserva is only aged in new French barrique. They don't decide which wine will be Riserva until a year before its release. They have around 200 barrels in their cellar.

Under the 'V' for Verbena on the label is the Michaelangelo symbol of the Golden Ratio. The designs somewhat differ depending on the wine; the Riserva is the most prestigious wines, so the image is shown larger.

#### VINEYARD

The vineyard is located at the highest point of the Montalcino hill about 636 meters above sea level. This plot of land belonged to Elena's side of the family since the early seventies. Back then, such high elevation was not considered a typical position for growing grapes in the region, but Elena's grandfather planted 2.5 acres of vineyards in 1997 to meet growing demand for Brunello. Today, the vineyard plot and 'Le Pope' wine is considered a jewel amongst the Montalcino wine district. Mild summers with a constant cool breeze has created a unique microclimate in Montalcino which allows for a slow maturation, perfect acidity, and ideal pH balance.

#### TERROIR

Soils are left to grass between the vines naturally, so no processing is carried out

#### VINIFICATION

The vinification process looks to maximize color extraction with a short maceration, generally less than one week, to achieve a high level of elegance and velvety texture of the tannins. The first 24 hours of fermentation take place at a controlled temperature of 35°C, then continues for another 8 days at a temperature of 30°C. Pumping over 4x per day. 20% of the malolactic fermentation is carried out in French oak barriques and 80% in steel tanks.

#### AGING

The aging differs from regular Brunello. The wine does not sit in 225 liter French oak barrels. Instead, it is racked into 30hl (800 gallons) casks of Slavonian oak (more precisely from the part of the forest in the Austrian territory). It remains in cask for 3 years of aging before release.

