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Tenuta Monteti

“We don’t like the excess of roundness”

I sometimes find myself struggling with the ripeness and the lack of acidity in some of the wines of the Tuscan coast. Although technically well made, their warmth, elevated alcohol content, low acidity, and use of 'international' grapes such as Bordeaux blends can sometimes make them seem interchangeable. Additionally, global warming hasn't been favorable for these wines. Usually, I am more drawn towards wines that show a sense of place, a vision and have a soul and freshness. Tenuta Monteti ([Link](#)) is a great example of a winery that embodies all these virtues, while avoiding stepping into the trap of being over-complicated or too intellectual.

The wines of Tenuta Monteti embrace their origin, Capalbio, and a certain richness the southern part of the Maremma typically offers. At the same time, these wines always show a great sense of place, individuality and good freshness and tension. The story behind these wines is as fascinating as what is inside the bottle. For more detailed background on the winery and its origin, I would highly recommend Jean-François Guyard's article from 2021 -in German- ([Link](#)) “Monteti, das erste Schmuckstück aus Capalbio”.

In an interview with Javier Pedrazzini ([Link](#)) on the 23rd of April, we gained additional insights on this fascinating winery and also tasted the new vintage (2018 for red and 2023 for rosé).



Eva Baratta – general manager- and her husband Javier Pedrazzini – sales manager and production supervisor-

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History and the vision

For many years, former businessman, economist and minister in the Italian government, Paolo Baratta ([Link](#)) had been looking for a unique place to start his winery together with his wife, Gemma. As the former president of the Venice Biennale, he eventually found everything he envisioned in Capalbio, a picturesque town in the Southern Maremma. Capalbio combined a pretty medieval town with a long history of art and culture with excellent soils and a perfect location for viticulture. Since 1998, there is also a famous art garden, the

Giardino dei Tarocchi ([Link](#)), that was designed by Niki de Saint Phalle together with her husband, Jean Tinguely. But most importantly, in Capalbio, the Barattas together with their long-term consulting enologist, Carlo Ferrini, didn't have to follow a strict set of tightening rules like the DOCGs surrounding it would have (e.g. Montalcino, Montepulciano and others). They had the liberty to choose the most suitable grape varieties for their vineyards, soil and microclimate and it was clear to them, that the area was not well suited for Sangiovese, the most obvious choice. The vision was to create unique wines with a sense of

place, reflecting their terroir and the region without drifting into an international style.

Therefore, 26 years ago, the Barattas started planting Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, but also Petit Verdot and Alicante Bouschet about 15 kms from the coast on a hill where the vineyards are protected from the heavy winds, but also enjoy cooler nights. While the Cabernets and Merlot are pretty common in



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this part of Italy and many others, Petit Verdot and particularly Alicante Bouschet were and still are a pretty rare pick. Even if the grape variety has a mixed kind of reputation and is infamous for high yields (see e.g. Jancis Robinson "The Oxford Companion to Wine"), according to Javier Pedrazzini from Tenuta Monteti, Alicante Bouschet is providing a lot of freshness and acidity and is ripening at much lower alcohol/sugar levels than other grapes. These days, it is an important part of the Caburnio with 25% of the blend. For Petit Verdot, this historic Bordeaux grape is ripening even later than Cabernet Sauvignon, which makes it a challenging grape in moderate climates. It's in the warmer/hot regions where Petit Verdot truly excels. Testament to this are for example a few wines from Virginia (US) made fully from this grape like Michael Shaps Petit Verdot ([Link](#)). Also in the Maremma, this finicky grape can fully ripen and be harvested, before the late fall rains are usually kicking in. According to Javier, Tenuta Monteti prefers to blend the grape with others, as Petit Verdot is bringing a certain spiciness, dark color but also substantial tannic structure and acidity to the blend. Javier sums up the stylistic preference of the house perfectly: **"We don't like the excess of roundness"**.



Click on the picture to watch the video about the winery

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The attention to detail at Tenuta Monteti is impressive. Besides extreme diligence in the vineyard work and cellar, e.g. when choosing the oak, roughly 30 parcels are harvested and vinified separately. It's possible that a plot of Cabernet Sauvignon can spend significant time in new barrique, while another plot only 20 meters away can stay in stainless steel to capture the purity of fruit and its finesse. The winery spends considerable effort on mapping their vineyards to fully understand each plot and give it the farming and cellar treatment that suits best. This level of perfectionism also leads to a small range of wines, as they do not want to get lost in a range of interchangeable Crus. It is also remarkable that the wines are released pretty late, to make sure that the consumers will get to buy something that is already accessible. For now, the 2018s in red are in the market. This deserves a lot of respect, because late releases are binding substantial capital and capacity in the cellar for the Tenuta, while creating an even better customer experience. It's the opposite of the Bordeaux „en primeur“ business where wines are prepaid ahead of bottling and delivered to their customers when they are still years or even decades away from their drinking window.

Tenuta Monteti only produces three wines: a **Rosé** from Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Mourvèdre that is picked early to preserve its freshness and moderate the alcohol level, the **Caburnio** (red) made from Cabernet Sauvignon, Alicante Bouschet and Merlot and the **Monteti** (red) made from Petit Verdot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. All three wines are made with equal attention to detail and therefore, a significant part of the harvest ends up being sold in bulk to other producers.



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The wines

In Germany, Monteti wines are available at [Superiore](#), in Switzerland at [Secli-Weine](#) and [Archetti](#).

Rosé 2023

The Rosé is mostly made from Merlot with the addition of some Cabernet Franc and recently planted Mourvèdre. The vineyards have south to south-west exposure and an altitude of approximately 140m above sea level. There is a complex soil with stony clay, the vines are densely planted at 6'600 plants per hectare. The grapes are harvested early to retain acidity, picking is only taking place between sunrise and noon to avoid the heat and preserve freshness. Fermentation in stainless steel is temperature controlled. All these measures are taken to preserve freshness and tension, and the result is stunning.

Pretty pale salmon color. This jumps out of the glass with explosive notes of strawberries, also some raspberries, citrus, some exotic fruit, a hint of pepper and some flowery notes. It's medium-bodied, has medium acidity and just an overall irresistible personality. Good finish with plenty of freshness. There is an almost „sweet“ expression to the fruit that is really appealing even if the wine is bone-dry. The explosive fruit works particularly well with the overall crisper style of Rosé this is offering. Good fresh finish. One of the most delicious Rosés I have had over the last few years. This is the perfect summer wine to drink on a terrace while picturing being in Tuscany. **17.25/20** (90/100).



Caburnio 2018

The winter was wet and mild, with a spring that was both rainy but also average in temperatures, this leads to bud-break at the end of March. Summer was wet again, but also with good moderate to warm temperatures and good diurnal shifts that preserved acidity. During the summer, but also around harvest there was some precipitation, which is not very common here. The season could be summarized as a relatively long growing season with moderate temperatures, enough rain and good diurnal shifts. Harvest for the Caburnio started on the 27th of August with Merlot, and concluded on the 21st of September with Cabernet Sauvignon. The Caburnio (IGT Toscana) consists of 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Alicante Bouschet and 20% Merlot from south and south-west facing vineyards with a plant density of 6'600 plants per hectare. Yields were 50hl/ha and the different plots are fermented in stainless steel (individually per plot), with pretty long maceration (21 days), and aging in stainless steel for 12 months, followed by 12 months in 30% new French oak and another 12 months in bottle. There is no fining or filtration. The Caburnio comes in at 13.5% alcohol.

The Caburnio 2018 received two bicchieri from Gambero Rosso, 93/100 from Falstaff and many more accolades.



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Medium-deep ruby/purple color. Very inviting bouquet of dark cherries, some cassis, but also some brighter notes of pomegranate and some other red fruits, there are also notes of graphite, leather, some subtle sweet spices and some flowery notes too, as well as some herbs. Also some lead pencil on the aftertaste. It's medium-full bodied, with very good persistence, it is showing a surprising medium-high acidity that is adding beautiful freshness and some medium- tannin that is exceptionally ripe, but still present. With a few minutes in the glass, this is opening up nicely and showing a fascinating perfume. Pretty long finish with very good freshness again. This is a real beauty and It combines a certain ripeness of fruit with excellent freshness. Very good price/quality ratio. This seems in a great spot already and I would drink this over the next 3 - 5 years or so. **17.75/20** (92/100).



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Monteti 2018

The Monteti (IGT Toscana) consists of 50% Petit Verdot, 30% Cabernet Franc and 20% Cabernet Sauvignon from south and south-west facing vineyards with a plant density of 6'600 plants per hectare. Harvest for the Monteti started on the 10th of September with Cabernet Sauvignon and concluded on the 24th of September with Petit Verdot.

Yields were 35hl/ha and the different plots are fermented in stainless steel (individually per plot), with pretty long maceration (21 days), and aging for 18 months in French barriques and tonneaux, of which 70% are new. After blending the individual plots, it rests in cement vats before bottling. Additional 24 months of bottle aging. There is no fining or filtration. The Monteti comes in at 14% alcohol.

The Monteti 2018 received three bicchieri from Gambero Rosso, 95/100 points from Falstaff and many more accolades.

Pretty deep ruby/purple color. This needs a few minutes in the glass to open up. Very pretty and complex notes of blueberries, but also some crunchy strawberries, and plenty of dark fruit, too. There are notes of tobacco leaf, some leather, earthy notes, some graphite and also a touch of dark chocolate and juniper berries. With some air also some flowery notes of crushed violets make an appearance. It's medium-full bodied, with some more persistence and mid-palate weight than the Caburnio tasted next to it, there is a beautiful medium+ acidity providing freshness and tension, and there is some medium-high tannin that is excellent quality but will also provide structure for aging. Long finish with building complexity. An excellent Monteti and a really beautifully layered wine that combines aromatic complexity with ripeness and a very nice freshness. Like all these wines, this also has a beautiful sense of place. While it is already pretty accessible, especially with some air, it wouldn't hurt to give this another 2-3 years in bottle. Good aging potential, too. **18.5/20** (95/100).

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