

Tuscany

Marchesi Pancrazi

Location: Montemurlo,
Province of Florence



Innovations in the winery: The most important of these regarded the **duration of aging sur lie**. Aging the wine on the lees for lengths of time comparable to Burgundy's causes a number of distinctive odors (leather, horse sweat, *merde de poule*), well loved in France but rather disliked in the rest of the world.

This prompted the team at Villa di Bagnolo to cut back on the duration of aging sur lie and **eliminate the coarser lees early on**. Furthermore, the past year has seen the Pancrazi team implement a **new, hi-tech method for temperature control during fermentation**.

The story of this stunning Tuscan Pinot Noir from a fifteenth-century estate west of Florence, **Villa di Bagnolo** (property of Marchese **Vittorio Pancrazi**) is unusual to say the least. In **1975**, 3,300 vines identified as Sangiovese were planted on the estate's clayey/schistous/serpentine soil, on a low hillock (50-150 meters a.s.l.) particularly rich in **iron** (instrumental for Pinot Noir complexity). The grapes were vinified as Sangiovese, and anonymously blended into the everyday family wine. Then one day in **1989**, an oenologist friend of the Marchese pointed out the "Sangiovese" was actually Pinot Noir — in fact, probably **Tuscany's oldest Pinot Noir vines!** At this point, Vittorio Pancrazi decided to vinify it on its own, and naturally put his Bordeaux-educated friend, **Niccolò D'Afflito**, in charge of the experiment. After over a year's maturation in Allier barriques and six months' bottle age, the experiment not only succeeded, it exceeded all expectations.

From 1989 to this day, Pancrazi, in synergy with both his winemaker and brilliant agronomist **Paolo Mocali**, has carried out in-depth innovations in the **vineyard** and in the **winery**.

In the vineyard: Today, the Pinot Noir vines on the estate, southerly exposed and covering **14** out of a total **173 acres**, have been almost entirely renewed (albeit maintaining some 5% of the original, unidentified local clone), and planted even **more densely** than in the past (approx. 1,620 stocks per acre), with different clones that come straight from Burgundy. The present number of new variants is 8 (nos. 113, 114, 115, 521, 666, 667, 777, 943): **top selections**, some of which are so new there are very few specimens in Burgundy itself! Their painstaking orchestration adds dimension and complexity to the Pinot Noir of Villa di Bagnolo, and makes for an **even more graceful, mellow style starting with the 2000 vintage**.

Another innovation is the **gravitational irrigation system** for all vineyards, with natural water (very rich in iron) from a well in the hillside above the property, Monte Ferrato.

Besides the Montemurlo property, the Marchesi Pancrazi also own an even larger **estate at San Donato**: 1,285 acres, **37 of which are now under vine** at 300-400 meters above sea level, on Mount Calvana's alberese soil (a variety of compact, very fine-grained limestone), yielding the **SANDONATO** and **CASAGLIA** reds.

The Wines



PINOT NOIR VILLA DI BAGNOLO IGT: *The unique terroir of Villa di Bagnolo enhances this noble variety's characteristic harmony of components. **Barrique-aged c. one year**, the wine is a brilliant, violet/purple red in color, with*

intense, layered, mellow aromas and flavors of cherry, blackberries, plums, tobacco, licorice, vanilla, tea and mint leaves sustained by full body and outstanding persistence.

SANDONATO IGT: *From the Pancrazi's San Donato property and vineyards on the slopes of Mount Calvana, at 350-450 meters above sea level. **50% Pinot Noir & 50% Gamay**, it undergoes partial carbonic*

maceration, and is bottled the spring following harvest. Lively ruby red, with a delightful bouquet of strawberries, cherries and flowers, good body, firm yet sweet tannins, great balance, lingering finish.



CASAGLIA IGT: *100% indigenous Colorino, from Mount Calvana soil at 350 meters a.s.l., **barrique-aged approx. 12 months** then bottle-aged a minimum of 6 more. The ensuing wine has a style and elegance well, well beyond ordinary Colorinos: clean, characteristic aromas, fine tannins, good structure and breeding. Once more, Pancrazi have proven that*

universal truth: no grape is so 'minor' that great vineyard management and top-notch winemaking cannot make it into a major wine.