



CIACCI PICCOLOMINI d'ARAGONA



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Region: Montalcino (Tuscany), Italy

Owners: Bianchini Family

Website: www.ciaccipiccolomini.it

Winemaker: Paolo and Lucia Bianchini

WINERY PROFILE:

The origin of the Ciacci Piccolomini d'Aragona estate dates back to the 17th century. Located in southeastern Montalcino in the beautiful village of Castelnuovo del Abate, it has breathtaking views of the Orcia valley and Mount Amiata. The oldest part of the property is the Palazzo (meaning Palace), erected by Montalcino's bishop, Fabivs de Vecchis, Abbot of Sant Antimo Abbey. Over the course of time, the Palazzo became the property of the Montalcino diocese and was auctioned according to Italian law regarding ecclesiastic property.

In 1877, Francesco Ciacci, head of a Castelnuovo-based family, purchased the property from the Church. In the mid-1900s, the historical "Palazzo del Vescovo" became known as the Palazzo Ciacci Piccolomini d'Aragona after the marriage between count Alberto Piccolomini d'Aragona, a direct descendent of Enea Silvio Piccolomini (Pope Pius II), and Elda Ciacci.

Today, the Bianchini family owns the Estate. Giuseppe Bianchini managed the farm for the Countess Ciacci Piccolomini. He lived on the land with his family and oversaw the day-to-day operations of food and wine production. His children were born on the Estate and grew up in the vineyards and olive groves with their father. Giuseppe was willed the property in 1985, when the Countess passed without any heirs. Prior to this, the farm made wines for personal and local consumption. The Countess was never interested in making Brunello for the larger market. However, it had always been a dream of Giuseppe's to produce great Brunello. After selling a portion of the Estate to pay for inheritance taxes, he set about farming the most perfectly situated plots of land for classic Brunello production.

"I remember perfectly the day my father told us. Since as long as I remember he managed the property at Ciacci Piccolomini for the Contessa who owned it. A few months after she passed, my father learned that she had left the entire property to him in her will. It was so unexpected, such a shock for everyone. My father had always wanted to plant vineyards on that property while working for the Contessa but she would always respond 'someone else will, but not me.' So in the meantime he had bought a small parcel of vineyards where I worked and found my passion for viticulture but it was really that day, in 1985, when things changed" – says **Paolo Bianchini**, owner of Ciacci Piccolomini.

VINEYARDS AND VINIFICATION:

Giuseppe passed in 2004. His children, Paolo and Lucia, continue to farm the land with great care and incredible results. Of the 200 hectares in Montalcino, 40 are planted to vine. They farm organically, without the use of chemicals or pesticides. Nestled at the base of Mount Amiata, the terroir is moderated by proximity to the volcano and the Orcia River. This extends the growing season and, coupled with the well-drained, rocky soils, leads to wines of great finesse, balance and longevity. Like many of the great producers of Italy, Paolo and Lucia are modern in the vineyards, favoring low yields, using cover crops and working the vines manually. In the cellar, the Sangiovese-based wines are classically styled, employing large oak and cement with wonderful results. The wines are quintessential expressions of place and the nobility of Sangiovese.

Paolo Bianchini explains: *“The first vintage that I would consider was Brunello 1990. It was the vintage that put us on the map and when we really started. From there we grew slowly, and my sister joined the team around the same time we had started to build the new winery together with my father. It’s too bad that he wasn’t able to see it finished but I like to think he is looking down at it from the heavens. The new cantina is something that represents our philosophy as a company, this balance between old and new and respect for tradition and use of innovation. We apply it to everything we do, in the vineyards, cellar, our use of wooden barrels, and hopefully you find this search for balance in our wines.”*

