



Photographs: Clay McLachlan/claypix.com(3)

**Above: Val d'Orcia is a World Heritage site, and Col d'Orcia will soon be certified organic, in keeping with the area**

contact and optimal extraction of both colour and polyphenols. The straight Rosso, Brunello and Riserva are aged in large Slavonian and French casks. 'Brunello and Rosso are wines that by custom are consumed with meals,' says Francesco. 'So it makes sense to age these wines in large neutral casks that don't impart obvious wood sensations.'

'Brunello is also a wine prized for its impressive ageing potential, and large casks are fundamental to producing long-lived Brunellos, as barriques accelerate the ageing process,' he explains. On the other hand, Olmaia and the single-vineyard Rosso di Montalcino, Banditella, are aged in barriques, to satisfy those palates more accustomed to a more evident wood influence.

One of Col d'Orcia's most admirable qualities is that it is always striving to outdo itself; no small feat seeing that it is already highly acclaimed. Case in point: in 2010, the firm started the lengthy process of converting to organic viticulture. 'Val d'Orcia is a World Heritage site. It seems right to protect this area with organic farming,' says Francesco. 'To be honest, we've adhered to organic methods for years, in part thanks to our ideal growing conditions, and being surrounded by woods that offer biodiversity. It just seemed time to make it official.' Certification should arrive in 2013. Then Col d'Orcia will be Tuscany's biggest organic winery, and the benchmark for the region's other large estates will have been set a little higher. **D**

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## Col d'Orcia: a timeline (continued...)



**1991**

Francesco Marone Cinzano is in charge. A new cellar is built and area under vine rises. Olmaia, a Cabernet Sauvignon 'SuperTuscan', is released

**1997**  
Sangiovese clones selected from the estate trials are used for planting new vineyards



**2011**  
Registration of two Sangiovese clones from the Poggio al Vento vineyard



**2010**  
Start of conversion to organic methods

**2013**  
Organic certification is due in August