The Mixed Message in 2013 Brunello I was ready for the 2013 vintage to deliver something altogether better and more typical than the rich and ripe 2011 and 2012 Brunello di Montalcinos. But it didn't happen. I tasted about 130 Brunellos in a blind tasting a few months back in Tuscany, and although the top 2013s (all those scoring 95 points or more) were more linear and refined than the 2012s, many of the 2013s showed similar opulent fruit and round tannins, suggesting that they were made from slightly overripe fruit. "It's hard to say what happened," said Giacomo Neri of the famous estate of Casanova di Neri. "Perhaps some people decided to harvest too late, but we find our Brunellos show cool fruit and bright acidity with structured tannins." Indeed, his top Brunello, the Tenuta Nuova, and about 30 others (all 95 points or more) showed the great Brunello

much more character, structure and depth.” The vintage certainly had the potential to make more typical and structured Brunellos as it was less hot and dry than 2011 and 2012. The top soils such as Montosoli or high vineyards in the south appear to have made the best wines. And top names fine-tuned viticulture practices and harvesting dates to get the most out of the grapes and produce great wines. In recent memory, 2010 is still the best vintage followed by 2013, 2012 and 2011. Of course, 2014 is going to be a tough year for Montalcino due to a wet and late growing season, as so many know, so I suggest buying what Brunello is already out on the market. The 2013s begin to arrive on retail shelves in January 2018. I look forward to tasting more 2013 Brunellos when I am in Italy in January.