



## MASSETO

### Vintage Descriptions

*From the very beginning of its genesis in 1986 until today*

#### 1986

Masseto before the existence of Masseto.

The first official release of Masseto was in 1987, but an experimental bottling of a Merlot was carried out in 1986; the wine was made from the first fruits of the new merlot vineyard planted in the clay soil of the Masseto hill. This wine was the first “prototype” of Masseto, and a few bottles still remain at the winery. Tasting the wine today, one immediately understands the reasons that the Estate produced a separate bottling of this Merlot, which was “so full of promise” right from its first harvest. Even now, decades after, the wine exhibits all of the qualities we associate with Masseto: a rich, deep pigmentation, although orange-tending notes have emerged with the years; a rich cornucopia of fruit, well-ripened by the Mediterranean sun; and the nonpareil marriage between tannic structure and velvety sensuousness. For those fortunate enough to encounter one of these rare bottles, Masseto 1986 is now ready to enjoy, and they will find it amazingly fresh.

#### 1987

The 1987 vintage was characterised by a generally good growing season. Temperatures during the month of July were very hot, followed by some rainfall during the month of August. The harvest of the Merlot was carried out on the 13th September 1987.

**TASTING NOTES:** This was the first vintage to bear the now iconic Masseto front label. The wine is now fully mature, fragrant, delicate and silky, perfect to drink, but with no particular urgency.

#### 1988

The vegetative cycle of the 1988 vintage enjoyed generally hot, sunny weather until the final phases of berry ripening. The temperature reached its peak during the month of August. The harvest of the Merlot for this vintage was carried out on 14th September 1988.

**TASTING NOTES:** Along with 1985 and 1990, the 1988 is the great vintage of the decade. Dense and full-textured, with the mass of tannins classic to the vintage, Masseto 1988 is now at the peak of its maturity, exuding the expressivity, complexity, and elegance of a perfectly-aged wine. The impressive freshness and solidity that it displays at this point indicate still more years of life ahead, with no haste necessary in uncorking it now.

#### 1989

The climate for the 1989 growing season was characterised by warm weather and clear skies until the final phase of the berry ripening. There was modest rainfall during the summer and peak temperatures during the month of August. This caused the ripening process of the grapes to slow down, and consequently, the grapes matured later than average. The harvest of the Merlot for this vintage was carried out on 28th September 1989.

**TASTING NOTES:** The 1980s saw alternations of great vintages and others somewhat more difficult. Despite this, Masseto 1989 is a surprisingly pleasurable wine, with a nose that releases very complex, elegant fragrances and marries fruit that is still fresh and crisp with evolved notes of truffle and forest underbrush. The palate lacks the power of great vintages, but rich aromatic impressions and a silky weave convey sensations of masterful elegance and finely-balanced proportion. It is a wine to enjoy now.

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## 1990

The 1990 vintage was generally warm and sunny for the duration of the vine's vegetative cycle with a small amount of rainfall in early August followed by peak temperatures towards the end of August. The characteristics of this vintage were similar to that of 1988. The harvest was carried out on 5th September. **TASTING NOTES:** Another great vintage displaying superb impact, dense and mature and considerable tannic power even today. Still showing youth, the wine is very enjoyable today, but if cellared longer it will continue evolving towards even greater complexity.

## 1991

The primary growing phase of the vines was characterised by an average temperature with flowering and optimal fruit set around the 15th of June. The summer months had lower than average temperatures and above average rainfall. For this reason, the maturation of the berry was about 3 weeks later than average. The harvest was carried out on the 11th and 17th of September (somewhat later than for previous harvests). **TASTING NOTES:** A wine which has reached full maturity. To be enjoyed today.

## 1992

The area enjoyed a spring with average temperatures. Persistent humidity continued throughout the month of June followed by a notable rise in temperature which continued throughout August. Periodic and sporadic cooler moments offered respite from the heat. The persistent humidity caused, however, a slight slowing down in the maturation of the fruit and the harvest was carried out slightly later than expected. Luckily, the area of Bolgheri was spared by the terrible rainfalls that occurred between the middle and end of September in other areas of Tuscany. The harvest took place on the 5th and 12th of September. **TASTING NOTES:** In general, 1992 has not left positive impressions in Tuscany. Rains during September and October lowered quality, particularly in late-ripening varieties, such as Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc in Bolgheri and Sangiovese in central Tuscany. But many have forgotten that in mid-September the weather was good, and the harvest looked promising. Merlot, the earliest-ripening among all the varieties at Bolgheri, actually enjoyed fine conditions for most of its ripening. Thus, it was not a surprise to see an excellent Masseto 1992 emerge. A dense wine with multi-layered complexity, perhaps not as open and radiant as usual, but with appealing, crisp notes of balsam that enliven the fruit that is still present. It offers impressive weight in the mouth, a satisfying tannic presence, and fine length. Perfectly enjoyable today and for some time to come.

## 1993

The climate for the 1993 growing season was characterised by a very warm spring with moderate rainfall. This resulted in an early flowering (around mid-May) and which was followed by a very hot summer. Temperatures remained steady throughout September with the first rains not appearing until the end of the month. The harvest took place on the 5th and 22nd of September.

**TASTING NOTES:** A good vintage in Tuscany, even if later over-shadowed by the great vintages from the end of the decade. The wine is fully matured, with very expressive fruit and a dense-packed, velvety palate. The vibrant tannic structure suggests that the wine will be able to drink beautifully for another decade. One could very well begin to open a few bottles, but it still possesses the right qualities to continue its evolution.

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## 1994

The 1994 vintage was characterised by an exceptionally warm spring with moderate rainfall. These conditions resulted in a premature flowering of the Merlot vines on the 15th of May 1994. The summer months were extremely warm until the end of September, and there was very little rainfall. The harvest took place on the 4th and 15th of September 1994.

**TASTING NOTES:** The vineyard is gradually reaching maturity, and the wine reflects this fact. Of course, it reflects the quality of the vintage as well, but all told, the personality of the wine itself comes to the fore. 1994 is certainly the first vintage to delineate clearly and unmistakably Masseto's soul and inimitable personality. Whereas the 1988 and 1990 wines reflected above all the great qualities of their respective vintage years, the 1994 incarnates the great personality of this nonpareil vineyard: a rich, opulent wine of superb maturity, that releases in the glass classic notes of cherry and dark chocolate. The mouth gradually expands, building in richness and texture, which are both densely knit and silky smooth, characteristic of Masseto. As with the 1993 the 1994 the wine is drinking perfectly now and will for another ten years at least.

## 1995

The prevailing climate throughout 1995 was characterised by a relatively late spring which consequently influenced the flowering of the vines. Flowering initiated on 24-25 May for the Merlot grapes. The end of June and the onset of July were somewhat cooler than the norm, followed suddenly by approximately 30 days of exceptionally hot weather. Intermittent showers started around the 8th of August with temperatures dropping and remaining somewhat cooler throughout the month of September. The harvest took place on the 4th and 13th of September 1995.

**TASTING NOTES:** This is a fine vintage, even though it experienced cool, rainy weather at the start of the harvest. The result is a great Masseto, ripe and opulent, that has developed considerable elegance over the years. It presents sensuous impressions of smooth fruit, dark chocolate, and roast espresso bean; a densely-woven, velvet-textured palate; and still-expressive tannins on the finish. It has reached full maturity and will still hold nicely for many years.

## 1996

The spring of 1996 had below average temperatures which caused a delay in budding. The Merlot variety flowered 24/25 May. Temperatures in the summer were fairly stable but not excessively hot. Around mid-August there was some rain which caused some delay in ripening. Temperatures however increased noticeably at the beginning of September enabling the grapes to fully ripen. The harvest was carried out between 8-12 September, and attention was given to a careful grape selection.

**TASTING NOTES:** Another late-ripening year, generally considered to be inferior to 1995, but one that yielded once again a great Masseto. Even more dense and sumptuous than the 1995, with a more restrained tannic structure, fully rounded and very compelling. It still exhibits considerable inner resources for further ageing, but it is difficult to restrain oneself from enjoying it right now.

## 1997

The start of spring saw above average temperatures which resulted in an early budding of the vines. The vegetative cycle slowed down somewhat following an unexpected frost in mid-April and subsequent rainfall until the end of the month. From May onwards, the weather became very warm and dry and the summer months were particularly hot, reaching above average temperatures. The grapes ripened earlier than usual, and harvesting was carried out under ideal conditions, starting on 25 August and finishing at the end of the first week of September. The vintage was exceptional in terms of quality (with grapes that had

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matured perfectly with good concentration and well matured tannins), while quantities were somewhat lower than average due to the small dimensions of the grapes resulting from the dry summer conditions.

**TASTING NOTES:** This vintage is already legendary, even if it is simply the first in a long series of exceptional vintages. Warm and early, 1997 expresses better than all other years the sun-blest, sensuous side of Masseto. Spacious, dense and ultra-concentrated, displaying soft, silky tannins. The bottling has preserved all of the lusciousness characteristic of this vintage and its magnificent aromatics as well as its deep sensory impressions. Its admirable power is accompanied by a gratifying elegance. Step by step it is advancing towards peak of maturity, but without haste.

## 1998

The end of winter and beginning of spring were mild, favouring an early budding of the vines. Flowering took place at the end of May followed by a uniform setting of the berry. The summer months were very hot and dry reaching, at times, temperatures well above average. The vintage saw very little rainfall (only 450 mm in the whole year). Veraison took place in mid-July in a very uniform way. At the end of July, the grapes were thinned to ensure that those remaining on the vines matured under the best conditions. The harvest was carried out under fine conditions during the period 3rd and 9th September. The harvest was made in different lots.

**TASTING NOTES:** Not easy to exceed an impressive year such as 1997, yet 1998 too can certainly lay claim, in Bolgheri, to the title of vintage of the decade. Another warm summer yielded a powerful, concentrated Masseto, one of amazing character. Density, breadth, and depth of fruit are all well-supported by a superbly-supple mass of tannins, giving the wine an overwhelming impression of solidity and youthfulness. Still under-developed but already showing significant impact, this is a Masseto destined for long cellaring.

## 1999

Winter was slightly colder than in 1998, with budbreak delayed until around late March. During spring temperatures and rains were within the norm, with flowering and growth similar to the previous year. Flowering took place at the end of May. The excellent climate during late spring resulted in a better-than-average fruit set. A hot summer without rain led to veraison one week earlier than in previous vintages, with very consistent fruit. Harvest started during the second week of September and lasted 7 days under ideal weather conditions.

**TASTING NOTES:** Third in a triptych of iconic vintages, Masseto 1999 is another great wine that, like the 1998, is following a parabola of very slow evolution. A wine of concentration, smoothness, and power. It seemed, for many years, monolithic and closed. Today, however, it seems to have awakened, and the once-impetuous tannins have mellowed, making way for a broad, expansive silky weave. The aromatic complexity of a mature wine is slowly building, displaying those sensuous fragrances classic to warm vintages, with dark chocolate, black liquorice, and candied violets. In conclusion, it is a wine that could still have some surprises in store for us and emerge as one of the great Masseto. Patience however will be required, since it is still very young and has much life ahead.

## 2000

Winter was generally warmer than in 1999. A homogeneous budbreak occurred during the first days of April, under some rain. Spring evolved with average temperatures and sunny days. Flowering was completed uniformly by mid-May. Thanks to the rain in early spring, initial fruit formation was more than previous year. The weather was very sunny with no rains and temperatures well above the average during the entire summer until harvest time. This allowed for an early veraison (around mid-July) and for the vines to develop under ideal conditions. Harvest started the last days of August and continued until mid-September.

**TASTING NOTES:** Following the monumental quality triptych of the 1990s, the 2000 represents the turn of the millennium vintage with a wine that is now fully ready to drink.

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## 2001

Winter was milder than the norm and rain above average: this brought about an early budbreak, between the end of March and the beginning of April. A spring characterized by abundant rainfall and average temperature favoured the Merlot, which flowered around the middle of May. Fruit set was good, with grape size large than the norm. Summer temperatures were within average with very little rain. During September, temperatures were slightly below average, and this allowed for the berries to achieve a slow and complete ripening of polyphenols. The harvest started at the beginning of September and was completed about four weeks later. Grape conditions were very good and ripening very uniform.

**TASTING NOTES:** 2001 is a worthy successor to the great vintages from the end of the 90's. A flamboyant, rich and powerful Masseto. A monumental wine that combines extravagant levels of ripeness, opulent fruit with a perfectly balanced tannic structure. It is starting to drink well but given its power and richness it will certainly benefit from a few more years.

## 2002

2002's weather report can be divided in two parts: before and after the 10th August. The early part of the vines' vegetative cycle was slightly advanced, followed by normal flowering and fruit setting, despite the alternating spells of hot and cold weather. The biological phases of the vines proceeded regularly and within the seasonal average. At the beginning of July, a green harvest was carried out which reduced the bunches on the vines by about 30%. After 10th August the wet conditions required careful and constant work in the vineyard to achieve a perfect balance between canopy growth and fruit development. This ensured a slow, perfect polyphenolic ripening. The harvest started on the 4th September in the upper part of the Masseto vineyard and was completed on the 25th of September with the central part.

**TASTING NOTES:** As often happens Masseto surprises us in the more challenging vintages. In 2002 it has yielded an utterly beautiful wine that compensates a lesser richness with a restrained and refined elegance, complex aromatics and a silky texture. The wine has been drinking well almost since release and starts to reach full maturity which it should maintain for at least another decade.

## 2003

The 2003 growing season was characterised by high temperatures, well above seasonal average, and by scarce rainfall - only 14mm from the end of April through early September. The generous rains of the preceding season, however, had adequately supplied the deep soils with sufficient water reserves to arrive through the summer of 2003. This meant that the harsh conditions of the summer months had less impact on the vines, but it did have the effect of highlighting the differences in the various sections of the Masseto vineyard. Due to the hot conditions, the upper part of the Masseto vineyard ('Masseto Alto') was in fact picked on 25th August, while the clayey soils situated in the heart of the vineyard, ('Masseto Centrale'), were able to remain relatively cool and this contributed to optimal ripeness, which was reached on 18th September.

**TASTING NOTES:** In a vintage that pushed Merlot to its limit, the blue clay supplied just about enough freshness and moisture to allow to produce a textbook Masseto, showing the ripe and exotic character of the vintage but avoiding any heaviness or harshness. The wine is evolving nicely and can be drunk from now on.

## 2004

2004 was a textbook vintage. In terms of climate, during the winter there was sufficient rainfall, and the temperatures were never excessive, while the spring was sunny, with occasional brief thunderstorms. Budding took place between 30th March and 10th April. The flowering revealed great fertility on the part of the buds (due to the high temperatures of the previous year). The potentially high yields were

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kept in check, to achieve the desired quality levels by repeated, extensive pruning of excess grape bunches. The summer began with mild temperatures, followed by a sunny, very hot August. These ideal conditions allowed the Merlot to ripen evenly and uniformly. During the harvest there was no rainfall enabling us to determine the perfect moment to harvest each parcel. The harvest began with the higher part of the vineyard on 13th September. The central and lower parts were harvested between the 17th and the 21st September.

**TASTING NOTES:** A particularly balanced growing season has resulted in a Masseto that is all about refinement and proportion. There is no lack of power and richness, but all hidden behind a remarkably engaging and silky texture and a cornucopia of aromas. Such a refined and balanced wine tends to be enjoyable to drink at any stage, but the most impatient should nevertheless leave a few bottles in their cellar as the wine is still at an early stage of its evolution.

## 2005

The winter of 2005 was, with the exception of a few bitterly cold days between February and March that delayed budbreak by a few days, rather mild, and was followed by a spring that quickly became hot and sunny. As a result, the vines flowered about a week early, around the 20th May. Vegetative vigour and productive potential displayed perfect harmony from the beginning. June and July behaved as expected: heat, sun, and just a few drops of rain... Perfect for the veraison to occur evenly. The grapes ripened steadily in August, under constant temperatures that never exceeded the seasonal average (32 °C). A few rains around August 15 contributed the optimal development of the bunches. At the end of August, the preliminary analyses revealed extremely high polyphenolic potentials, which are indicative of a great vintage. September provided us with alternating beautiful sunny days and sudden showers. To allow the grapes to ripen fully and develop optimal concentrations, we harvested late, beginning with the lower part of the Masseto vineyard on 14th September and finishing up the central part on 30th September.

**TASTING NOTES:** The fruit of a particularly late harvest, Masseto displays great aromatic maturity, with fruit and spice joining the usual balsamic and mentholated accents. Ample, rich, and full on the palate, its once potent tannins have mellowed to leave a sense of great vivacity and freshness to counterbalance the richness. The wine is a joy to drink right now but can certainly further improve with more bottle age.

## 2006

2006 began with a rainy winter, followed by hot spring days that resulted in flowering after the first week of June. From April to August there was almost no rain, and this led the vines to produce slightly smaller than normal bunches. The summer was also not too hot, and as a result the vines produced a good volume of grapes with good aromatic potential. Excellent climatic conditions during ripening, coupled with the reduced size of the grapes, provided an exceptional concentration, with sugars, tannins and acidity all higher than usual. At the beginning of the harvest the grapes were perfect: concentrated and uniformly ripe. During the harvest, the pickers worked their way through the vineyard four times, beginning on 6th September with the 'Masseto Alto' section of the vineyard, and 23rd September with the 'Masseto Centrale' section.

**TASTING NOTES:** A bold and powerful wine in its early years, Masseto 2006 has now shed a lot of its initial flamboyance and evolves towards an unexpectedly classic and elegant profile. The proverbial power is still there but the wine has developed a seamless integration of all its elements. Opulent, ripe fruit and Mediterranean herbs melt together in a glorious bouquet. The 2006 Masseto reflects the particular conditions of the vintage: ripeness, concentration and balance. The intense nose with ripe fruit and jam reflects the summer sun. On the palate it is powerful, rich, and opulent, with tightly woven, sweet, polished tannins balanced perfectly by acidity, which leads into a long finish marked by elegance and freshness.

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## 2007

2007 began with a very mild winter, with less rainfall than usual. As a result, bud break occurred about 10 days early. Spring was mild too, with rains coming just when they were required, which allowed excellent vegetative growth and led the vines to flower early. June rains, which occurred throughout Tuscany, accompanied the development of the grapes. Summer finally started with a July, which was hot and dry, followed by an August which was cooler, with classic mid-month thunderstorms that slowed the ripening of the grapes, bringing the projected harvest date in line with the average. A perfect September with brilliant sun, mild temperatures, and little rain permitted a perfectly slow, steady ripening of the grapes, concentrating polyphenols and aromatic compounds, without leading to any over-ripeness. The grapes were picked between 3rd and 15th September on four different occasions.

**TASTING NOTES:** The hallmark of Masseto is its power and impressive tannic structure. The 2007 vintage displays, in addition, an overwhelming elegance and complex wealth of aromatics, boasting impressions of perfectly ripe red and dark berry fruit, along with balsamic notes of wild herbs, smooth spices, and cocoa. The mouthfeel is dense, rich, intense, with glossy, silk-smooth tannins. A very long, leisurely finish reveals a good vein of acidity and concludes clean and fresh.

## 2008

The 2008 growing season was marked by a cool, rainy spring, with budbreak occurring within the norm. Rainfall during flowering did however affect the fruit set, thus lowering the vine's production. Summer brought intense heat, with almost no rain, and these conditions lasted through the first ten days of September. This facilitated a good veraison and a very satisfactory ripening process, since the cool nights favoured development of aromas and of deep colour, while the sunny days served to further concentrate compounds in the fruit, yielding grapes of impressive depth. September brought the cool northerly tramontana winds, which lowered temperatures. This cool, breezy but generously sunny period was particularly beneficial to some of the later ripening vines in the central part of Masseto, allowing them to develop full ripeness while maintaining fresh and vibrant aromatics. Harvest started on 4th September with the youngest vines of 'Masseto Junior' and was completed with the last section of 'Masseto Centrale' on 18th September yielding a total of six different lots.

**TASTING NOTES:** Masseto 2008 is the expression of a warm vintage, most of it having been harvested in the first half of September. With great concentration, its colour is particularly deep and young. The nose is characterized by rich and fully ripe fruit yet without any traces of over ripeness, focused and intense with spicy and mineral notes. On the palate the wine is remarkably dense, concentrated and opulent, with a very pure expression of fruit. The tannins are present and firm giving the wine focus and precision to balance the wine's opulent richness. It is undoubtedly one of the great expressions of Masseto with a long ageing potential.

## 2009

The 2009 growing season saw a winter and early spring that were cool and rainy, and budbreak occurred in line with past years. May was dry, but the rains returned in June, without however negatively impacting vine growth or flowering. Summer was practically rainless, and hot, with temperatures often rising above 35°C and with little difference between day and night temperatures. Strong scirocco winds from Africa between late August and early September hastened the ripening process, and this vintage harvest was one of the earliest and most rapid in Masseto's history. Harvest started on 2nd September and was completed on 10th September yielding a total of five different lots.

**TASTING NOTES:** Masseto 2009 is the expression of a particularly warm vintage that showcased all

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the noble qualities of a great terroir. Working in harmony with the clay soil of the Masseto vineyard, we succeeded in achieving the balance, crispness, and aromatic complexity that are classic to all great wines. An impressively dark hue, Masseto 2009 mirrors its vintage, exhibiting intense impressions of ripe cherry, chocolate, spice, and coffee. Profound and full-bodied in the mouth, it boasts explosive fruit, and tannins which are glossy and firm. Its vein of crisp acidity fuels a long finish marked by a vivacious crispness.

## 2010

The 2010 growing season will be remembered for being one of the latest in recent years. From budbreak on, in fact, the growth stages were some 10 days behind average, and that slow pace continued through to the harvest. A rainy spring was followed by a hot, dry summer, which favoured optimal development of the clusters. A few rain showers interrupted the harvest in September, but adequate dry, sunny periods allowed the fruit to fully ripen. Painstaking vineyard management, and careful leaf-pulling in particular, ensured that the grapes were sound and healthy. Cool nights encouraged fine development of aromatic compounds, with the grapes displaying remarkably crisp fruit and floral qualities. Harvest started on 14th September and was concluded on 4th October yielding a total of five different lots.

**TASTING NOTES:** The relatively cool climate of 2010 yielded a wine that is remarkably elegant and with superb, complex aromatics. The colour is dense and near-opaque, while the nose boasts intense, deep fruit accompanied by delicate spice notes and a vein of crisp minerality. If on the palate it presents itself somewhat less opulent than in warmer vintages, it does however display an impressively-dense suite of firm tannins that seem to linger forever. The equally-lengthy finish conveys elegant notes of toast and chocolate. A Masseto full of elegance and finesse, but with its customary magnificence.

## 2011

After a very late-developing 2010 growing season, 2011 was characterised by warm, dry weather and a much earlier than average harvest. A rainy winter was followed by a warmer-than average spring that brought forward the start of vine growth by 10 days. Budbreak was particularly rapid and uniform, always a good indicator of a fine growing year. Then cooler weather in June and July slowed vine development. The expected rains arrived on schedule after flowering and during veraison, encouraging optimal cluster growth, aromatic intensification, and, even more important, exceptionally-generous accumulation of polyphenols. A heat spell at the end of August further quickened ripening, resulting in the earliest harvest to date in the history of Masseto. The grapes arriving in the cellar were perfectly sound and healthy, well balanced, and with no sign of over-ripeness. Harvest began on 25th August and finished on 1st September, bringing in a total of 5 different lots.

**TASTING NOTES:** With the 2011 vintage, Masseto returns to a typically Mediterranean expression of a warm year in the Bolgheri terroir. Yet the overall impression is one of superb balance and measure, notwithstanding the wine's rich concentration and ripeness. A near-opaque colour greets the eye, followed by explosive aromas of gloriously-ripe wild red berry fruit cosseted by hints of toasty oak and dark chocolate. A full-bodied palate impresses with its deep concentration and opulence, displaying remarkably supple, glossy tannins. Masseto 2011 concludes with a cleanly-defined vein of crisp acidity, infused with the fruit and spice encountered on the nose.

## 2012

2012 was a dry growing year, like 2011, with the scarcity of water already evident during a cold, dry winter. At budbreak, which occurred normally, a water deficit of some 100mm, compared to the multi-year average, was already evident. A mild, sunny spring brought excellent vine growth, with a rapid, consistent flowering. July and August were hot and almost rain-free, prompting fears of arrested ripening due to lack of water. In spite of this, veraison was normal and satisfactory under optimal conditions. A few spells of

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rain between the end of August and beginning of September gave final momentum to the ripening, and the fruit achieved a fine overall ripeness, with optimal levels of aromatics and polyphenols. The harvest took place between 29th August and 17th September.

**TASTING NOTES:** Masseto 2012 benefited from another particularly dry, sunny year which, thanks to the rains prior to the harvest, created perfect conditions for the ripening of the Merlot, without excessive heat or dryness and enhanced by the exceptional terroir of the Masseto vineyard. This vintage combines the principal characteristics of a great Masseto: rich and generous but also very fresh and with a firm structure in a wine of great intensity and complexity. Intense in colour, the olfactory impact develops classic notes of red and black fruit, chocolate and liquorice, subtly enhanced by notes of toasted wood. The palate shows well-rounded and full, with a thick, dense tannic texture that boasts rich fruit and spice notes. The finish is prolonged with a lively and vibrant acid vein that closes on a note of intense freshness.

## 2013

After a dry 2012, winter 2013 was characterized with mild and rainy weather, which caused a delay in budding of up to 15 days. A cool, rainy spring also led to an irregular and very long flowering period – with a two-week delay compared to the average – which reduced production and resulted in an uneven development of the grapes. Fortunately, the summer, which arrived punctually at the end of June, was perfect, dry and sunny, with a few peaks of heat in July and August. The slow vegetative development was ultimately beneficial because it deferred ripening until after the hottest period. The August storms significantly lowered temperatures, especially at night, which favoured aromatic expression. This however led to a later than average harvest, which started on 12th September with vineyard parcel “Masseto Alto” and concluded on 25th September with the last block of “Masseto Centrale”.

**TASTING NOTES:** Masseto 2013 is the result of an overall late and fresh climate during the harvesting period. These are particularly favourable conditions for Merlot, which was able to ripen slowly and completely in sunny weather, without excessive heat, which enhanced a full expression of the aromatic qualities and perfect ripening of the polyphenolic content. Intense ruby in colour, the nose immediately reveals fully ripe fruitiness endowed with great freshness and complexity, underlined by delicate notes of vanilla and cocoa. On the palate, the wine is substantial and rich, with great density, and a rare tannic quality of silkiness and smoothness. Black fruit aromas are accompanied by a strong note of freshness and a long, elegant finish, which is prolonged with a delicate hint of cocoa.

## 2014

The 2014 vintage will remain as one of the most particular in Masseto’s history. A warm and rainy winter was followed by a mild, dry spring that permitted a normal vegetative development with a timely and even flowering. After regular conditions in July, August was rainy and cold, creating difficulty for the grapes to ripen and increasing the risk of diseases. However, the meticulous work carried out in the vineyard, including leaf removal and treatments throughout the month of August, allowed the grapes to arrive in excellent condition for harvest in September and October when the weather was mostly sunny and dry. As always, great terroirs tell their own story, and in 2014 the blue clays of Masseto showed their capacity to a full by swelling and making the soils impenetrable, thus avoiding excessive accumulation of water and the dilution of the grapes. During the harvest a very careful selection of bunches was essential and some specific vineyard blocks were harvested in up to three different stages. A strict selection was also made on the sorting table, in order to fill the tanks with only perfect grapes. 2014 represents to date the latest and longest harvest in the history of Masseto. Starting on 5th September and ending on 7th October.

**TASTING NOTES:** In a vintage where the quality of the terroir, the patience and rigor of the workers made it possible to achieve full ripening, Masseto 2014 represents a most elegant and refined expression. Intense in colour the nose immediately reveals complexity and freshness with hints of red berries, sweet spices, and a slight aroma of toasted wood. On the palate silky with a fine, smooth texture, supported by a vibrant fruitiness and a lively acidity, all perfectly integrated. A long, intense finish concludes the tasting.

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## 2015

Compared to a rather particular 2014, the 2015 proved to be an almost textbook vintage. After a rainy and mild winter, with just a few days of temperatures below zero, budbreak arrived on time during the first days of April. Spring was characterized by dry and sunny weather, providing ideal conditions for regular vegetative growth that culminated in a quick and complete flowering at the end of May. From June on, water stress gradually became evident. July will be remembered as a particularly torrid, dry month, with maximum temperatures exceeding 30°C every single day of the month. The heat, combined with the absence of rains, made us fear a shut-down in the ripening and the need for an early harvest. Luckily rain fell abundantly around 10th August that not only unblocked the ripening but also brought much cooler temperatures during the final ripening phase. This cool, yet sunny, weather continued throughout the harvest, allowing us to pick the grapes with great ease, choosing just the right moment to harvest the different vineyard blocks, resulting in a fresh and lively aromatic quality with a perfect degree of phenolic ripeness along with abundant, yet silky and soft, tannins. The harvest began on 29th August with the youngest vines and finished on the 16th September with the last portions of 'Masseto Centrale'.

**TASTING NOTES:** The regularity of the vintage, along with ideal temperatures during harvest, are reflected in a classic Masseto, with a perfect balance between a mature, complex, aromatic expression of great freshness and a rare quality of ample, silky and smooth tannins. Dark and intense in colour and rich in aromas with hints of fully ripe red fruit and spicy, balsamic and cocoa notes. In the mouth it becomes sensual and rich, with great density and an ample and perfectly smooth tannin. The fruity notes are underlined by the subtle presence of oak - terminating in a fresh and vivid finish with pronounced hints of cocoa.

## 2016

A common scenario in recent years, the winter of 2016 was characterized by abnormally warm weather with heavy rainfall in February. Budbreak took place on time in the last week of March.

The abundance of water in the soil and the warm weather in April led to quick and normal vegetative vine growth. Towards May temperatures returned to normal, slowing the growth down slightly, bringing about the flowering which took place in the last week of May with dry sunny weather, perfect for a good fruit-set. The summer temperatures were in the norm with very little rain, favouring a notable water stress towards the end of ripening. The usual mid-August storms were also absent, maintaining a state of hydric stress through the first part of the harvest. Luckily temperatures significantly cooled off at night, allowing the vines to recover from the daytime temperatures. Ripening went on steadily building up excellent phenolic potential and a balanced sugar/acidity ratio. Harvest started early on the 24th August with the younger vines. In September a few rain showers arrived, providing enough water in the soil to prevent the vines from shutting down. This allowed us to complete harvest under virtually perfect conditions. The older vines of 'Masseto centrale' took great advantage from this situation and continued their ripening until the third week of September. The last plots were picked on the 20th September.

**TASTING NOTES:** 2016 represents a textbook vintage for Masseto, with a typical coastal Tuscan climate that saw a dry and sunny growing season, abundant sunshine with just enough rain to allow perfect ripening. Particularly intense and young in colour, followed by a nose in which ripe and intense dark fruit blends with subtle notes of cocoa and spices. On the palate it develops a rich and dense frame of ripe and caressing tannins balanced by luscious and vibrant fruit and a vivid acidity that keeps the long finish clean and vibrant.

# MASSETO



## 2017

2017 will be remembered as one of the hottest and driest vintages in recent history. Due to an unusually mild winter with temperatures 3°C above average, budbreak occurred two weeks earlier than usual. Apart from a brief period of cold weather towards the end of April, the entire growing season was dominated by warm and dry weather, leading to a reduced development of the canopy. Flowering and fruit set went well, but due to the lack of water cluster and berry sizes stayed small. July and August stayed hot and virtually without rain, but fortunately with sufficiently cool nights to allow the vines to recover from the heat and continue to ripen the fruit without shutting down, maintaining excellent levels of acidity in the grapes. Harvest started early and was the fastest ever, only three days of picking between the 24<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> August. Given the particular conditions, the grapes were picked rather by vine age than by single vineyard, yielding only four different lots.

**TASTING NOTES:** Masseto 2017 is certainly a child of its vintage, that has managed to encapsulate all the ripeness and concentration of a particularly sunny and dry vintage.

The colour is almost black, the nose reveals a rich and ripe expression of concentrated black fruit, with hints of spices and liquorice. On the palate the wine manages to combine great intensity and ripeness of fruit with a remarkable sense of balance and freshness. The tannins are densely knit, the texture velvety, the finish shows lingering fruitiness and a vibrant acidity giving a final touch of freshness. Although it comes from one of the warmest vintages, 2017 can be considered a very typical Masseto in its unmistakable combination of richness and elegance.

## 2018

After the drought vintage 2017, winter 2018 seemed to indicate that things were getting back to the norm, with cold weather and even few days of snow which we had not seen for years. Things changed quickly from March onwards with one of the rainiest springs in Masseto's history. At the same time temperatures, particularly in April, were higher than average, which led to a rapid vegetative growth, culminating in flowering which occurred one full week earlier than normal. Precise timing and presence of all our workforce was required to keep pace with the vines and operate shoot thinning and positioning of the canopy. While temperatures came back to the norm in May, the high amount of rain created a high level of disease pressure, especially for downy mildew, which put the nerves of vine growers to the test for the rest of the growing season. Only through perfect organization and capacity to enter the vineyard for spraying in the few days without rain was it possible to get control of the disease keeping canopies and grapes healthy.

In July mostly sunny and warm weather allowed for a little rest before *véraison* stepped in timely around the 22 July.

August was warm with a bit of rain around the 15<sup>th</sup>, which prevented the appearance of any major hydric stress. Sugars and acidity moved at a slow pace while berry sizes grew a bit more than usual.

Harvest started on 31<sup>st</sup> August with the youngest gobelet-trained vines and then stopped for one week until we started picking the older vines from the 6<sup>th</sup> September onwards. Differences between parcels within Masseto were particularly marked, leading to a very long harvest that was concluded only on 4<sup>th</sup> October and yielded 9 different vinification lots.

**TASTING NOTES:** Masseto 2018 is a wine that perfectly respects its unique terroir and the vintage. Dark in colour, with an expressive nose of perfectly ripe cherries, plums, and spicy new oak. The palate is broad and rich as one would expect from Masseto, but shows refined and silky texture that is so typical of 2018. The finish shows great length with a touch of refreshing tannic grip. A particularly elegant version of Masseto that combines richness and elegance.

# MASSETO



## 2019

The year 2019 was characterised by a highly variable climate, which alternated periods of cold and rain with long bouts of drought and heat.

After a rather normal winter, budding took place on the first week of April. Cold and rainy conditions throughout April and May considerably slowed down development of the vegetation, delaying flowering to 10 days later than usual. In June, the climate suddenly turned hot and dry, with peak temperatures of 37°C reached at the end of the month. All summer long the weather remained hot and sunny, with temperatures 2°C higher than average and 45 consecutive days without rain. In the last week of July, the long period of drought was interrupted by two days of rain, readjusting the temperature to the seasonal norm, with ideal conditions for grape ripening.

After another set of rain showers at the beginning of the month, Merlot harvest began on 5<sup>th</sup> September with the young vine and went on until the 20<sup>th</sup> September under perfect conditions. Harvest was completed with the Cabernet Franc on the 1<sup>st</sup> October.

**TASTING NOTES:** Masseto 2019, harvested slightly later than usual has benefited from the sunny but mild weather in early September, giving a dense yet harmonious expression. The youthful colour suggests a rich and intense wine, the nose shows textbook scents of ripe cherries, violet, liquorice and dark chocolate. The palate is broad and dense with velvety and refined tannins that coat the palate, while leaving a fresh and vibrant finish.

*July 2022*

# MASSETO