



CALL OF NATURE
Winemaker Giovanni Bulgari
on a Tuscan hillside

Bulgari Bottled

Giovanni Bulgari has himself a jewel of a winery.

| By Katie Kelly Bell |

The Bulgari family is known throughout the world for their grand contributions to jewelry and timepieces, as well as their uncompromising appreciation for quality. Son Giovanni brings those family values to the world of wine. To call his winery “new” would be inaccurate; Giovanni spent years studying winemaking and vineyard management while transforming acres of abandoned vineyards into a fertile new endeavor.

Giovanni Bulgari, the youngest member of the famous brood, has parlayed this inherent passion into his own Italian vineyard, Podernuovo a Palazzone—from which a second vintage is soon to arrive. Not one to shy away from learning a laborious skill from the ground up, Giovanni put in his time (from the age of 22), mastering nearly all aspects of the family’s jewelry business—including traveling the world in search of exotic gems.

Despite the glamorous trappings of life as a Bulgari, Giovanni always felt drawn to winemaking, and knew he’d go back to the old country if given a chance. It was 2004 when, he and his father, Paolo Bulgari, founded Podernuovo a Palazzone. Today, he feels most at home on

his Tuscan hillside farming grapes and tending to his goats, dogs and bees. “This kind of job takes you completely and deeply inside,” he says. “You can’t close the shop and go on vacation. Winemaking is an obsession.”

The winery rests in the middle of Tuscany’s famed Chianti zone, yet Giovanni elected to forgo the special Chianti designation, opting for IGP status on his label. In doing this, he deliberately freed his wines

from the region’s strict requirements. “I don’t want to be bound by rules; I want to experiment with my wines.”

So far, experimentation has served him well. Currently he is producing three wines: a red blend, a single varietal sangiovese and a single varietal cabernet franc. The wines are finessed and elegant, with richness of fruit and beguiling complexity—violet, dried herbs, black cherries and spices compete for your attention in every glass. “During my time at Bulgari, I learned many things about excellence and obsession for details,” he says. “When you buy a stone, you need to touch and see it, and test clarity, color and density. I find many analogies between this and winemaking.” Cheers to that.

Three to Try:

2009 Therra

Red blend of sangiovese, cabernet sauvignon, merlot and montepulciano, \$23

2010 Argirio

100 percent cabernet franc grapes

2009 Sotirio

100 percent sangiovese

Where to Buy:

Binny’s Beverage Depot, various locations, binnys.com

