



## Simonit&Sirch Master pruners

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**M**aster pruner Marco Simonit travels the world to tend vines for the great international labels. Together with his friend and partner Pierpaolo Sirch he devised the Simonit&Sirch pruning method that helps vines grow more healthily and gives them a longer life. As a result the partnership is in great demand from the world's most important wineries. Winner of the wine-making Oscar in 2012 as the Best Wine Agronomist, Marco is the CEO of Simonit&Sirch, the only company in the world involved in training workers to hand-prune vines. It also provides consultancy services for over 130 prestigious wineries in Italy, the rest of Europe, the USA, South Africa, Australia, Chile and Argentina, numbering the legendary Château d'Yquem, Château La Tour, Moët&Chandon, Roederer and Domaines Leroy among its clients. Simonit&Sirch recently developed a dendrosurgery technique that treats vines afflicted with Esca without digging them out, and worked with Bordeaux University's ISVV (Institute of Vine & Wine Science) to create the DUTE-Diplôme Universitaire de Taille ed d'Epamprage, the only university diploma in pruning and desuckering in the world. There's nobody better than Marco to discuss Italian wines with.

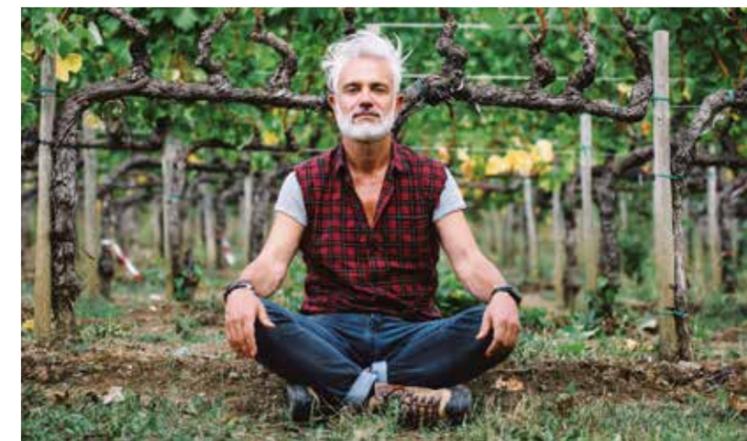
**1** What do you think are currently the most important Italian wines?  
I'd rather talk about terroirs than labels, which means Piedmont and Tuscany, especially the Montalcino area. As for wineries, there's Angelo Gaja, Roberto Voerzio, Sandrone and Giuseppe Rinaldi in Piedmont, and Biondi Santi in Montalcino and Sassicaia and Masseto in the Bolgheri area in Tuscany. Then there are Franciacorta wines (with estates like Bellavista and Ca' del Bosco) for the Metodo Classico and Trentino, with Ferrari. Finally, cellars like Romano dal Forno and Quintarelli for Amarone.

**2** From your privileged point of view, what are the most sought-after Italian wines abroad?  
At the top end it has to be the Piedmontese and Tuscan wines I mentioned before. Of course, Prosecco is well-known abroad, but that's in the more popular section of the market. But we're talking about a number of different levels.

**3** What wines do foreign visitor to Italy look for?  
The ones already available in their country, the kind they drink in swish restaurants or find in well-stocked wine shops. Unless someone in Italy offers them an alternative and has the authoritative knowledge to do so. There's a great deal to be done in this field, creating stronger links between oenology and tourism.

**4** Which cellars, including niche wineries, do you think they really should make an effort to discover?  
Here too I'd rather talk about terroirs above all, because it's the combination of the terroir and the human skills involved in making a fine wine – so that means the Friuli wines of Borgo del Tiglio, Miani, and Ronco del Gnemiz. The altoatesini Cantina Terlano and Manicor. Plus some wines from Etna (Marco De Grazia, for example) or the Valtellina (like Dirupi), the fruits of a truly heroic cultivation initiative. And the Basilicata, with its Aglianico del Vulture, is a region to keep an eye on.

**5** How does your work help the wines produced by the cellars you support become fine wines?  
Vines that are tended correctly grow stronger and live for a long time, and their wines develop a distinctive personality because the plant expresses the character and unique nature of the land from which it draws life. Caring for the plant is a crucial factor in the production of unique wines. The style of the wine is the basis for all the work carried out by the great wineries, which have to offer peerless products. That's what gives value to a bottle of wine, transforming it into a prized collectable object.



The international jury of the OIV, the authoritative and prestigious International Organisation of Wine and Vine, awarded the OIV prize 2018 to Marco Simonit for his "Vine Pruning Guide: Guyot", a practical guide to vine pruning to prevent diseases in the wood



The Agromonop of Friuli at work among excellent vines

