

# THE WINES OF ITALY

In Italy we have over 2,400 different wines - both the largest wine production and greatest spectrum of diversity in the world. France classified its growths into a hierarchy of crus over a century ago, and did so with remarkable talent and exactitude. We still have not done so, and have only our D.O.C. - our own "appellation d'origine" - or our stricter D.O.C.G. to guide the wine world towards the appreciation of our great wines. It is patently not enough. In fact, the D.O.C. alone generates confusion; for example, one may taste Chianti wines of such boggling diversity that one wonders at the significance of an appellation that groups them all together. The 1984 D.O.C.G. legislation (where G. stands for "guaranteed") has not impressed me with any meaningful improvements. Moreover, more often than not, the laws governing the production of D.O.C. wines hinder rather than help the imaginative and talented producer. Thus, many quality-oriented wine-makers have started making truly remarkable wines disregarding the D.O.C. laws. But alongside these we also have unscrupulous estates who, wanting to ride this highly esteemed "nouvelle vague", have given us uninteresting wines at best. Furthermore, non-D.O.C. wines can only adopt proprietary names which are too often unknown. Thus, to the wine-lover both at home and abroad, the picture becomes all the more complex and nebulous. I should like to dissipate some of this confusion, to offer a direction. I am only interested in wines of outstanding quality. This does not mean only in the greatest wines, but also in "petits vins" of unusual character - pure wines that in their own class, and in their own right, are the best that one can possibly find. For, just as one would not drink great Bordeaux or top flight Burgundy daily, so one would not drink Barolo or Brunello on an everyday basis - while one ought to still demand and obtain very good wine

with every meal.

To find a great wine one must first find a great cru. And although the Italian government has not classified them in any comprehensive way, the hundreds of years of trial and error in our vineyards, and the results that unequivocally followed, have. With a careful but also critical eye towards tradition and the experience that grows out of tasting and research, I have made my own classifications. My selections offer them to you.

Secondly - as a wine does not make itself - one must find a great wine-maker. And I pride myself on my collaborator-friends, whom I repute to be among the finest in Italy. They are the living matter of my selections.

Finally, perhaps my greatest pride today is the resuscitation of once great and famous appellations and their wines. To return dignity and pride to winemaking in Frascati, Orvieto, Valpolicella, Soave and Verdicchio; to help produce extremely fine wine where the will to do so had been systematically crushed by the mega-coop and industrial mentality, and the legislature that fostered and protected it. Please give these wines a try, and I'm sure you will be captured by the self-same excitement and pleasure that captivated the multitudes that once made these wines deservedly among the most famous in the world. ◇



## The estates of Marc de Grazia Selections

### Piedmont

*Domenico Clerico  
Seghesio  
Giovanni Manzoni  
Giovanni Corino  
Renato Corino  
Silvio Grasso*

*F.lli Revello  
Mario Marengo  
Cavallotto F.lli  
Luigi Pira  
Francesco Boschis*

*Stefano Massone  
Moccagatta  
Albino Rocca  
Antonolo  
La Morandina*

### Trentino Alto Adige

*La Cadalora  
Viticoltori Alto Adige  
Köfererhof*

### Veneto

*Gini  
Tamellini  
Roberto Mazzi  
Cantine U. Bortolotti*

### Marche

*Boccadigabbia  
Bisci  
Le Terrazze  
Tavignano*

### Umbria

*Palazzone  
Fratelli Pardi*

### Abruzzo

*Filomusi Guelfi*

### Tuscany

*Uccelliera  
San Filippo  
Podere Brizio  
La Serena - Rasa 1°  
Scopetone  
Le Potazzine  
Il Palazzino  
S. Giusto a Rentennano  
Le Cincirole  
Le Fonti  
Lucignano  
Giacomo Mori  
Ambra  
Dei  
Fontaleoni  
Le Calcinaie-Santini  
Terenzuola*

### Lazio

*Lorenzo Costantini*

### Campania

*Salvatore Molettieri  
Antonio Caggiano  
Benito Ferrara  
Colli di Lapio  
Cantina del Taburno  
De Angelis*

### Sicily

*Terre Nere  
Girolamo Russo  
Centonze  
Ferrandes*

### Puglia

*Santa Lucia  
Masserie Pisari*

# ESTATES

## **Piedmont**

DOMENICO CLERICO  
ALDO & RICCARDO SEGHESIO  
GIOVANNI MANZONE  
RENATO CORINO  
GIOVANNI CORINO  
SILVIO GRASSO  
FRATELLI REVELLO  
MARIO MARENGO  
CAVALLOTTO  
LUIGI PIRA  
F.LLI MOCCAGATTA  
ALBINO ROCCA  
ANTONIOLO  
LA MORANDINA  
FRANCESCO BOSCHIS  
STEFANO MASSONE

## **Tuscany**

UCCELLIERA  
SAN FILIPPO  
PODERE BRIZIO  
LA SERENA - RASA 1°  
SCOPETONE  
LE POTAZZINE  
IL PALAZZINO  
S. GIUSTO A RENTENNANO  
LE CINCIOLE  
LE FONTI  
LUCIGNANO  
GIACOMO MORI  
AMBRA  
DEI  
FONTALEONI  
LE CALCINAIE  
TERENZUOLA

## **Campania**

SALVATORE MOLETTIERI  
ANTONIO CAGGIANO  
BENITO FERRARA  
COLLI DI LAPIO  
CANTINA DEL TABURNO  
DE ANGELIS

## **Sicily**

TERRE NERE  
GIROLAMO RUSSO  
CENTONZE  
FERRANDES

## **Puglia**

SANTA LUCIA  
MASSERIE PISARI

## **Lazio**

LORENZO COSTANTINI

## **Trentino Alto Adige**

LA CADALORA  
VITICOLTORI ALTO ADIGE  
KOEFERERHOF

## **Marche**

BOCCADIGABBIA  
BISCI  
LE TERRAZZE  
TAVIGNANO

## **Umbria**

PALAZZONE  
PARDI

## **Abruzzo**

FILOMUSI GUELFI

## **Veneto**

GINI  
TAMELLINI  
ROBERTO MAZZI  
CANTINE U. BORTOLOTTI

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# PIEDMONT

If Tuscany with its moderately large Estates and Renaissance villas and castles may be found to be reminiscent of Bordeaux, Piedmont, bespeckled with microscopic properties whose average vineyard is no larger than two acres, is unquestionably more akin to Burgundy. And just as all the regions above have their own predominant varietal, so does Piedmont. For although the Dolcetto grape is responsible for delightfully fresh and fragrant wines; and largely thanks to the producers I collaborate with, the Barbera grape is finally regaining its status as a very fine varietal; and while in Moscato d'Asti we have one of the world's most appealing aromatic dessert wines; unquestionably the Nebbiolo varietal - responsible for Barolo and Barbaresco and concurring largely in the makeup of many other fine wines - is king in Piedmont.

At their best, Barolo and Barbaresco can match any wine the world over, and Piedmont's reputation as the greatest red wine region of Italy largely stems from these oenological masterpieces. Yet in the not too distant past these wines suffered a loss in popularity easily measurable by the ignorance that still today somewhat surrounds them both in Italy and abroad.

This has been largely due to the vast amounts of wine on the market that have not delivered what their reputation promised. Moreover, the obvious diversity between wines produced in virtually adjacent vineyards has naturally generated confusion with the consumer. Clearly, legislative seriousness is demanded here, where very small, but highly diversified microclimates cry out for a cru classification.

Furthermore, improper winemaking coupled to the general unavailability of qualified information

has led to the recklessly widespread myth that Barolo and Barbaresco are wines packed with hard tannins, virtually undrinkable before a 10 year aging period, whereas it is largely untrue that longer aging is required of a fine Barbaresco or Barolo than it is of a fine Bordeaux.

If this myth has been at least in part dispelled and if the demanding wine drinker is requesting the wines of Piedmont more and more, no small thanks is due to the producers with whom I have worked for over three decades, for unquestionably it was they and few others that pioneered and paved the way to quality for all to try and follow.

That Piedmont's climate is more tasking on red wines than any other in Italy, and that inevitably great vintages are usually less common than one would like them to be - this is true and must be admitted. But it is certainly no more problematic than the climates of Bordeaux or Burgundy.

Accordingly, without exceptional crus backed by very talented winemakers, demanding world class wines from Piedmont would be asking too much. But both of these we have, and my selection stands as proof: ever since I started my selection, nearly every year at least one new producer from Piedmont irresistibly crept in. These are talented men who have dedicated themselves, mind and body, to produce the greatest wines possible. Most of them have very small properties, but all have the finest crus, the will and the drive, the pride and the capacity.

The second half of the nineties and the first decade of the 2000s has produced a series of exceptional vintages.

Each estate that you will find described here represents, vintage after vintage, the finest effort from each respective cru.

Over three decades ago, when I first started my selections, these estates were virtually unknown. More often than not, these estates were ridiculed for employing simple yet unheard of, and certainly unorthodox, techniques of vinification.

Today, all the estates of my selection are known the world over for their splendid wines, valued as the finest expression of their kind. Together they embrace many of the great crus of Piedmont in all their rich diversity. Their wines are in all ways outstanding, yet in all ways fascinatingly and remarkably different. ◇

# DOMENICO CLERICO

After many years of tasting experience I have found six areas in the Monforte township worthy of a “grand cru” appellation. Significantly, these coincide with those traditionally hailed as the best by winemakers of the area.

The Clerico estate has vineyards in four of these crus: Bussia, Ginestra, Pajana and starting with the 1995 vintage, Mosconi. As in the case with most Barolo estates, the Clerico holdings are very small: 0.4 hectares in Bussia, 4.5 hectares in Ginestra, 1.8 hectares in Pajana and 1.5 hectares in Mosconi. Furthermore, Domenico Clerico - owner of the Clerico estate - is a tremendously gifted winemaker, and has a very finely equipped cellar. Having vineyards in crus of such stature enables him to produce exceptional wines even in “off” vintages. In order to insure always top quality when the harvest is not so good, Mr Clerico exercises especially good care in the grape selection and reserves only the very best must for aging into Barolo.

Of the Barolo wines that I have chosen, Clerico’s is perhaps the least archetypal - or rather, the one in which the style of the producer is most noticeable. It has a concentration of colour most outstanding and unusual in Barolo: even after three years of aging, most of which is spent in wood, it still retains a deep, vivid ruby with a mulberry ripeness that is reminiscent of a Grand Echezeaux. Similarly, the concentration and viscosity of this wine do not resemble those found in the Nebbiolo. The bouquet is intense, ample and spicy, with herbaceous hints, and in the mouth it is meaty and rich - almost grapey when young - and gifted with a long lingering finish, it will grow with austerity and age. It is a wine of extraordinary equilibrium, its richness in alcohol and extract undercutting

the tannic edge all-too-common in Barolo wines, making it round even when young. Yet, it remains a wine of great longevity that will reward the patience of one willing to age it with an ever increasing elegance and complexity.

In the past, Mr Clerico and I have experimented together at length with small French oak and starting in 1985 his estate produced a wine bottled under the proprietary name of “Arte”, which represents the culminating point in our joint effort in winemaking. A revolutionary blend of the finest Nebbiolo and Barbera aged in small French oak, Arte has spawned countless imitations. The Arte label may be seen in Lausanne’s Museum of Modern Art.

Mr Clerico also produces very fine Dolcetto d’Alba and a superb Barbera d’Alba. Two new wines will be released in 2011: Barolo “Aeroplan Servaj”, made from vineyards in Serralunga, and Langhe Nebbiolo “Capisme-e”, from vineyards in Monforte.

This Estate every year garners the highest recognition the world over in virtually every serious wine journal, and is today a recognized star among Barolo producers. His wines are sought after by the finest establishments and connoisseurs. ♦



## Barolo Ciabot Mentin Ginestra

Zone: *Monforte d’Alba*  
 Cru: *Ciabot Mentin Ginestra*  
 Varietal: *Nebbiolo*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *4.5 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *18,000 bottles*



## Arte

Zone: *Monforte d’Alba*  
 Cru: *Mosconi, Pajana, Ginestra and Bussia (younger vines)*  
 Varietal: *Nebbiolo (90%); Barbera (10%)*  
 Average Prod.: *12,000 bottles*

# ALDO E RICCARDO SEGHESSIO

I met Aldo and Riccardo Seghesio in 1990 through two fine friends and great winemakers of the area who occasionally bought small quantities of grapes from them. In fact, they were signalled to me for the outstanding quality of their vineyards in Monforte's cru of La Villa. This, I soon found out upon visiting, is a beautiful, small, tremendously steep south-facing slope only workable by hand.

The first release of the estate - the 1988 Barolo la Villa (first bottling ever from this cru!) - happily coincided with a magnificent vintage. The character of La Villa betrays its vicinity to La Ginestra, its better known neighboring cru justly famous for the elegance of its wines. Seghesio's Barolo expresses unusually deep colour, great finesse of bouquet with musk and tobacco scents and a concentrated, rich, silky texture that lingers long on the palate.

The low yields, the wonderful terroir and the fine winemaking also contribute in the making of very attractive Dolcetto and Barbera and perhaps the finest Nebbiolo I have ever tasted.

Furthermore, a Langhe Rosso (under the name of Bouquet - a blend of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Nebbiolo) started being produced in 1996 and a Barolo "base" (made from the younger vines of the "La Villa" vineyard) will be released on the market in 2011.

Riccardo, after Aldo passed away in 2010, is at the helm of the estate supported by Aldo's two sons, Sandro and Marco, and by his daughter Michela. The winemaking philosophy of the estate remains the same: a modern style that interprets and respects this remarkable terroir. ♦



## Barolo La Villa

Zone: *Monforte d'Alba*  
 Cru: *La Villa*  
 Varietal: *Nebbiolo*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *4 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *20,000 bottles*



## Dolcetto d'Alba Vigneto della Chiesa

Zone: *Monforte d'Alba*  
 Cru: *La Chiesa*  
 Varietal: *Dolcetto*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *2 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *15,000 bottles*

# GIOVANNI MANZONE

**W**ith Giovanni Manzone I am happy to be able to offer another superlative producer of Barolo, Dolcetto and Barbera. 4.3 hectares of the estate's vineyards lies in Le Gramolere, a cru I will not hesitate to call one of the greatest and most expressive of the Barolo appellation. Interestingly enough, if one excludes small quantities for local consumption, wine from this cru had never been bottled before the early nineties, but rather sold in bulk by the various growers to negotiants who gladly reinforced their blends with them. As a cru Le Gramolere yields a Barolo of extraordinary longevity - a characteristic usually associated with the wines from Serralunga. With forty hectolitres per hectare it also appears to yield among the lowest

production of the entire appellation, without need of grape thinning or excessively short pruning. This may help explain why Manzone's Barolo's concentrated silky raciness is backed by such a firm structure.

Both in bouquet and flavour, the character of this terroir expresses itself in a powerful reminiscence of currants and cherries which - unique in my experience - traverses the boundaries of grape varietal, affecting Barolo, Dolcetto and Barbera alike!

Depending on the given harvest, four distinct Baroli may be bottled: Le Gramolere, Bricat (produced from a strip of Le Gramolere vineyard owned exclusively by Giovanni Manzone, while Le Gramolere is owned by a couple of other estates), le Gramolere Riserva and Barolo Castelletto (2004 being the first

released vintage and made from vineyards in the zone of Castelletto). This intriguing display of "cru identity", moreover, is truly enhanced by the winemaking precision and integrity of Giovanni Manzone, whose exacting and critical palate has guided him unerringly towards the achievement of the highest quality. Last but not least this estate produces a tiny amount of most seductive barrel-fermented white wine from an obsolete varietal, Rossese Bianco and a Langhe Nebbiolo. ◇



## Barolo Le Gramolere

Zone: *Monforte d'Alba*  
 Cru: *Le Gramolere*  
 Varietal: *Nebbiolo*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *3 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *10,000 bottles*



## Dolcetto d'Alba La Serra

Zone: *Monforte d'Alba*  
 Cru: *La Serra*  
 Varietal: *Dolcetto*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *1.3 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *6,000 bottles*



## Barbera d'Alba Superiore La Serra

Zone: *Monforte d'Alba*  
 Cru: *La Serra*  
 Varietal: *Barbera*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *0.5 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *2,500 bottles*

# RENATO CORINO

The Corino brothers have divided their father's estate into two separate properties as of January 2006.

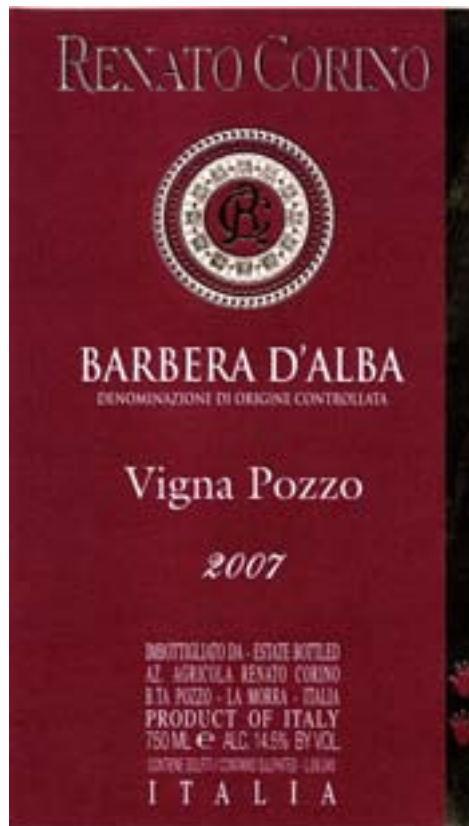
Renato's estate is in the Arborina area, approximately 1 km from the original winery, and a new cellar and homestead were recently built. Renato now exclusively produces Barbera Vigna Pozzo, Barolo Vigneto Rocche and a Nebbiolo d'Alba, while Barolo Arborina, the regular Barolo, Barolo Vecchie Vigne, Dolcetto and Barbera are made by both the estates.

Although the properties are now two, the wines maintain their wonderful character and outstanding quality, as the two brothers have always worked as a team and their vineyards are in top La Morra crus: Giachini, Pozzo, Rocche di Annunziata and Arborina.

The single vineyard Barbera Vigna Pozzo joins the half dozen world class wines produced by this varietal: a wine of stunning concentration, colour and length, it displays a phenomenal complexity of flavours and aromas.

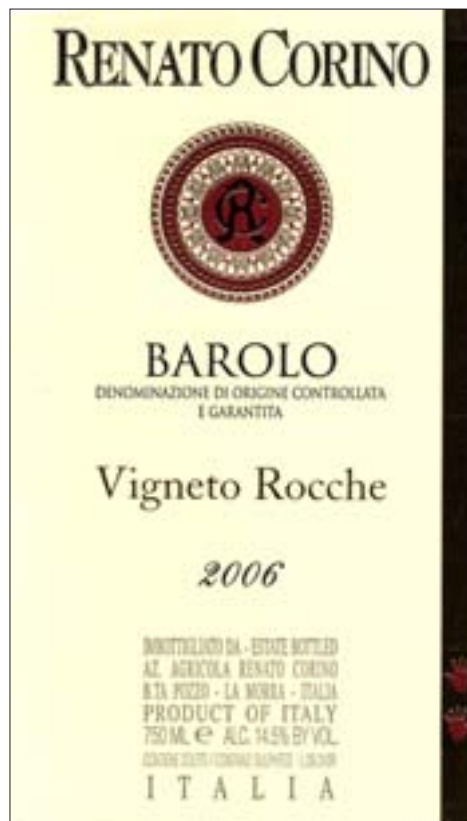
Barolo Vigneto Rocche is a wine whose magical elegance and finesse are unrivalled in the whole appellation and brand the cru as the "Musigny" of Barolo.

Arborina will no doubt remain the classic it has always been. An archetypal La Morra expression in its generous flesh, it distinguishes itself from all other surrounding crus by a touch of austerity, that tannic grip in the finish which is the trademark of this cru. ◇



## Barbera Vigna Pozzo

Zone: *La Morra*  
 Cru: *Vigna Pozzo*  
 Varietal: *Barbera*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *1 hectare*  
 Average Prod.: *5,000 bottles*



## Barolo Vigneto Rocche

Zone: *La Morra*  
 Cru: *Vigna Roche*  
 Varietal: *Nebbiolo*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *0.60 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *3,500 bottles*

# GIOVANNI CORINO DI GIULIANO CORINO

After the estate was divided at the beginning of 2006 between the two Corino brothers, Giuliano maintained the original homestead and cellars. This winery exclusively produces the single vineyard Barolo Vigna Giachini, Barbera Ciabot du Re (aged in wood 18 months, first release 2007 vintage) and a Nebbiolo Langhe, while the regular Barolo, Barolo Arborina, Barolo Vecchie Vigne, Dolcetto and Barbera are made by both estates. Giuliano also kept the original design of the labels.

Giuliano and Renato are certainly among the most talented winemakers of the new generation and the combination of owning top La Morra crus and extremely scrupulous practices in the vineyard and in the cellar ensure the release of outstanding wines.

Barolo Vigna Giachini is intense and opulent, vibrant with fruit and the vanilla-cedar aromas that oak confers. In my opinion Giachini is the most representative cru of the Annunziata subzone of La Morra. It displays all the trademarks of this splendid vineyard area: fragrance and length, soft supple tannins and a fullbodied generosity dressed in flawless austerity. A profound wine.

Barolo Vecchie Vigne, "old vines" in Italian, is produced from Nebbiolo of the oldest vines in each vineyard, although it is mainly made from Giachini in this estate. This is an extraordinary wine by any standard exalting the grandeur of the Giachini area to the hilt! An unforgettable wine and one that wants aging.

The Dolcetto and Barbera are all wonderful, well crafted and exciting wines - full, fruity, fat and exuberant. Giuliano will continue to produce l'Insieme, a blend of Barbera, Nebbiolo, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. ◇



## Barolo Vecchie Vigne

Zone: *La Morra*  
 Cru: *Giachini*  
 Varietal: *Nebbiolo*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *0.5 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *1,400 bottles*



## Barolo Vigna Giachini

Zone: *La Morra*  
 Cru: *Giachini*  
 Varietal: *Nebbiolo*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *2 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *6,500 bottles*

# SILVIO GRASSO

The estate, now in the hands of Federico Grasso, was founded in 1927 and boasts two hectares of southwest facing Nebbiolo vineyards in the fine La Morra crus of Luciani and Manzoni. Since Federico is a close friend and neighbour of Renato Corino, I have had the opportunity and pleasure to know his wines and to follow in detail the estate's progress over the years. Inclusion is a way of life for the best winemakers in Piedmont and so Federico and his wines were often shown at our tastings. He virtually evolved into this portfolio of which he has been part since 1993.

As is common with many fine crus of La Morra, those of Federico yield soft, deep and lush Barolo, the Manzoni having a slightly more tannic attack. In youth his Baroli display in varying depths an undercurrent of sweet oak. As they age, they move towards a fine, cedary and plump middle-age. I would say they acquire the quiet, refined, leisurely fabric and presence of a gentleman farmer.

Over the last decade, in addition to Barolo Bricco Luciani, Barolo Ciabot Manzoni and a Barolo "base", the volcanic Federico, in order to enhance the character of the different plots that make up his property, has released three more Baroli (all made from vineyards standing in La Morra): a traditionally made wine (forty days of maceration with the skins and ageing in large Slavonian oak casks) and two single vineyard versions from the Giachini and Plicotti crus. These efforts have been rewarded by the Italian and the international press.

The estate also produces a seductive barrel-fermented Barbera from the Fontanile vineyard, as well as a traditional juicy Barbera, a pretty and youthful Dolcetto, two different Nebbioli and "L'Insieme" (a blend of Barbera, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot

and Nebbiolo). Federico's son Silvio, a trained agricultural technician, is now working full-time at the estate. ◇



## Barolo Bricco Luciani

Zone: *La Morra*  
 Cru: *Bricco Luciani*  
 Varietal: *Nebbiolo*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *1.5 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *6,000 bottles*



## Barolo Pi Vigne

Zone: *La Morra*  
 Varietal: *Nebbiolo*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *1.5 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *10,000 bottles*

## FRATELLI REVELLO

Enzo and Carlo Revello take over their father's estate in 1990: their vineyards, once belonging to the local parish, boast parcels in the crus of Giachini, Rocche dell'Annunziata, Conca dell'Annunziata and Gattera. In 1992 the first Barolo is bottled with no cru designation, a last minute harvest under duress and with minimal equipment. Nevertheless, the wines show the gracefulness of the best vineyards of La Morra. This is convincing and we sell the first wines. In 1993 some grapes still need to be sold off in order to buy barrels and other equipment, but now Carlo and Enzo are prepared, and get rewarded with a remarkable vintage. In 1994 for the first time the grapes from Giachini are singled out and vinified separately, resulting in the depth and concentration typical of this cru. In 1995 the hail reduced the harvest dramatically in the Rocche vineyard, but in 1996 Revello's tiny parcel was finally vinified on its own, immediately betraying the extreme floral notes so unique to this Chambolle-like cru. Finally Barolo Conca - first release 1997 vintage - and Barolo Vigna Gattera - first release 1999 vintage - were added.

Well, when I met Carlo and Enzo Revello, their integrity was immediately palpable and it was clear that we really only had to work out a few details. Such is the quality of their vineyards and such has been the perfection of their wines that all has been borne out.

The Revello brothers also make a regular Barbera, a barrique aged Barbera, a Langhe Nebbiolo, a Dolcetto and L'Insieme (their blend is Barbera, Cabernet Sauvignon, Nebbiolo and Petit Verdot). ◇

**Barolo**

Zone: *La Morra*  
 Cru: *Rocche, Gattera, Giachini*  
 Varietal: *Nebbiolo*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *3.5 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *18,000 bottles*

**Barolo  
Rocche dell'Annunziata**

Zone: *La Morra*  
 Cru: *Rocche dell'Annunziata*  
 Varietal: *Nebbiolo*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *0.30 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *1,000 bottles*

# MARIO MARENCO

**M**ario Marengo, Marco's father, was a rare individual. In 1994, when I first visited the estate, the vineyard was truly a sight to behold: old vines (some 75 years old) high up on a south facing slope of the great Brunate cru of La Morra. After tasting several vintages, I knew I was in the presence of a greatness one rarely experiences, part of this greatness being a reserve of potential still unexploited. I also learned that though Mario devoted much care to his wine and took great pride in it, that he was quite occupied in other activities and was unable to personally carry his winery further forward: nor was he aware of any need for changes. Therefore, an unpleasant task I had faced many times before: tactfully informing a wine producer that though the wine was splendid in many ways, that it could and should be improved and that this would require some significant alterations. Mario listened, was perhaps a bit perplexed at first, but only right at the very start of the discourse. He then thoughtfully conceded a few possibilities and soon began experimenting and tasting with a reborn palate. He approved with a bright smile and said he suddenly felt 20 years younger.... and he acted that way too! Inside of a year he remade the cellars and all around the area heads were turning.

Mario's son, Marco, is now managing the estate, since his father passed away in 2001, with the same passion and dedication.

Barolo "Brunate" bears the character of the extraordinary vineyard it is made from, but equally apparent is the stamp of Mario Marengo that it continues to have: on all the 5,000 bottles made from the estate's 1.5 hectares.

The estate also makes another single vineyard Barolo from a tiny plot, Bricco Viole, in the township of La Morra, and small quantities of

Nebbiolo d'Alba and Dolcetto.

Finally, two new releases are a "base" Barolo and a Barolo made from a selection of the oldest vines of the Brunate vineyard. ◇



## Barolo Brunate

Zone: *La Morra*  
 Cru: *Le Brunate*  
 Varietal: *Nebbiolo*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *1.5 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *5,000 bottles*



## Nebbiolo d'Alba Valmaggione

Zone: *Veza d'Alba*  
 Cru: *Valmaggione*  
 Varietal: *Nebbiolo*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *0.4 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *3,000 bottles*

# CAVALLOTTO

There is a steep and winding shortcut leading from Azelia's estate to Castiglione Falletto, where I always stay, in a friendly quaint hotel, whenever I'm in Piemonte. And every day, over and over again, I take it, cutting time from one estate to another. For years, magnetically, I'd be drawn to my left, up the steep slope, to the Bricco Boschis cru, one of the finest and most spectacular of the Barolo appellation. Some day...I always told myself. And finally, the day has come.

Coming to me highly recommended by all my vigneron friends, I finally met the Cavallotto family, and found we mutually enjoyed our company, tasting wines, both theirs, from barrel and bottle, and some I'd bring along as a tease or a challenge; discussing winemaking, sharing the virtues of fine wine and the pros and cons of differing stylistic views. And mutual respect, that rare commodity seldom found in the wine world, led to collaboration!

The Cavallotto family have a monopole on the Bricco Boschis cru, and have been producing wines there for five generations. In 1984 they were the first of their township to eliminate all other crops, and to dedicate themselves exclusively to vinifying their grapes and bottling their wines. Today, Alfio and Giuseppe Cavallotto, both trained oenologists, continue to vinify the grapes grown exclusively from their own holdings, transforming them into the most classic expressions of Castiglione Falletto.

Between the Bricco Boschis and the Vignolo crus they own 23 hectares, roughly 13 of which planted with Nebbiolo.

Their vineyard management, as I have witnessed it all these years, is outstanding; rigorously aimed at

producing a yearly average of 32-38 hectolitres per hectare, in the case of Nebbiolo, and not over 40 for their other varietals.

The cellars are remarkably well equipped and spacious allowing for an even greater ease and flexibility during the hectic harvest period.

The estate produces three Baroli. One from the Vignolo cru, sloping 60-80 metres lower in altitude than the adjacent Bricco Boschis holding. This altitude difference probably accounts for its greater "sweetness" with respect to its siblings, the Vignolo showing equal vigour and power, but a more creamy flesh. Unquestionably a wine of singular breeding and longevity, with a gentile quality both on the palate and in its aromatics that is always the hallmark of a blue blooded cru. A princely wine indeed.

Equally grand is the estate's selection of the finest vineyard within the Bricco Boschis cru, the Barolo Vigna San Giuseppe. This is a magnificent classic, the epitome of Castiglione Falletto's character, a powerful, majestic wine of absolute authority. In its youth one revels in its firm and effortless stature; for sweetness one must wait.

The Barolo Bricco Boschis, far from being merely "regular" or "village" Barolo, is a cru in and of itself, best described as a San Giuseppe in a minor key. Superbly structured, it also reflects the austere, husky personality of its township: with a gentleman's reserve, it nevertheless reveals its powerful nature promptly betraying a richness that will unfold with age.

Similarly, Cavallotto's Nebbiolo is a rare wine built to age. Stylistically, it shies away from the wonderfully fragrant Nebbioli that one so easily enjoys, rather aiming to be a "little Barolo", as it were, approaching the

structure and depth of its majors, and easily mistakable with a full fledged Barolo. Significantly, it is oak aged and bottled a year later than most. Last, but not least, Cavallotto produces splendid Dolcetto and Barbera, both reflecting the massive nature of their terroir. The Dolcetto is well structured under its velvety floral identity. The Barbera, released a year later, sinewy and fleshy, possesses the weight, purity and balance of an athlete. ◇



### Barolo Bricco Boschis

Zone: *Cast. Falletto*  
 Cru: *Bricco Boschis*  
 Varietal: *Nebbiolo*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *5 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *22,000 bottles*



### Barolo Bricco Boschis Riserva Vigna S. Giuseppe

Zone: *Cast. Falletto*  
 Cru: *Bricco Boschis*  
 Varietal: *Nebbiolo*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *3.78 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *13,333 bottles*

# PIRA LUIGI & FIGLI

**V**igna Rionda, Vigna Marenca and Vigna Margheria are reputed to be the best in the township of Serralunga and this estate produces single vineyard Baroli from plots owned in all three of these crus (which can be seen from the azienda's terrace).

In the 1950s grapes and bulk wines were sold. In the following years small quantities of Barolo "base" were bottled. In 1993 the Baroli Margheria and Marenca were produced followed by Barolo Vigna Rionda in 1997.

The wines from these three crus are typical of the great terroir of Serralunga: mineral and austere. Barolo Margheria, made from 50 year old vines, is the most classical. Barolo Marenca and Barolo Vigna Rionda are structured, complex, with a lot of muscle and age longer. The Dolcetto is outstanding, also made from vines in Serralunga. It is rich and concentrated and reflects the character of this zone through and through. A pleasant and well balanced Nebbiolo d'Alba (in which the telltale smooth tannins of Serralunga are detectable) and a Barbera d'Alba are also made.

The Pira family works as a team with the principal aim of expressing the extraordinary character of their vineyards in the wines. Gianpaolo is in charge of the cellar, which has been completely renovated. His winemaking is meticulous aided by spotless modern equipment. The use of wood is very careful: large Slavonian oak casks for Barolo Margheria and Barolo "base" (made from the vines of Margheria and Marenca standing in the lower part of the slope), 30% new (or even less depending on the vintage) small French wood for Barolo Marenca and for Barolo Vigna Rionda.

Gianpaolo's father, Luigi, and his

brother Romolo tend the vineyards: natural viticulture is pursued, no chemicals are sprayed, low grape yields ensure concentration in the wines.

The azienda Luigi Pira has been part of my portfolio since 1996 and it acquires new accolades and enthusiasts every year. ◇



## Barolo Marenca

Zone: *Serralunga*  
 Cru: *Marenca*  
 Varietal: *Nebbiolo*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *2.2 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *9,000-10,000 btl*



## Barolo Margheria

Zone: *Serralunga*  
 Cru: *Margheria*  
 Varietal: *Nebbiolo*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *1.5 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *6,000-7,000 btl*

Azienda Agricola  
**MOCCAGATTA**

Piedmont

The Moccagatta Estate, founded by the Minuto family in 1952, has always held a rather low profile. The outstanding qualitative leaps made in the late eighties, however, have drawn the attention of both winemakers and winelovers alike. Adoption of barrel fermentation and aging in small French oak; severe pruning and grape thinning; employment of sophisticated cellar equipment and careful fermentation-maceration techniques; all this and more have poised Moccagatta at the forefront of quality winemaking in Barbaresco.

The Estate owns plots in three crus of radically different character in the townships of Barbaresco and Neive. From these - Basarin, Cole, Bric Balin - three single vineyard Barbaresco wines are produced, each individually vinified so as to enhance the character peculiar to their terroir. From Basarin comes also a remarkable barrel-fermented Barbera of astounding complexity.

Other 5 plots are devoted to Chardonnay (a single vineyard and a "base" wine are made) from which an average of 10,000 bottles are produced. This is a world class wine which I have little hesitation in calling one of Italy's very finest expression of this superb varietal.

Finally Moccagatta makes small quantities of very fine Dolcetto and Nebbiolo.

In short, under Franco and Sergio Minuto, the Moccagatta Estate has gained for itself a spot among the finest producers in Piedmont. Unfortunately, as seems to be the rule, here too great quality goes hand in hand with small quantities. ◇



**Barbaresco Cole**

Zone: *Barbaresco*  
 Cru: *Cole*  
 Varietal: *Nebbiolo*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *0.46 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *800 bottles*



**Barbaresco Basarin**

Zone: *Neive*  
 Cru: *Basarin*  
 Varietal: *Nebbiolo*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *1.80 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *10,000 btl*



**Barbaresco Bric Balin**

Zone: *Barbaresco*  
 Cru: *Muncagöta*  
 Varietal: *Nebbiolo*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *4 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *23,000 btl*



**Chardonnay Buschet**

Zone: *Barbaresco*  
 Cru: *Buschet*  
 Varietal: *Chardonnay*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *0.70 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *4,500 bottles*

# ALBINO ROCCA

Two vineyards contribute to the production of the Nebbiolo grapes that go into the making of Albino and Angelo Rocca's Barbaresco: Loreto and Bric Ronchi, both remarkable crus of the appellation. The viticultural practices are strict: organic fertilization, short pruning and green pruning. The very low production per hectare results in remarkable concentration - an engaging delight to the palate and a guarantee of longevity that many a Barbaresco no longer possesses.

Equally important: while already producing very fine wine, Albino and Angelo Rocca have a true yearning for improvement, and an openness towards novel winemaking techniques which they successfully apply. Proof of this are the wines still resting in the cellar's casks and barriques, the quality of which rivals the very best Barbaresco.

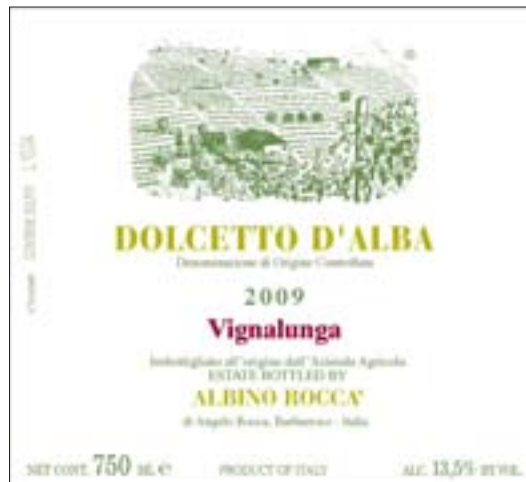
And, naturally, in keeping with the sound viticultural wisdom that, in Piedmont, holds to giving over each exposure to whichever varietal is most suited to it, the estate also produces small quantities of fruity Dolcetto and Barbera and a unique barrel fermented, stout bodied, rich still zesty flavoured white wine from the Cortese grape. A "base" Barbaresco (made from a plot in San Rocco Seno d'Elvio, in the township of Alba), a fresh and fruity Chardonnay with interesting mineral notes, a pleasant red "Vino da Tavola" (a blend of Nebbiolo, Barbera and Cabernet Franc) and a Moscato d'Asti complete the range.

Albino and Angelo's wines have been acknowledged and praised by the Italian and international specialised press. ◇



## Barbaresco Vigneto Bric Ronchi

Zone: *Barbaresco*  
 Cru: *Ronchi*  
 Varietal: *Nebbiolo*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *5 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *24,000 bottles*



## Dolcetto d'Alba Vignalunga

Zone: *Barbaresco*  
 Varietal: *Dolcetto*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *3.5 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *20,000 bottles*

# ANTONIOLO

For many reasons Gattinara is by far the most underrated appellation in Italy. Until most recently, its wines rivaled both in reputation and quality those of Barolo and Barbaresco, equaling, and often surpassing them in complexity, elegance and longevity. I, myself, have tasted superb 30-40 year old examples of the Antoniolo estate, of a quality I have yet to find in similarly aged Barolo.

The Nebbiolo varietal, locally known as Spanna, found its habitat in Gattinara at least since the 12th century, and by Charlemagne's time the hills girdling the western part of the town were prosperous in the vineyards. But it was at the court of the Hapsburgs when northern Italy was under their sway - that Gattinara's reputation began rivaling that of the great crus of Burgundy. So much so that connoisseurs, at the time, began to theorize on the possible Burgundian origin of Gattinara's unique clone of Nebbiolo.

Up to the mid nineties, its vineyards, as those of the small neighboring appellations, had been systematically abandoned - agriculture giving way to small industry. But in the following years, luckily, a countertrend took place and large investments in vineyards and cellars were made.

At the present time, the appellation's tiny total of 120 hectares is splintered amongst 100 owners, of which approximately 15 bottle.

To date, only the Antoniolo estate has upheld with great pride the qualitative standards that made the appellation so famous. The estate, it must be said, has exceptional holdings in the appellation's three greatest crus: Osso San Grato, San Francesco and Castelle.

Antoniolo's Gattinara "tout court" has all the classic characteristics of its

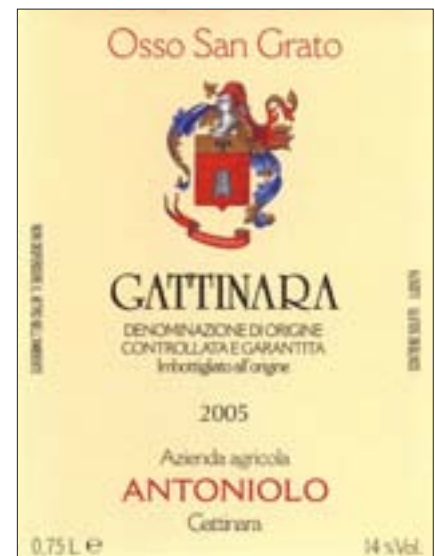
appellation: a deep, sinewy wine who, after four years aging is released still fragrant and youthful, revealing both the nobility of the Nebbiolo varietal and the stature that is the birthright of a great appellation.

The "Osso", which gets its name ("bone") from the cru's tough, rocky soil, wholly terraced due to its steepness, yields the Gattinara of greatest longevity and structure. A wine of immense power, when young it is brooding and shy; supremely suggestive, it is haughtily unwilling to release its graces before at least ten full years of life.

Castelle is comparatively suave and debonair. Immediately recognizable by its fine rose petal bouquet, it conquers with its rare engaging gracefulness.

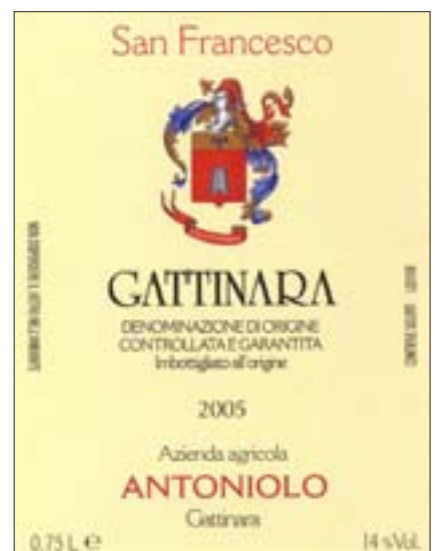
San Francesco has Osso's vigor, but not its severity. It has Castelle's elegance, but not so readily will it offer it. A superb and princely wine.

Antoniolo also makes a Coste della Sesia Nebbiolo, a Coste della Sesia Rosato and a white wine made from Erbaluce, a typical varietal of northern Piedmont. ◇



## Gattinara Osso San Grato

Zone: *Gattinara*  
 Cru: *Osso San Grato*  
 Varietal: *Nebbiolo*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *6 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *5,000 bottles*



## Gattinara San Francesco

Zone: *Gattinara*  
 Cru: *S. Francesco*  
 Varietal: *Nebbiolo*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *4 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *4,000 bottles*

# LA MORANDINA

**L**a Morandina's terroir is superlative and incredibly idiosyncratic. The Moscato grape, by nature most aromatic, is exalted by the calcareous soil on which the 15 hectares of vineyard stand.

The Morando brothers' Moscato is perfection: it has the richness that thoroughly satisfies coupled to a fragrant freshness that prevents cloying; and the bouquet transcends Moscato with unique nuances of sage and mint.

In this estate strict organic practices have been utilized for over 30 years, in fact chemical pesticides and fertilizers are banned in favour of sulphur and copper base products, manure and compost. Leguminous plants are sown on the aisles between the rows of vines and biological control is normally used against some kinds of pests. Furthermore, Giulio and Paolo Morando closely collaborate with the University of Turin, where their uncle Albino has taught viticulture for many years, and a considerable amount of research work is carried out at La Morandina.

The estate offers two wonderful Barbera d'Asti, Barbera Varmat and Barbera Zucchetto, both issuing from very old vines: husky and riddled with spice, these are pure examples of this rich soil, originating from the Miocene Epoch during which the Alps continued rising from the sea (fossilized shells can be found in the ground), while the vines of the Varmat cru are prephylloxera and are 100-120 years old.

Giulio and Paolo also make a regular Barbera d'Asti, L'Insieme (a blend of Barbera, Syrah and Nebbiolo) and a stunning single vineyard Barbaresco, "Bricco Spessa" (a cru in the township of Neive), made from 70-80 year old vines, mainly Nebbiolo Michet. This

Barbaresco, due to the age of the vines and the biotype of Nebbiolo, can be considered an "austere" wine, with an intense aroma and a great structure that makes it suitable for long ageing.◊



## Moscato d'Asti

Zone: *Castiglione Tinella*  
 Cru: *Bricco Francia*  
 Varietal: *Moscato*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *15 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *90,000 bottles*



## Barbera d'Asti Zucchetto

Zone: *Montegrosso d'Asti-Costigliole*  
 Cru: *Zucchetto*  
 Varietal: *Barbera*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *4 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *12,000 bottles*

# FRANCESCO BOSCHIS

I've known Mario Boschis Francesco's son - for quite a few years, he being a highly respected friend of good friends of mine who are all excellent winemakers. His wines have always been remarkable and tempting, and finally the temptation became irresistible. When I included this estate in my portfolio (in 1996) I represented twelve producers of Barolo and three of Barbaresco, plus other two producers of Piedmont, all of which made Dolcetto. Clearly in order to add three more, these had to be extraordinary to the highest degree and, indeed they were!

Dolcetto di Dogliani, along with that of Diano d'Alba, has always been acknowledged as the finest expression of the varietal. Both appellations rise up to 550 meters above sea level, a full 200-300 meters higher than the Dolcetto plantings in the Barolo and Barbaresco appellations. The altitude powerfully enhances the bouquet of the Dogliani Dolcetti with a fragrance like no other. Moreover, these wines in no way suffer that

lack of substance or structure that high altitude often implies. On the contrary, given excellent exposure and, especially, very old vines, the Dolcetti of Diano and Dogliani are more richly complex and age worthy than their lowland siblings.

Mario Boschis produces an excellent Dolcetto di Dogliani from many different plots the grapes of which are blended together. There's a springtime freshness about this Dolcetto that makes it a classic Dogliani wine: fine, floral and reminiscent of wild cherries.

From the Sorì San Martino cru and its 50 year old vines, looking east and planted in lean calcareous soil, comes a Dolcetto (now Dogliani DOCG) of unearthly fragrance and depth: this is the quintessence of Dolcetto di Dogliani, a wine of superlative elegance. The Dolcetto Vigna dei Prey (now Dogliani DOCG) - made from a vineyard with 20-30 years old vines and a small part with 60 year old vines - is Mario Boschis' favourite. I have a slight

penchant for the San Martino, but admittedly Mario has a much vaster experience. The wine is unusually powerful for any Dolcetto and is gifted with true "stage presence". Coming from heavier soils, rich in clay, its immensity is immediately obvious in its inky colour. Powerful and deep, it is a brooding wine with a tannic vein that it sheds with aging, a process which I find rewarding and unique in a Dolcetto. Certainly the Dolcetto with the greatest personality that I have ever tasted. An estate I couldn't resist!

Mario also makes two more Dolcetti, a Barbera d'Alba, a Langhe Barbera, a Langhe Freisa, a Piemonte Grignolino and a Langhe Sauvignon Blanc. ◇



## Dogliani DOCG Vigna Sorì San Martino

Zone: *Dogliani*  
Cru: *San Martino*  
Varietal: *Dolcetto*  
Vineyard Ext.: *2 hectares*  
Average Prod.: *6,500 bottles*



## Dogliani DOCG Vigna dei Prey

Zone: *Roddino d'Alba*  
Cru: *Vigna Prey*  
Varietal: *Dolcetto*  
Vineyard Ext.: *2 hectares*  
Average Prod.: *6,500 bottles*

# STEFANO MASSONE

Produced on a very poor calcareous soil from the Cortese varietal, in a region otherwise almost exclusively devoted to red wine, Gavi is by definition the fine white wine of Piemonte.

Stefano Massone has a small estate, ten hectares of which produce Cortese grapes. The pruning is short for quality and the grapes are meticulously selected for the wine designed to be bottled - less than half that produced.

After soft pressing only the flower must is chosen for bottling. It will then undergo a long and slow temperature controlled fermentation, after which it is cold stabilized and filtered before being bottled under perfectly sterilized conditions.

Here we have a model estate that offers a small amount of exceptionally fine Gavi, a crisp, lean and steely wine with piquantly high acidity and sharply engaging bouquet.

Ideal as an aperitif, this Gavi is perfectly suited for fish, light soups and hors d'oeuvres. In my experience it improves with up to two years of aging, whereupon it may be matched with more engaging foods.

Andrea and Stefano Massone now own another estate, Camporosso, within the Gavi appellation. The total vineyard extension is 15 hectares and the first harvest was in 2000. The soil here is mainly calcareous, yielding a Gavi that is particularly intense and fruity. ◇



## Gavi Vigneto Masera

Zone: *Capriata d'Orba*  
 Cru: *Masera*  
 Varietal: *Cortese*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *3 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *25,000 bottles*



## Gavi Vigneto S. Cristoforo

Zone: *Capriata d'Orba*  
 Cru: *Vigneto S. Cristoforo*  
 Varietal: *Cortese*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *1 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *10,000 bottles*

# TUSCANY

Tuscany vies with Piedmont for the laurels of the best red wine region of Italy. Best known for its Chianti, Tuscany boasts a complex spectrum of red wines ranging from Brunello di Montalcino D.O.C.G. - one of the world's most engaging and longest lived wines - to excellent everyday wines from lesser known appellations (Chianti Colli Fiorentini D.O.C.G., Morellino di Scansano D.O.C.G. etc.) which will reward the consumer with fine quality at very affordable prices.

Common to all red wines of Tuscany is the ubiquitous Sangiovese varietal. As will be clarified by the estate descriptions that follow, the Sangiovese grape is present in all red wines in percentages running from 65% to 100%. This remarkable and versatile varietal will yield - according to the area, appellation, cru and exposure in which it is grown, and to the percentages in which it is used along with other varieties - an array of stunningly diverse fine wines. An ample oenological portfolio that ranges from wines of great elegance and aristocratic suppleness, to wines of rich gracefulness and engravating bouquets - each with specific characteristics for which one may successfully search. Many of these characteristics, however, have been diluted and mortified due to the heedless loss of Sangiovese's genetic heritage.

When in the 60's mass replanting was encouraged and subsidized, no effort was made towards clonal selection. Thus weakened strains represent today an estimated 85% of Tuscany's Sangiovese crop! The estates which I represent are in the forefront of clonal experimentation, their wines recapturing the wealth of flavours and intensity of the past with the added knowhow of modern winemaking.

Although Tuscany as a whole has

remarkable soils and climates which allow for decent wine to be made almost anywhere below prohibitive altitudes, just decent wine simply leaves me rather unsatisfied. To find, make and release great wines is, and always has been, my goal. As such the great crus and climates of Tuscany are of the essence, for these are the small and rare geophysical loci which nature has gifted with the choicest soils and microclimates with respect to grape growing. Italy has never given its crus a formal status of recognition, but winemakers and growers alike know them only too well: they are too important in winemaking to be neglected. They are particularly important when it comes to planting foreign varieties, which too many have wrongly planted with little consideration for their optimal terroir.

Finally, as crucial as the clones and the crus is the actual estate which produces the wines - for the experience, will and imagination of the winemaker are what will exalt the superior qualities of the great raw material into its finest expression: the great wine.

One of the most unfortunate realities of Tuscany as a wine region has been its poor appellation legislation, with the consequences that this has signified. Crop allowances have been - and are - allowed to be much too high: enforced varietal standardization has virtually destroyed nearly one hundred autochthonous varieties that abounded less than a century ago; political lobbying has preposterously fostered the enlargement of historical appellations to include areas with no qualitative rights whatsoever to the appellations; last and perhaps worst of all, still today all the Chianti D.O.C.G. (except for the "regular" Chianti to which 15% of foreign varieties can be added) are legally

allowed to "improve" their wine up to 20% of foreign varieties! As can easily be imagined, all the above infected Tuscany with a mercenary attitude towards wine which is odious to me anywhere, but all the more so in a region so magnificently gifted for wine. How, I ask, can one speak - as "eminent authorities" have done and still do - of a "typical Chianti Rufina", for example, knowing full well that in a good many vintages you'll be drinking a fancy dollop of God-knows-what blended in with it? And there are yet no rules and regulations strict enough to enforce truly ethical winemaking. Thus, as always, the human element is of the essence: one has to build with people who believe the best is possible even against the odds and nevertheless wish to pursue it. No one has yet attempted what we are trying: to really and fearlessly express terroir in the multifaceted panorama of Tuscany. For example, what can Sangiovese do in a few crus of Carmignano or of Montepulciano? And believe me, it is unspeakably exciting, and it shoulders you with pride and awe when, sipping a wine from a barrel, along with the novel flavours you feel a little, but precious drop of wine truth is being re-established.

In the following section you will find estates described which combine the best grapes, the best crus and the finest winemakers of Tuscany - in essence, the very special and unique creations of one of the outstanding wine regions of the world. ◇

# UCCELLIERA

**A**ndrea Cortonesi, owner of Uccelliera, is a person who could be described as “salt of the earth”: the only son of a farming family, he has worked in the fields since he was a teenager helping his father.

Andrea is not only an extremely talented winemaker, but he is also a fine entrepreneur who managed to purchase in 1986, entirely thanks to his own devices, the initial four hectares of the estate, consisting of an ancient homestead and half a hectare of old vineyards. He immediately planted two hectares of vines and in 1987 the first half hectare for the production of Brunello was planted. The name Uccelliera, meaning aviary in Italian, probably dates back to the Middle Ages when falcons were raised in this specific area. In the following years more vineyards, standing in different positions in respect to the homestead, were added so to reach the present extension of 6 hectares.

To produce Brunello and Rosso by blending vineyards with different exposures and soils is a specific choice so that the character of each vintage and of the terroir can be expressed following a “mimimum handling” philosophy. This is pursued through natural vineyard management, the vines are sprayed only with copper and sulphur based products, the use of insecticides is very rare, the vineyards are tilled so no weedkillers are necessary. Depending on the age of the vines, vineyard density is 3,000-5,000 plants per hectare. The work in the vineyards, carried out entirely by hand, is focussed on obtaining perfectly balanced vines that yield fully ripe and flawless clusters.

Andrea’s efforts continue in the cellar (a new cellar has been added to the old one and they are both built

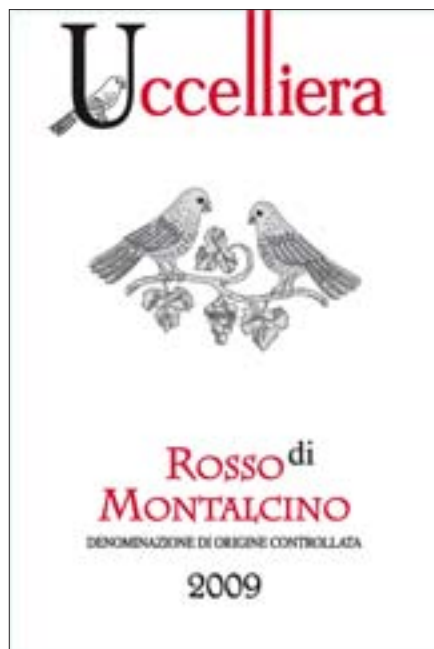
underground) where the wines rest at a constant and natural temperature. At present Uccelliera is without any doubt one of the top estates of Montalcino, the Brunello and Rosso are complex, intense, extremely supple and drinkable. A small quantity of an IGT/proprietary wine, Rapace (meaning “bird of prey” in line with the name of the estate), a blend of Sangiovese, Merlot and Cabernet is also produced.

The volcanic owner is not only a vigneron, he is also on the board of institutions for the management of the territory of Montalcino and he has recently opened a very good restaurant near the lovely Piazza il Campo of Siena: the high level cuisine of the creative chef can be considered part of the family’s tradition as Andrea’s mother is a wonderful cook and to have lunch at the estate is an unforgettable experience! ◇



## Brunello di Montalcino

Zone: *Montalcino*  
 Varietal: *100% Sangiovese*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *6 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *20,000 bottles*



## Rosso di Montalcino

Zone: *Montalcino*  
 Varietal: *100% Sangiovese*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *5 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *22,000-25,000 bottles*

# SAN FILIPPO

**R**oberto Giannelli, who has a law degree and used to work in real estate, has had a passion for wine ever since he was a child. At the end of 2002 he came into contact with the former owners (who owned the estate since 1972) through his wife and, after a long negotiation, he bought Azienda San Filippo in 2003.

The four vineyards – *La Storta*, *Le Raffiche*, *Le Lucère* and *La Smarrita* – stand in the south-east area of Montalcino and all have an excellent exposure. This zone is particularly cool, with a good night-day temperature range, making it particularly suitable for growing Sangiovese and the wines tend towards elegance and finesse rather than power.

A great amount of work has been carried out since 2003: the management of the vineyards has

been considerably improved, a new vinification and ageing cellar was built and all the small and large oak barrels along with the fermentation vessels and the cooling/heating equipment have been gradually renewed.

Roberto's philosophy is to make the wine "in the vineyard". All fertilizers, both organic and chemical, have been totally eliminated, the vines are to "work" on their own without extra aid. With the support of Patrizio Gasparinetti, a very talented agronomist, natural viticulture is pursued. A meteorological station has been placed on the estate in order to schedule antiparasitic treatments, strictly sulphur and copper based, only when necessary. Where the vigour of the vines has to be kept in check, grass is left on every other aisle (the space between the rows of vines). Although this can be risky in some vintages due to the weather,

the grapes are harvested only when phenolic and aromatic ripening is complete.

Brunello matures in barriques toasted to a light level for the first 12 months and for a further 14 months in large oak casks.

When one tastes the wines of San Filippo one can only agree with oenologist Paolo Caciorgna who describes them in two words: equilibrium and elegance! ◇



## Brunello di Montalcino Le Lucère

Zone: *Montalcino*  
 Varietal: *100% Sangiovese*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *3 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *20,000 bottles*



## Rosso di Montalcino Lo Scorno

Zone: *Montalcino*  
 Varietal: *100% Sangiovese*  
 Average Prod.: *20,000 bottles*

## PODERE BRIZIO

**M**y first encounter with Brizio wines was at the end of an exhaustingly long day of bopping around Montalcino tasting big fat Brunelli. The devious devil of dropdead dreariness was whispering to me how easy it would be to call and cancel, after all, with my mojo running on empty and a seriously diminished interest therefore, what kind of a tasting would it be and wouldn't it be unfair to judge this producer in my lethargic condition? In my other ear, the archangel of earnest enterprise blasted and chastised me for my laziness, shaming and rallying me into showing up. Taking the weight off my feet in Brizio's office I sighed and mechanically dragged the first glass across the table and hefted up to my mouth. Whoa! It was all vibrancy and it energized me immediately. Not knowing, I asked what I was tasting. The 2003. Really? Well, that was remarkable given how most 2003 Brunelli were born tired and overcooked (much like I was feeling 30 seconds before). Then I learned it wasn't even the Brunello, it was the Rosso di Montalcino 2003! It was now beyond wanting to taste Brizio wines, I needed to taste them and five vintages of Brunello later this was clear: Brizio Brunello is unrivalled for elegance and vigor. Is phat!

Roberto Bellini, from a northern Italian family of agricultural entrepreneurs, purchased Azienda Agricola Chiesa di Santa Restituta in the 1970s and used to also manage the vineyards of Podere Brizio. Chiesa di Santa Restituta was then sold to Angelo Gaja in 1996. Mr Bellini bought 50% of Podere Brizio and established a partnership with the Cannoni-Mazzi family who had owned the estate since 1960. A modern and well equipped vinification and ageing cellar of an

extension of 1,000 square meters was finished in 2002: the ageing section is built underground in order to have an even temperature all year round, all the stainless steel vats are equipped with temperature control and automatic devices to punch down the cap, the presses are pneumatic. Small and large oak casks are of French Allier oak, barriques and tonneux are renewed every three years.

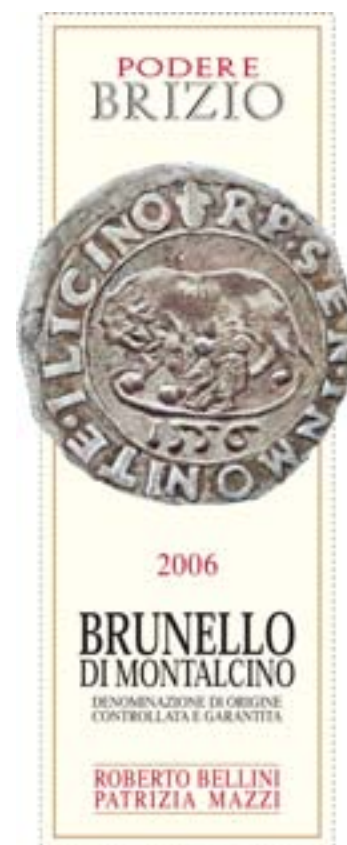
The total vineyard extension is 8.8 hectares of which 6.8 hectares registered for the production of Brunello, 1 hectare registered for the production of Rosso and 1 hectare registered for the production of Sant'Antimo.

The excellent south-west exposure, the ideal type of soil and climate (in fact the area is protected from hail and storms by Monte Amiata a mountain south east of Montalcino and 1,740 meters high) make the zone of Santa Restituta, where the vineyards of Podere Brizio stand, one of the best areas of Montalcino.

Mr Bellini manages the vineyards personally and the practices in the vineyard are strict, no systemic products nor chemical weed killers are used, the vines are sprayed prevalently with copper and sulphur base products and only small quantities of organic fertilizer (dung) are spread when needed. The clones of Sangiovese were selected from the oldest vines of Podere Brizio when the vineyards were replanted (the vineyards of Brunello are 30, 20 and 11 years old, while the vineyards of Rosso are ten years old). Yields are well below what the appellation allows. Only the best clusters are chosen for the wines.

Vittorio Fiore, considered one of the leading oenologists in Italy, is the wine maker of the estate. His touch is evident in the Brunello and Rosso (released one year later than usual).

I asked him to explain how Brizio wines come to be so uniquely bright, classic, impeccable and extremely drinkable. His answer was perfect: nothing special, we try not to do any damage. The Brizio style arises from Roberto Bellini's vision. The two meet every month or so to taste through the cantina, always, it seems, avoiding doing damage. ♦



### **Brunello di Montalcino**

Zone: *Montalcino*  
 Varietal: *100% Sangiovese*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *6.8 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *20,000 bottles*

# LA SERENA - AZIENDA AGRICOLA RASA 1°

**L**a Serena is a family run estate, with Andrea Mantengoli at the helm since 1997. The estate was established in 1934 and even though wine has always been made, the first Brunello di Montalcino was produced in 1988.

New vineyards were purchased up to 1989, for a total of 8.5 hectares, in the south-east zone of Montalcino.

This estate is committed to eco-friendly practices: the cellar, designed by Andrea's twin brother Marcello who is an architect, is completely insulated with cork panels and a geothermal system keeps the inner temperature cool in the summer (at approximately 20 degrees Celsius) and warm in the winter (never below 14 degrees Celsius). The cellar is built on a slope and a network of pipes runs through the whole building ending in two larger pipes that run underground for about 300 meters and are connected with the exterior on the lower part of the slope. The air enters the two large pipes (and is consequently warmed up in the winter and cooled down in the summer), flows through the whole network and exits the cellar through a series of chimneys. Hot water, used to clean the oak casks and the cellar, is produced by solar panels. When needed, sodium bicarbonate (also known as baking soda) is added to clean the fermentation vessels.

One can find the same environmentally conscious approach in the vineyard: Andrea's philosophy is to plant vineyards where they have always been grown, to utilise the right clones and rootstocks and to make sure that the vines are "balanced" (meaning when fruit production is in proportion to the total leaf surface of the vine). Light toppings, light thinning out of the clusters are carried out, specific types of grasses are sown on every other aisle: in this way the vines are naturally protected

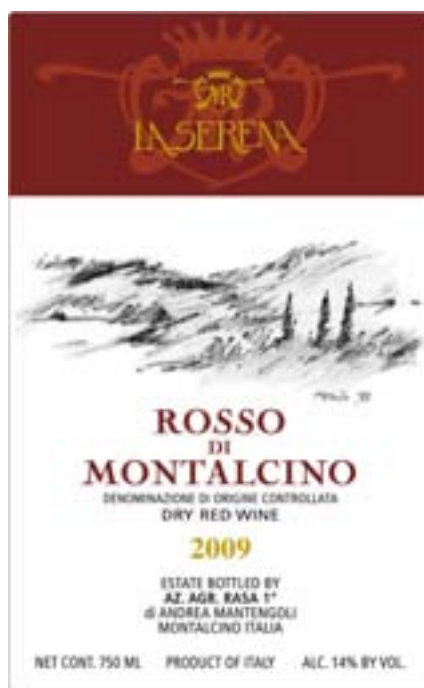
against diseases and pests and the yield is kept very low.

These extremely accurate vineyard practices, together with the soil type (here the soils are quite mixed, being clayey, sandy, tufaceous and marly) and modern equipment in the cellar, result in wines that blend power and finesse with a slight austerity and the hard work of the Mantengoli family has certainly been rewarded by the international press! ◇



## Brunello di Montalcino

Zone: *Montalcino*  
 Varietal: *100% Sangiovese*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *7 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *25,000 bottles*



## Rosso di Montalcino

Zone: *Montalcino*  
 Varietal: *100% Sangiovese*  
 Average Prod.: *10,000 bottles*

Azienda Agricola

Tuscany

# SCOPETONE

Less than four acres of vines in two exceptional crus. One that of Scarnacuoia, famous for harbouring the first plantings of Sangiovese Grosso in the appellation's history; the other bordering the grand cru of Montosoli.

The winemaker, Attilio Pagli, a friend above all else, but also a winemaker of taste and integrity, both great rarities these days. The owner, Angela Corioni (at the helm of the estate since Federigo Abbarchi passed away), whose dedication to quality is indisputable.

The wines are the final result of all the above. Like few others they embody the qualities that made

Brunello famous: intensity without vulgarity, grandeur as opposed muscle, elegance before clout and harmony that is the privilege of very fine wine. ◇

## Brunello di Montalcino

Zone: *Montalcino*  
Cru: *Scarnacuoia*  
Varietal: *100% Sangiovese*  
Vineyard Ext.: *1.5 hectares*  
Average Prod.: *4,000 bottles*



Azienda Agricola

Tuscany

# LE POTAZZINE

Le Potazzine" (meaning "Chickadee" in Montalcino dialect, small very lively birds with coloured plumage) is the nickname given by Beppe Gorelli's mother to her two granddaughters, Viola and Sofia.

Beppe, an oenologist, used to manage his father's estate, Due Portine, till it was recently sold and at present he consults for several other wineries in Montalcino. He bought his

own property together with his wife Gigliola in 1993. The extremely well cared for vineyards of Le Potazzine, extend for 7.60 hectares in the higher area of the township of Montalcino: 3.3 hectares are close to the newly built cellars and homestead, 1.3 hectares are nearby in the area of S. Angelo in Colle and 3 hectares are in the area of Castelnuovo dell'Abate. The vineyard near the homestead is endowed with a high water table,

consequently the vines do not suffer from hydric stress even in extremely hot summers as in 2003. The first released vintage of Brunello was 1997, the first vintage of Rosso was 1998 and a Brunello Riserva - 2004 vintage - is now on the market. Beppe's wines are elegant and well structured, reflecting his drive for stylistic perfection. ◇



## Brunello di Montalcino

Zone: *Montalcino*  
Cru: *La Prata, La Torre*  
Varietal: *100% Sangiovese*  
Vineyard Ext.: *7.6 hectares*  
Average Prod.: *17,000 bottles*



## Rosso di Montalcino

Zone: *Montalcino*  
Cru: *La Prata, La Torre*  
Varietal: *100% Sangiovese*  
Vineyard Ext.: *7.6 hectares*  
Average Prod.: *20,000 bottles*

## IL PALAZZINO

Six miles south of Gaiole in Chianti, at an altitude of 400 meters above sea level, in what has long been known to the locals as “The Cru” of the Gaiole township, stretch the vineyards of Il Palazzino.

The Sderci family has owned the estate since mid-nineteenth century, but wine started being sold only in the Seventies when Alessandro and Andrea took up the management of the property.

As many other producer-friends with whom I have the pleasure of collaborating, Andrea and Alessandro are passionately involved in their work and always seeking means to improve their already superb wines. By scrupulously selecting their grapes at harvest time and pursuing the selection in the cellars, where only the finest barrels are reserved

for bottling, they have heightened to an almost exasperated degree the archetypal qualities that have distinguished Chianti Classico wines of Gaiole from the rest: finesse, warmth and richness, and a bouquet of exceptional wealth, pronouncedly reminiscent of raspberries, violets and the iris of Chianti.

Since 1981, hand selected Sangiovese from a vineyard next to the homestead, has yielded a special selection Chianti Classico called Grosso Sanese (formerly a proprietary wine) which has dominated blind tastings throughout the world.

Alessandro and Andrea also make other two Chianti Classico: Argenina and La Pieve (starting with the 2008 vintage only very small quantities of this wine will be bottled and only in outstanding vintages, the superior

juice from the vineyards blended into Argenina). Furthermore, starting with the 2008 vintage, Il Palazzino’s Casina Girasole (an IGT/proprietary wine, mainly Sangiovese) will be substituted with Rosso del Palazzino, same wine, of course, but with a label in every way similar and identifiable with the rest of Il Palazzino’s labels. Two more IGT/proprietary wines - Bertinga (the blend being Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot) and Stagi (100% Colorino) - and a Vin Santo, complete the range. The estate has been in the conversion phase for two years in order to obtain the certification for organic viticulture (it should be certified in 2011). ◇



### Rosso del Palazzino

Zone: *Monti in Chianti, Lecchi in Chianti*  
 Varietal: *80% Sangiovese, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot, Colorino*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *2 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *10,000-13,000 bottles*

### Chianti Classico Grosso Sanese

Zone: *Monti in Chianti*  
 Cru: *Grosso Sanese*  
 Varietal: *100% Sangiovese*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *2 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *9,000 bottles*



# SAN GIUSTO A RENTENNANO

Once a 9th-century monastery then turned into a mighty fortress in the 12th century, the castle of San Giusto a Rentennano was destroyed in a feudal battle after becoming a Ricasoli residence in the 14th century. Of the ancient structure only the labyrinthine cellars remain, upon which was built the 15th-century villa. San Giusto is now the residence of the Martini di Cigala family.

The villa is surrounded by 30.5 hectares of vineyards rooted on soil rich in shale and limestone all facing ideal south-eastern exposure. The dominant varietal is Sangiovese, and that only (together with a small percentage of Canaiolo) is employed for San Giusto's Chianti Classico. Malvasia and Trebbiano are used for the truly superb Vin San Giusto,

a sweet wine traditionally aged six years in 40-180 litre oak and chestnut casks.

The quest for top quality is obvious: of the 850 hectolitres produced only a maximum of 600-700 are destined for bottling - from the choicest selection of grapes only. Moreover, in unfavourable vintages, when the wine is considered unsatisfactory, the whole production is sold off in bulk.

With the 1983 vintage the first experiments with small oak were started, and from the same superb vintage a proprietary wine, Percarlo (100% Sangiovese aged in small French oak), has been a standard.

San Giusto a Rentennano's Chianti Classico, given its particular soil and microclimate, is characteristically incisive and decidedly more robust

than that of his neighbours. Still it maintains a lovely tenderness of bouquet. Though fresh and fine on the palate, this is unquestionably a wine that shows best after some aging, and in great vintages it will live far beyond ten years. Bright ruby lit by a rich purple vein when young, it will not betray its age in garnet for a long time. A Chianti Classico of remarkable character. Other wines of the Estate are a Chianti Classico Riserva, Le Baroncole, and a barrique aged 100% Merlot wine, La Ricolma. Starting from the 2009 vintage the estate is certified for organic viticulture. ♦



## Chianti Classico

Zone: *Gaiole in Chianti*  
 Cru: *San Giusto a Rentennano*  
 Varietal: *95% Sangiovese, 5% Canaiolo*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *17 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *45,000 bottles*



## Chianti Classico Riserva Le Baroncole

Zone: *Gaiole in Chianti*  
 Cru: *San Giusto a Rentennano*  
 Varietal: *97% Sangiovese, 3% Canaiolo*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *4 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *12,000 bottles*



## Percarlo

Zone: *Gaiole in Chianti*  
 Cru: *San Giusto a Rentennano*  
 Varietal: *Sangiovese*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *7 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *18,000 bottles*

# LE CINCIOLE

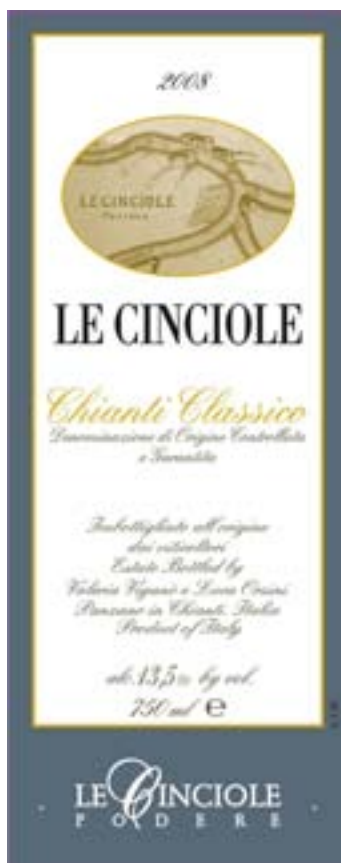
**L**e Cinciole is located roughly half a mile from the town of Panzano, precisely in the center of the Chianti Classico appellation. The vineyards are mainly in two distinct areas: Le Cinciole, the titular tract, adjacent to the house and cellars with an east-south-east exposure; Valle del Pozzo, over the hill of Panzano, facing south-east on the higher limits of the famous “Conca d’Oro”, one of the finest crus of the Chianti Classico.

The vines are pruned very short, producing 30 hectolitres per hectare on the average. The intensity of the wines, deep colour and lush flesh attest to uncommonly fine clonal selection.

Uncommon is also the focused dedication of the owners, Valeria Viganò and Luca Orsini. Every discussion, even every casual chat is tuned towards ideas of defining and making fine wine, or improvements and how to accomplish them. The Chianti Classico of Le Cinciole, aged one year in 20 hectolitre oak ovals rivals the very best wines in the area. For Petresco, a wine of clearly superior structure and breed, the aging occurs in French oak barriques for 18 months. Petresco is a selection from the vineyards that at best express the vintage.

Luca and Valeria also produce an IGT/proprietary wine, “Camalaione”, a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah and Merlot. The use of international grapes is to prove that, when a terroir is particularly suitable for viticulture, its character is stronger than the one of the varieties grown. Finally, a rosato, a saignée of Sangiovese, has recently been released in order to offer a fresh and fruity wine.

The vineyards now extend for 13 hectares and, since the 2005 vintage, the estate is certified for organic viticulture. ◇



## Chianti Classico

Zone: *Panzano in Chianti*  
 Varietal: *98% Sangiovese, 2% Canaiolo*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *9 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *35,000 bottles*



## Petresco Chianti Classico Riserva

Zone: *Panzano in Chianti*  
 Crus: *a selection from the vineyards that at best express the vintage*  
 Varietal: *100% Sangiovese*  
 Average Prod.: *4,500 bottles*

# LE FONTI

This delightful estate in the heart of the Chianti Classico region has a lot to offer. It was bought in 1956 by the father of the present owners, Franca, Ferdinando and Giovanni Imberti, who also manage a wood industry business in northern Italy, which has been in the family for four generations.

Franca and Ferdinando follow the activities at “Le Fonti” together with a young and very motivated agronomist, Lorenzo Bernini, and the talented oenologist Paolo Caciorgna.

The soil here is typical of the Chianti Classico, skeletal with clay and sand, altitude is between 200 and 300 meters above sea level and the exposure of the vineyards is mainly south, south-west.

This zone is warmer in respect to other classical ones, such as Panzano, Gaiole or Radda, consequently

harvest is earlier and the berries always reach full ripening. All this makes the wines fruity, pleasant and relatively supple (one must bear in mind that all wines here are 100% Sangiovese!) in comparison to the more “austere” Chianti Classico wines and are perhaps more similar to the wines of Tuscan Maremma.

The 23 hectares of vineyards were mostly replanted in the early 1990s and the traditional cellar was completely renovated a few years ago.

The owners and the technical team believe in an extremely accurate work in the vineyards. Just as an example of how carefully viticulture is managed, different types of vegetation, chosen depending on the vigour of the vines, are sown on every other aisle between the rows of vines in order to provide green manure, and tillage of the soil

is “fine-tuned” in order to prevent hydric stress. And you certainly all know about Paolo Caciorgna’s work in the cellar!

All these efforts certainly pay off and the quality of the Chianti Classico, of the Chianti Classico Riserva and of the IGT/proprietary wine “Vito Arturo” (also strictly 100% Sangiovese) prove it. ◇



## Chianti Classico

Zone: *Poggibonsi*  
 Varietal: *100% Sangiovese*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *16 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *50,000 bottles*



## Chianti Classico Riserva

Zone: *Poggibonsi*  
 Varietal: *100% Sangiovese*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *16 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *6,000 bottles*

# Fattoria di LUCIGNANO

Tuscany

The fine microclimate and unique soil characteristics surrounding the medieval town of Lucignano, only a mile outside the western border of the Chianti Classico, make it without a doubt the finest cru of the Chianti Colli Fiorentini appellation.

Of all the estates I have selected in Tuscany, Lucignano is the most consistent in quality, achieving remarkable results even in the least favourable vintages. Its soils, moreover, (totally unlike those of the Chianti Classico), seem to be responsible for the unusual resilience of the complementary Canaiolo varietal grown there, the quality of which I have never seen equalled elsewhere, and whose relatively abundant presence in Lucignano's Chianti certainly contributes to its unerring fine quality.

Under these auspices, Niccolò Guicciardini (after his father, Count Lodovico, passed away in 2003), together with oenologist Federico Staderini, perpetuate the reputation that has made the wines of Lucignano among the most sought after products of the Florentine hillsides. Since 1988 (when I decided to add the Estate to my selections), Lucignano cultivates only the finest vineyards, having rented out the ones that they no longer felt were up to the quality they required. The Chianti from this estate is a remarkably fine, fruity and soft wine gifted with a notable bouquet, floral and berry-like, it is unlike any other Chianti I have encountered in this underrated appellation - a sign of the unique characteristics of its cru. Significantly enough, Count Guicciardini was piqued at having to call his wine Chianti - in his, and history's, opinion, a ridiculous misnomer which appellation laws have fostered upon it. There was a time, before the advent of mass media, when the cru of Lucignano

was as well known and sought after as the best of the Chianti Classico. Those were the days!

With its appealingly reasonable price it is my answer to the overwhelming output and encroaching presence of cheap and cheaply made wines that have invaded the markets of the world.

In 2009 a Vin Santo del Chianti (1998 vintage!) was released. ◇



## Chianti Colli Fiorentini

Zone: *Chianti Colli Fiorentini, Chianti*  
Cru: *Lucignano*  
Varietal: *Sangiovese, Canaiolo*  
Vineyard Ext.: *32 hectares (all in the Chianti Colli Fiorentini DOCG appellation)*  
Average Prod.: *140,000 bottles*

# GIACOMO MORI

**G**iacomo Mori is an engineer and (like me) a sailor, and ever since I've known him, he's dreamed of replanting his grandfather's vineyards and making fine wine. So for years I monitored his dream, and when he was poised and ready I suggested that he meet Alberto Antonini, a fine friend and outstanding winemaker. With the appearance of the first stunning 1998 barrel samples the rebirth of Giacomo's family estate was a clearly established fact. No ambition here to produce great quantities - the vineyard extension will never exceed 10 hectares - but rather a powerful drive to create the finest possible expression of Chianti. To this end Giacomo has chosen low yielding rootstock and the finest possible clones of Sangiovese and Canaiolo; he has spaced the vines tight, pruned short, employed only organic fertilization and avoided chemical sprays. He has also most tastefully restructured the family's spectacular vinification cellars, and thoroughly equipped them. Finally, he completed the ancient aging cellars, entirely dug into live tufo rock and most remarkably built of three different levels, so as to ensure racking only by gravity, pump action being limited only to assembly prior to bottling, once in the lifetime of a wine.

Two lovely Chianti wines are

produced. The Chianti, aged in 15-30 hectolitre casks; and the Chianti Riserva Castelrotto, a single vineyard wine aged in small French oak.

These are the quintessence of Sangiovese and Canaiolo from this little known area, whose expression of elegance and power closely resemble those of their most famous siblings of the neighbouring appellation of Vino Nobile di Montepulciano. Giacomo also makes a tiny quantity of delicious Vin Santo and two IGT/proprietary wines (one 100% Merlot and one 100% Syrah). ♦



## Chianti

Zone: *Chiusi*  
 Varietal: *95% Sangiovese, 5% Canaiolo*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *6.45 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *32,000 bottles*



## Chianti Riserva Castelrotto

Zone: *Chiusi*  
 Cru: *Castelrotto*  
 Varietal: *85% Sangiovese, 15% Merlot*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *2 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *7,000 bottles*

# AMBRA

In Italy the name of Carmignano, a small hillside town northwest of Florence, has been synonymous with fine wines since the 13th century, and documents attest to a sale of Carmignano in 1396 at four times the price of other contemporary prestigious wines. So great was its reputation that Cosimo III de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany, decreed in 1716 that the appellation be strictly controlled, as well as the harvests and the sales, whether local or abroad. The confines of the ancient appellation remain identical to this day, making it one of the smallest D.O.C.G. areas of Italy.

The wine itself has a physiognomy all of its own for, although its varietal makeup is similar to that of the Chianti (high percentage of Sangiovese), it boasts up to 10% of Cabernet Sauvignon in its blend - all of Bordeaux stock at Ambra - in addition to a 5% allowance of other varietals including Merlot, Syrah and such native Tuscan vines as Colorino, Mammolo, and even some Occhio di Pernice. Thus, in Carmignano we find wines characteristically richer than those of the Chianti: of more obvious

structure and colour, more prodigal in their longevity and of better defined character. And yet Carmignano is not what one would call a big or tannic wine, nor does it have the rigour of a Brunello di Montalcino. Its richness is smooth and accessible and its bouquet expresses itself in finesse rather than in power. It likes wood, but not too much of it and, rightly (for once!), the laws governing its production demand only one year in wood, eight months after which it may be bottled.

The Ambra estate has its vineyards in the crus of Santa Cristina in Pilli (where the soil has a high percentage of limestone), of Montalbiolo (planted in rich, mild, loose, Galestro soil), of Elzana (the soil of which is clay and Galestro) and of Montefortini (the soil of which is sandstone) close to the Etruscan tomb bearing the same name.

Giuseppe Rigoli, the agronomist who owns the estate, mainly employs Sangiovese, Cabernet and Canaiolo Nero. Thus, Ambra's Carmignano has a concentration and deep aristocratic "robe" quite unique among its leaner siblings. The estate is small, the

total vineyard extension 20 hectares. The total output is only about 800 hectolitres which is a yield of only about 40 hectolitres per hectare; an indication of the rigid grape selection that goes into the making of this wine. Since the 1985 vintage, a Carmignano riserva has been produced, aged in small French oak (500 and 350 litre tonneaux) and from the estate's vineyards of highest elevation, called Montalbiolo, producing a wine of unmatched elegance. 1998 brings the debut of a second Riserva, Vigna Elzana: still Galestro soil but here clay is a defining component and the resulting wine is powerful, warm-natured and opulent.

Ambra also produces Carmignano S. Cristina in Pilli and Carmignano Montefortini (made from the vineyards bearing the same name); Barco Reale (the young version of Carmignano), a fruity, fresh, dry red wine; a dry spicy Rosato di Carmignano (made from the "saignée" of the best must of Carmignano); a white wine (100% Trebbiano) and a Vin Santo di Carmignano (aged for 6 years in oak "caratelli").



## Carmignano Riserva Montalbiolo

Zone: *Carmignano*  
 Cru: *Montalbiolo*  
 Varietal: *70% Sangiovese, 20% Canaiolo Nero, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *1.5 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *5,000 bottles*



## Carmignano S. Cristina in Pilli

Zone: *Carmignano*  
 Cru: *S. Cristina in Pilli*  
 Varietal: *75% Sangiovese, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Canaiolo Nero, 5% other red berry varieties*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *6 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *20,000 bottles*

## DEI

**V**ino Nobile di Montepulciano - a wine whose lordly reputation is documented by no less than 16th century Papal court cellarmasters - was, as its name implies, a wine reserved for the pleasure of the nobility; and as a gift from the ruling families of Montepulciano, was much appreciated by aristocracy throughout Italy. An aesthetic memento to the wine's history is the wealth of magnificent cellars to be seen in Montepulciano, many dating back to the 14th century.

Montepulciano's economy, however, was severely crippled by the phylloxera and oidium plague that ravaged Europe at the end of 1800. When government subsidies came, it was the better known Chianti who received the lion's share. And again, when Montepulciano's township requested a formal DOC in the 1960s it was granted (since 1980 Vino Nobile is a DOCG) - but virtually, and most grossly, patterned after that of the Chianti Classico (varietals, percentages and all!). The Italian agricultural crisis that saddled the late 1960s was a further blow. But this superb wine, whose identity had been legally betrayed, still survived; and in less than a decade its formidable qualities have gained it growing international attention and acclaim.

Its characteristics are unique in the Tuscan wine panorama in that it is the only fine wine outstanding when young, yet gifted with an excellent capacity for aging. For its immediate up-front fruit and velvety roundness one might call Vino Nobile the Pomerol of Tuscany, and the analogy wouldn't be far off the mark. So true is this that in 1989 a new DOC has made it possible to bottle the wine of Montepulciano one year after the harvest under the denomination of Rosso di Montepulciano.

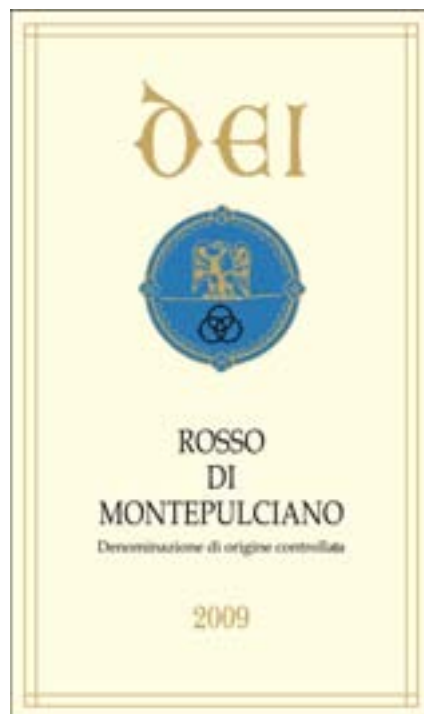
The Dei estate boasts two outstanding crus in the heart of

the Montepulciano appellation. Impeccable in both vineyards and cellars (the latter now totally renovated), Dei produces a Vino Nobile di Montepulciano of truly superior breeding. Powerful and austere, its rich, elegant warmth betrays a firm underlying structure. The Estate's first bottling coincided with the great 1985 vintage, and the outstanding results of Dei's standards of excellence moved yet higher when Niccolò d'Afflitto became winemaker in 1993. Bottled after two years of oak aging, Dei's vino Nobile di Montepulciano will reward the connoisseur for a good ten years to come.

The estate also offers a Rosso di Montepulciano, a Vino Nobile Riserva, and two IGT/proprietary wines: a white (a blend of Trebbiano and Malvasia) and Sancta Catharina (a blend of Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah and Petit Verdot). ♦

**Vino Nobile di Montepulciano**

Zone: *Montepulciano*  
 Cru: *Bossona, Martiena*  
 Varietal: *90% Sangiovese, 10% Canaiolo*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *42 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *90,000 bottles*

**Rosso di Montepulciano**

Zone: *Montepulciano*  
 Cru: *Bossona, Martiena*  
 Varietal: *90% Sangiovese, 5% Canaiolo, 5% Merlot*  
 Average Prod.: *90,000 bottles*

# FONTALEONI

**V**ernaccia di San Gimignano is the only Tuscan white wine with an historical identity and, at its best, with a wonderful and lively personality. Its reputation dating back to the Middle Ages, the wine's ebullience was duly noted by Michelangelo who with a perceptive poetical flight described it as a wine that "kisses, bites, stings and caresses", perfectly capturing its delicate yet sinewy character. This wine was the first in Italy to be awarded the DOC status in 1966, which was then upgraded to DOCG in 1993.

The parents of Franco Troiani, the present owner, moved from the Marche to Tuscany in 1959 and purchased the estate. In the 1990s a large part of the vineyards were replanted. The Vernaccia clones were collected, and still are today, from the oldest vineyard of the property,

planted in 1980. Franco now replants two or three hectares of vineyards each year. An extremely modern and partially underground cellar was built in 2001. To have modern and sophisticated equipment is particularly important for Vernaccia as this grape has a delicate nature and a very very fragile skin that breaks easily when reaching full ripeness.

Fontaleoni's vineyards lie on a prevalently calcareous soil (originating from the Pliocene Epoch) at the ideal altitude of 200-250 meters above sea level. The vine training systems are guyot and cordon spur, the traditional ones of the area, vineyard density is 4,500 plants/hectare.

Vineyard management is meticulous and carried out entirely by hand: chemicals are reduced to a bare minimum, sulphur and copper base products are preferred, very little and

only organic fertilizers are spread, grass is left on every other aisle. Grape yield is kept low by thinning the buds during the budding phase and the clusters at veraison (the phase when the berries change colour) and before harvest.

This is a family run estate, Franco's son, Matteo, a trained oenologist, being part of the team. The touch of Paolo Caciorgna, who consults for Fontaleoni, is evident in the lovely wines.

Four Vernaccia di San Gimignano are made: two "base" versions; "Casanuova" - a selection of the best clusters of the best vineyards - and a Riserva, partially aged in wood. Franco also produces a Chianti, a Chianti Colli Senesi and a Chianti Colli Senesi Riserva. ◇



## Vernaccia di San Gimignano

Zone: *San Gimignano*  
 Varietal: *Vernaccia*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *13 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *70,000 bottles*



## Vernaccia di San Gimignano Casanuova

Zone: *San Gimignano*  
 Varietal: *90% Vernaccia, 10% Chardonnay*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *1.5 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *8,000 bottles*

# LE CALCINAIE - SIMONE SANTINI

Along with the Fontaleoni estate and perhaps a few others, Tenuta Le Calcinaie happily testifies to the rebirth of quality oriented Vernaccia, a concept all but abandoned for nearly a generation. Simone Santini is the estate's factotum. Gifted with an archetypal Tuscan sense of humour - keen, refreshing, flippant and pungent, he in fact much resembles the Vernaccia he makes, a prime example of why this appellation was the first to deserve formal D.O.C.G. recognition. For, indeed, Vernaccia di San Gimignano really deserves the reputation that, with Soave and Orvieto, made it pre-eminent among Italian white wines.

A wine with a brilliant and nervous disposition, angular and vibrant, yet smooth in the finish, with the bitter-sweet almond touch characteristic of the varietal, Le Calcinaie's Vernaccia is a pretty and coquettish creature, of which, of course, one would wish one had much more than the little that is made. Even rarer is the Vernaccia Vigna ai Sassi, a single vineyard selection, that matures on the lees in steel for two years - and turned just a bit thoughtful and reticent in nature.

Simone Santini's red wines have also turned a few heads. The Chianti Colli Senesi is a wonderfully pure example of the supple Sangiovese that the San Gimignano climate and terroir will yield, a round, baby-faced wine of exceptional friendliness and candor. And the IGT/proprietary "Teodoro" is a show stopper - loaded with layers of rich texture, made more jammy by the presence of Merlot and Cabernet and small oak aging - remarkably satisfying stuff from the Great Santini! The estate also offers a Chianti Colli Senesi Riserva and another IGT/proprietary wine, "Gabriele", 100% Merlot.

Le Calcinaie was certified for organic viticulture in 2001 and,

starting with the 2008 vintage, it is also certified by the National Organic Program in the US. ◇



## Vernaccia di San Gimignano

Zone: *San Gimignano*  
 Cru: *Le Calcinaie*  
 Varietal: *Vernaccia*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *3.7 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *16,400 bottles*



## Teodoro

Zone: *San Gimignano*  
 Cru: *Le Calcinaie*  
 Varietal: *Sangiovese, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *1.2 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *2,000 bottles*

# TERENZUOLA

**M**y brother Iano and I had been looking for a Vermentino to include in our selection for a long time, but time passed, (roughly 12 years!), and none seemed to satisfy us. One day, at a fine fish restaurant owned by friends, and relaxing over a splendid hors-d'oeuvre, my chef friend suggested Ivan Giuliani's Vermentino Corsano. The same afternoon I was at the Terenzuola estate in Fosdinovo, the only Tuscan township within the province of La Spezia in Liguria, and within the Vermentino Colli di Luni D.O.C. appellation. I meet Ivan, he met me, neither of us had time, but we both knew we would share a future together, and soon after we started.

Viticulture is a very ancient tradition in this area, the Etruscans were the first to grow vines, followed by the Romans. There were periods when wine making flourished, (Fosdinovo is along the "Via Francigena", the ancient pilgrim route from Canterbury, across France, Switzerland and Italy to Rome),

and others when vineyards were abandoned. In the 1980s producers started bottling wines made out of 100% Vermentino (without adding other varietals as was done previously) and Vermentino Colli di Luni acquired a D.O.C. status.

Ivan decided to leave his University studies in economics and dedicate himself full-time to viticulture and wine-making in 1993, God bless him! The vineyard extension is now 14.80 hectares.

There's really very little to be said. This is the Vermentino that dreams are made of. It carries the racy spice of the varietal, the rich mouthfeel of complete ripeness, the mineral sharpness of the soil, the fine acid of its cool, breezy climate.

Ivan is also the only producer to make wine from Uva Merla (a local biotype of Canaiolo Nero) and from Tintoretto (the local name for Colorino), two red varietals that appeared in the area sometime during the nineteenth century. Clones were obtained through "selection

massale" of the oldest vines of the "Miniera" vineyard, named after the nearby coal and iron mines. The first results are quite provocative and very enjoyable.

Recent releases of the estate are a wine from an indigenous varietal of the area, Vermentino Nero (little is known about the genetics of this grape), a rosé wine and a Vermentino made from all the vineyards of Terenzuola.

The projects of Ivan do not end here: he has recently entered in partnership with Dr Evasio Pasini, a cardiologist, and is now managing an estate in Cinque Terre, Liguria, in the historical zones for viticulture of Montenero, Corniolo and Volastra. The vineyards stand on terraces on sheer cliffs and a part of the vines is 80 years old. Two D.O.C. wines (both a blend of Bosco, Albarola and Vermentino) are made: Cinque Terre Sciacchetrà (a traditional sweet wine) and Cinque Terre Bianco. ◇



## Vermentino Fosso di Corsano

Zone: *Fosdinovo*  
 Cru: *Terenzuola, Corsano*  
 Varietal: *Vermentino*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *4 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *25,000 bottles*



## Vermentino

Zone: *Fosdinovo*  
 Varietal: *90% Vermentino, 10% other allowed white varietals*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *4.5 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *40,000 bottles*

# CAMPANIA

Viticulture and wine making are an ancient tradition in Campania: the Greeks founded *Pitechusae* on the island of Ischia around 770 b.C. and *Cuma* on the coast in 750 b.C., introducing their own vine varieties and probably domesticating types of vines that were found in the area. Wine was quite different in those days as a number of aromatic herbs, honey and even sea water were added as preservatives and to counteract acidity. It was also used as a remedy against many ailments (for example red hot gold leaf was added to ease the suffering of lepers) and to disinfect wounds. During the Roman times, Pompei was considered the capital of wine and the wines produced in Campania the best (Falerno and Massico were the ones with the highest reputation) and served at the Roman emperors banquets. The Greeks introduced the art of pruning and, as today, there were renowned vintages, production zones and even cooperatives. Rome had a port and a market especially dedicated to wine. It is not by chance that southern Italy was also known as *Enotria* (the land of wine)! Viticulture was especially developed along the coastal zones as wine was mainly carried on ships stored in clay amphorae (in case you visit the Eolian island of Lipari, do not miss the archeological museum, where you can see a great number of these amphorae recovered from shipwrecks). The majority of the indigenous varieties that are grown nowadays in Campania date back to the Roman and Greek period, as testified by the historians of the time.

Although viticulture in this region has had mixed fortunes and many indigenous varieties were lost especially due to phylloxera (and the late introduction of resistant rootstocks in comparison to the rest of Italy) and to the decline of agriculture in general, Campania is

one of the areas in Italy where the greatest number of autochthonous varieties have survived. The wine produced with Greco has been celebrated throughout the centuries and the variety was grown by the Romans with the name of *Aminea Gemella*; Aglianico (although there are various schools of thought regarding the origin of the name) is a distortion of *Hellenico* (Greek); Fiano is probably a corruption of *Apianis* (*apis* meaning bee in Latin) a grape variety described by Pliny and Columella; Coda di Volpe (meaning fox tail due to the shape of the clusters) is mentioned by Pliny the Elder in his *Naturalis Historia* as *Cauda Vulpium*; Falanghina may originate from *Falernina* the grape variety from which white Falerno was made; Piediroso is also found in the works of Pliny.

Coastal viticulture, that thrived during the Roman times, was in great part abandoned, also due to the pressure of urban areas, and this explains why high quality wines are now produced in inland zones such as Irpinia or Benevento. In fact the three appellations that were awarded the DOCG status are in the province of Avellino (i.e. Taurasi, Fiano di Avellino and Greco di Tufo), also called Irpinia after the tribe that inhabited this area 3,000 years ago (their totem was the wolf, *hirpus*). This is a hilly-mountainous area, where winters are relatively mild and summers are cool, there is ideal rainfall and ventilation making it particularly suitable for viticulture. Harvest is later here in comparison to the rest of Italy, in fact Aglianico is often picked at the beginning of November under snow. Therefore, the clusters ripen slowly and for a long time resulting in elegant and refined wines, with a strong personality and that fully express the unusual character of this territory.

Cantina del Taburno, a cooperative that gives technical assistance to 300 small growers in the province of Benevento and that vinifies the grapes in a modern cellar, is giving great impulse to high quality wine making thanks to Luigi Moio, a well known and extremely talented oenologist and professor at the University of Naples and now also professor at the Faculty of Oenology and Viticulture in Avellino. Moio's students and graduates closely work with the staff and with the growers, combining avant-garde technology with traditional viticulture (bear in mind that vines have been grown here for over two thousand years).

The estates that have been selected for our portfolio are the ones that best represent the unique and wonderful combination of knowledge and culture of this land together with the character of these ancient grape varieties: please try and taste all this in a glass of wine of the Taurasi, or of the Greco di Tufo or of the Lacrima Christi we offer you! ◇

# SALVATORE MOLETTIERI

**T**aurasi is the only truly great red wine from southern Italy. The Aglianico grape from which it is produced was originally planted by the ancient Greeks that colonized the area (Aglianico being an Italianate distortion of Hellenico, meaning Greek). This is truly a superb varietal, perfectly suited to southern climates and particularly to the micro-climate of the Taurasi appellation.

Aglianico has a high acidity, is very rich in polyphenols and extract and displays a remarkably deep purple-red color. It does very well, and is commonly planted, throughout Campania - north, east and south of Naples. But only in the province of Irpinia, west of Naples, at an altitude of 400-600 meters, in the sheltered enclave and on the volcanic soil of Taurasi, does it achieve absolute greatness.

The Molettieri estate owns eleven hectares in Montemarano, historically one of the two finest crus of the appellation, at 550 meters altitude. Perfect ripening here occurs in the first week of November, yielding a wine of powerful authority and concentration.

The estate bottled its first wine with the 1988 vintage, and in its nascent efforts invested all in planting vineyards. Thus, in 1989, 1990 and 1991 all grapes were sold off in order to buy barrels for the following vintages, and the next vintage to be bottled was the 1992.

Salvatore Molettieri, a man of exquisite generosity, has produced Taurasi the likes of which I have never tasted, of a grandeur to rival the greatest wines of Piedmont and Tuscany.

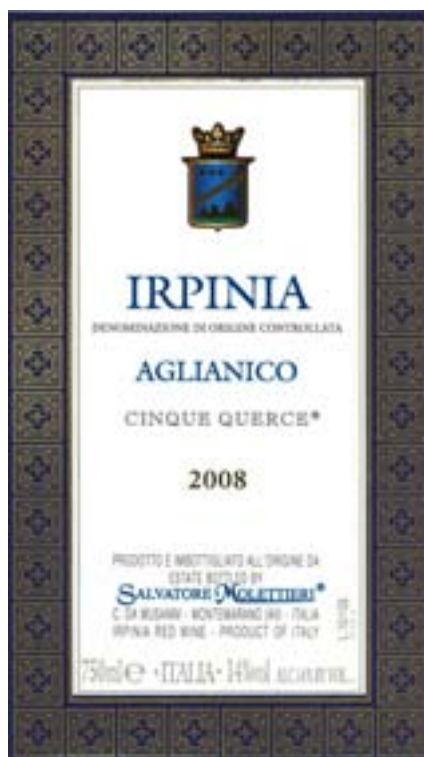
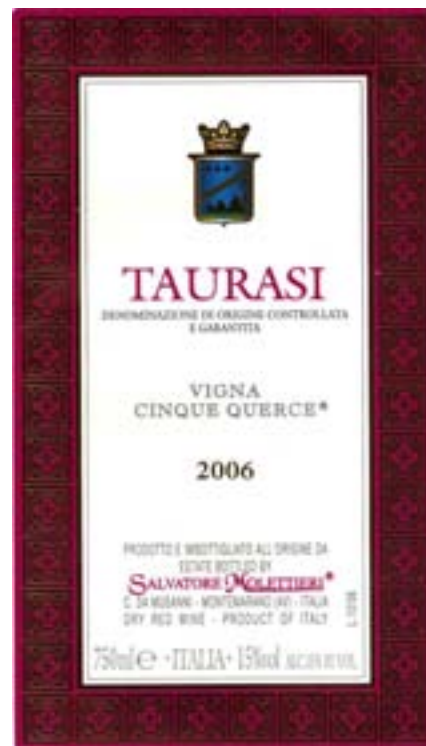
Today Salvatore's estate can be considered one of the finest in Italy.

Taurasi is positively not a frivolous wine, nor Salvatore makes any concessions to "modern palate".

His Taurasi is born a deep purple-blue, unrelentingly intense, with a vinous explosiveness rarely equaled in any young wine I have ever tasted. Its primary aromas are invariably muted, and it begins to acquire a complex bouquet as it expresses its secondary and tertiary aromatics. Starting in its sixth or seventh year of life this monumental wine begins to display its profound nature, only to improve for a quarter of a century or more. ◇

## Taurasi Vigna Cinque Querce

Zone: *Taurasi -  
Montemarano*  
Cru: *Cinque Querce*  
Varietal: *Aglianico*  
Vineyard Ext.: *4.6 hectares*  
Average Prod.: *19,000 bottles*



## Irpinia Aglianico Vigna Cinque Querce

Zone: *Taurasi -  
Montemarano*  
Cru: *Cinque Querce*  
Varietal: *Aglianico*  
Vineyard Ext.: *4 hectares*  
Average Prod.: *25,000 bottles*

# CAGGIANO

At last, the trust began in Burgundy, Antonio Caggiano, owner of the Caggiano estate, a passionate man powerfully dedicated to wine, took a tasting trip to the Côte d'Or. There his guide turned out to be Luigi Moio, a Neapolitan winemaker (he is now Professor in Oenology at the University of Naples), graduated from Bordeaux, working in Burgundy. It was friendship at first sight, Antonio promising Luigi to build him the finest estate possible if only he would return to Naples to help him. Eventually Luigi accepted, Antonio kept his word - his new cellars the most striking of the whole appellation! - and the adventure began.

Founded in 1990 with the purpose of making the greatest Taurasi possible, and thus reestablishing the remarkable reputation that Taurasi justly enjoyed in the past, when the

appellation was held to be on the par with that of Barolo and Gattinara in producing one of Italy's greatest wines, the Caggiano estate vinified its first grapes in 1994. All the while Antonio grappled with the cyclopic vision of erecting a three leveled cellar entirely hewn from stone (now completed). And from Burgundy he ordered the finest cooperage.

Vineyards from the finest crus that tradition attested to were bought. Plots of land were also bought and planted with selected clones of Aglianico, the famous *Vitis Hellenica*, planted by the Greeks when they colonized southern Italy, whose habitat has since unquestionably become the Taurasi appellation.

Luigi Moio dedicated himself heart and soul, and as the first wines were born and finally released, they revealed the perfect complexity expected only from the grand crus of the wine world!

Luigi Moio and I met at the Vinitaly fair, introduced to each other by the Burgundian tonnelier that we share. We tasted each other's wine - sparred, as it were - met again and again, and visited and revisited Antonio Caggiano and his splendid estate, still caught in the stonemason's grip.

The 1995s and 1996s from the barrel was monumental. The 1994 Taurasi was the finest wine ever to be released in the appellation- of that I was sure!

Besides Taurasi, the estate's range of wines now consists of two Irpinia Aglianico DOC (Salae Domini and Tari), a Fiano di Avellino DOCG (Béchar), a Greco di Tufo DOCG (Devon), an IGT white (Fiagre, a blend of Fiano and of Greco) and a passito (also a blend of Fiano and of Greco). ◇



### Tari

Zone: *Taurasi*  
 Cru: *Vigneto Costa*  
 Varietal: *Aglianico*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *7 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *37,000 bottles*



### Salae Domini

Zone: *Taurasi*  
 Cru: *Vigneto Sala*  
 Varietal: *Aglianico*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *3 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *10,000 bottles*



### Taurasi Vigna Macchia dei Goti

Zone: *Taurasi*  
 Cru: *Macchia dei Goti*  
 Varietal: *Aglianico*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *4 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *14,000 bottles*

# BENITO FERRARA

**G**reco, the true blue-blooded Greco, is powerfully appellation bound. That is why the specification “di Tufo”, meaning “from the town of Tufo” is indissolubly linked to the name of the grape and the wine. Some varietals - take Chardonnay - seem to perform very well across latitudes and longitudes. Greco, at least as we know it today, digs its heels in and refuses to budge. You want really good Greco? Must come to Tufo! Once upon a time, I suppose one would have gone to some equally interesting and specific place in Greece to find “the real thing”. After all Greco means Greek, and it was the crafty Hellenes who colonized the incomparably rich Neapolitan area in the seventh century B.C. and thought well to bring Greco with them. Wonderfully civilized of them, of course!

Tufo is just what it is: a volcanic rock which, crumbling, becomes grainy and powerfully informs the soil. The town of Tufo acquired its name from the tufo rock it is founded upon and its soil, the wine following suit.

Tufo holds humidity very well, keeping its roots cool and well nourished. In Italy it is mysteriously linked to white wine alone: Orvieto, Frascati, Pitigliano, Tufo. The towns and the vineyards stand on tufaceous rock and soil. To see Tufo is to understand: the very houses of this tiny town perched on a steep hill are built out of tufo bricks.

And you can smell the wine in the soil and sometimes even in the air, for Tufo stands atop now abandoned sulfur mines, and the tart, gunpowdery bouquet so true of Greco di Tufo often blown through the hills.

Genuine, properly made Greco di Tufo is a bold, impatient wine, charged with nervous energy. How can one describe it? Greco di Tufo

is Fiano’s next door neighbour, yet, surprisingly, its most perfect opposite. If Fiano is shy, subtle and soothing, Greco is aggressive, indeed reckless. One Apollonian, the other Dionisian, this comes close to the mark.

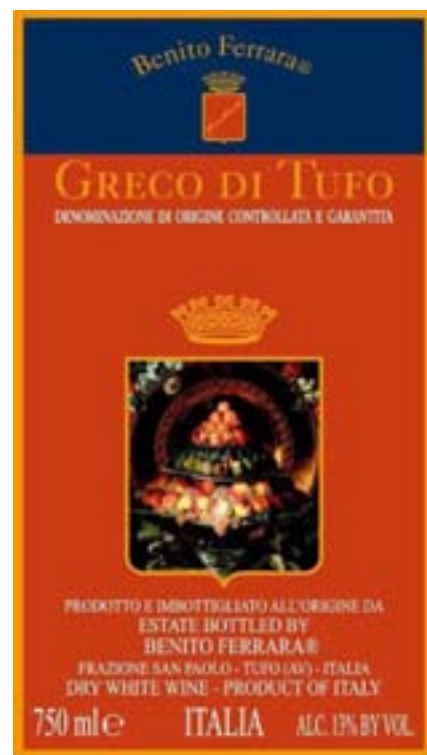
Tart, with a searing attack, Greco immediately melts honey-like on the palate, finishing, however, with a citric grip - all the while seducing with mineral suggestions of all kinds. Age will tame this wine somewhat, and it’s a wonder what time will accomplish: the fine, sharp edge never blunt, but a patina seems to grace its savage features.

Gabriella Ferrara’s Greco is such a wine, born of the slopes of San Paolo di Tufo, heart of this tiny appellation. And her Vigna Cicogna cru, from 70 year old vines on a full south exposure, seems to concentrate Greco di Tufo’s impetuous nature into archetype.

Gabriella also makes small quantities of Irpinia Aglianico DOC, of Taurasi DOCG, of Fiano di Avellino DOCG and of two IGT wines, a red (100% Aglianico) and a white (85% Greco and 15% Coda di Volpe). ◇

## Greco di Tufo Vigna Cicogna

Zone: *San Paolo di Tufo*  
Cru: *Vigna Cicogna*  
Varietal: *Greco*  
Vineyard Ext.: *1 hectare*  
Average Prod.: *8,000-10,000 btl*



## Greco di Tufo

Zone: *San Paolo di Tufo*  
Varietal: *Greco*  
Vineyard Ext.: *4,65 hectares*  
Average Prod.: *25,000 bottles*



## COLLI DI LAPIO

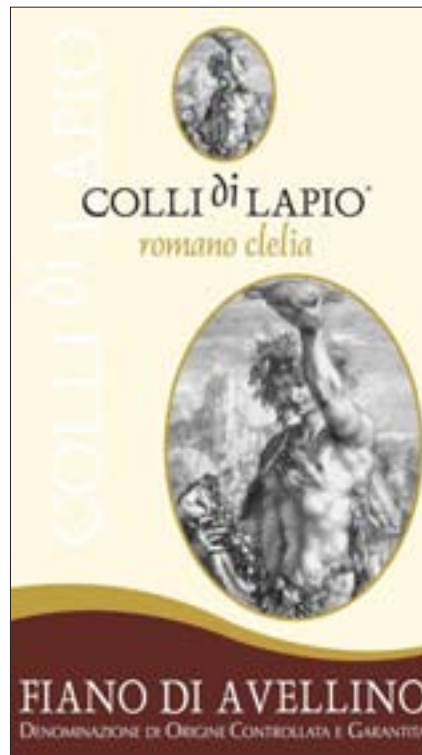
**F**iano is a gentleman's wine. And it must have always been so. It makes no concessions to today's ubiquitous "fruitiness". It is gentle but firm, smooth, elegant and somewhat reserved. It must be full and rich, but never loud: rather sustained by the effortless viscosity that is its grip. In aging it gains in stage presence and authority. Authentic Fiano is a rare wine: then it is fine and subtle and thoroughly rewarding.

At the estate in the Colli di Lapio (this 1st Century A.D. translates to "Hills of Fiano" proving the validity of the growing area) Clelia Romano has only 6 hectares of Fiano in four splendid tiny plots where, with her family, she bottles roughly 3,700 cases per year of very fine wine.

At 500 meters altitude ripening is late. Full ripening requires small crops. Fiano's delicate equilibrium needs splendid grapes, rich in sugars and extract, to counterbalance the varietal's naturally high acidity.

There is no other secret to this finest of Fiano. Superlative vineyards, care and integrity.

Clelia also makes a Taurasi DOCG, Vigna Andrea, and an Irpinia Aglianico Campi Taurasini DOC, Donna Chiara, named after two of her grandchildren, having made agreements with growers in the Taurasi area. The family supervises the grape production of 2 hectares of Aglianico, but vinification takes place at the estate. A Greco di Tufo DOCG was recently released and named after Clelia's third grandson. ♦



### Fiano di Avellino

Zone: *Colli di Lapio*  
 Cru: *Scarpone, Chiano, Stazzone, Compare*  
 Varietal: *Fiano*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *6 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *45,000 bottles*

# CANTINA DEL TABURNO

All who know me even a little are aware of my passion for the wines of Campania and in particular for the Aglianico varietal. Like Nebbiolo and Sangiovese it is, and has historically been, exclusive to a very restricted geographical latitude, altitude and soil. Only in Campania, and in the northernmost area of Basilicata, will it yield truly great wines. Aglianico has only thrived there, never expanding elsewhere, and even there it has only flourished at high altitudes and exclusively on volcanic soils. Under these conditions, if elegantly mastered, it produces among the very finest wines in the world. Indeed Aglianico has become my great oenological love and the “new frontier” to which in recent years I have devoted my greatest efforts. The results have always been exceptional, both with Taurasi and with Aglianico del Vulture. The only missing brushstroke to complete the tableau of the great Aglianici of Campania, was an Aglianico del Taburno worthy of its name.

When Luigi Moio - winemaker at Caggiano and Aglianico's greatest technical expert - asked me to visit Cantina del Taburno, I was thrilled. New agronomists had been hired to oversee the vineyard management of the conferring grape growers, and a full-fledged laboratory was installed at the establishment. Luigi had been given “carte blanche” for the vinification of all wines: indeed,

selection was so strict that Cantina del Taburno's production halved in Luigi Moio's first year as winemaker. Next, the tasting room: a line-up of white wines confronted me. A brilliant Falanghina, perky with acidity, stilish and pure, was followed by a Coda di Volpe, warm, generous and true. The Greco was relatively rigorous and shy, slow to reveal itself, to unfold its deep mineral core. These were all delightful impeccable, unusually fine even by boutique winery standards. Then Luigi poured his jewels, the late harvest barrel-fermented whites he had achieved from Falanghina and Coda di Volpe, and I was simply stunned. Never before had I tasted anything like them from Italy, the flavours and bouquets transporting me to Alsace (where, I suddenly remembered, Luigi Moio had worked with Zind-Humbrecht!). The richness and complexity of the wines and the mastery of the winemaking was simply superlative.

Lastly I followed Luigi into the cellars, there to taste from stainless steel and a battery of barriques Cantina del Taburno's three selections of Aglianico del Taburno: the regular cuvée, the barrel fermented Delius and the two barriques of Bue Apis (the entire production from a 180 year old pre-phylloxera vineyard!). And all three were brilliant examples of Aglianico at its very finest, diamond pure, exceptional in their own right. The Bue Apis simply breathtaking! With Cantina del Taburno a new star

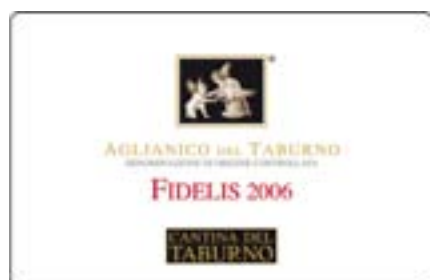
was born. End of story!

Since it has been included in my selection in 2000, Cantina del Taburno has had a remarkable success worldwide, promoting high quality wines made with indigenous varietals from Campania. The whites (Falanghina – also in its sparkling version - Coda di Volpe, Greco and Fiano) are greatly appreciated together with the Aglianico base wines. ◇



## Taburno Falanghina

Zone: *Taburno DOC*  
 Varietal: *Falanghina*  
 Average Prod.: *650,000 bottles*



## Fidelis Aglianico del Taburno

Zone: *Taburno DOC*  
 Varietal: *Aglianico*  
 Average Prod.: *320,000 bottles*

# DE ANGELIS

“**C**ampania Felix” - joyous Campania - as it was already known 2000 years ago, due to the felicitous nature of its soils and splendid climate, when its wines were already famous, quoted by Pliny, Horace and Ovid, and exported throughout the Roman Empire - has long been a love of mine. Not only for the extraordinary nature of its ancient and noble varieties, but also for the exemplary nature of its people, whose openly friendly character seems to effortlessly combine pride, integrity, unparalleled musical talent and a peculiarly carefree sort of fatalism: God knows it has to be good for wine.

The De Angelis brothers display just such virtues. Combined with the talent and dedication of their winemaker, Angelo Valentino (former cellar master at Caggiano), they make a formidable team.

Two the wines of my passion in this tiny cellar in the heaven that is Sorrento. Mythical wines, spawned at the foothills of the Vesuvius; red and white, with the same evocative name: Lacrima Christi. Both from timeless varieties, planted there, it seems, since the beginning of time.

The Lacrima red, a purple son of the Piediroso grape, flamboyantly spicy and gay, quasi Dionysian in its exuberant convolutions on the palate - a dancer of a wine, lightfooted, carefree and effortlessly fragrant. A pure, irrepressible and contagious joy!

The Lacrima Christi white, mainly Coda di Volpe, is a tender, feminine creature, velvety and aromatic. Of a silvery, luminous nature, it teases and caresses the palate, yielding and holding back at once: simply lovely. ♦



## Lacrima Christi del Vesuvio Bianco

Zone: *Vesuvius foothills*  
 Varietal: *Falanghina, Caprettone (Coda di Volpe)*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *5 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *30,000 bottles*



## Lacrima Christi del Vesuvio Rosso

Zone: *Vesuvius foothills*  
 Varietal: *Piediroso, Aglianico*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *10 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *40,000 bottles*

# SICILY

**S**icily, due to its history, its art and its climatic, geographic and geological characteristics is very different from the rest of Italy and more than a region it could be considered a “universe”.

Fruit and vegetables have another taste here and to sample the dishes of the extremely diverse and rich Sicilian traditional cuisine is an unforgettable experience: the influence of the Greek, Arab, Spanish, and French dominations mingle and result in flavours that are impossible to find anywhere else. The original recipes are improved as, for example, fish couscous which is a Sicilian *piatto forte*. Even the salt from the ancient saltworks of Mothia near Trapani is one of the most flavourful of the whole Mediterranean. And what to say about the divine *granite* (crushed ice flavoured with fruit or almond paste) or the mouth-watering *gelo di melone* (a delicious watermelon jelly)?

Fossil vines, dating back to the tertiary period, were found on the slopes of the Etna. Before the Greeks (who occupied Sicily between 800 and 500 b.C. and who improved viticulture and wine making), vines were grown by the *Siculi* a population from peninsular Italy. They used to venerate *Adranos*, the god of wine (and Adrano is the name of a large town on the southern slopes of the Etna), long before the introduction of the Greek *Dionysos*.

Sicilian wines started

being exported throughout the Mediterranean during the IV century b.C. and were greatly appreciated by the Romans.

Under the Arab domination viticulture was restricted to the production of raisins (hence the name *uva sultanina* meaning “sultan’s grape”) even though the population continued to drink wine (its consumption was forbidden in public). Strangely enough the Arabs introduced the technique of distilling wine and pomace, but mainly for medicinal purposes.

Fortunately there were better times for wine: in 1700s and 1800s wines from the Etna were exported to the whole of Europe from the port of Riposto, and Marsala wine has become famous thanks to John Woodhouse, Benjamin Ingham and Vincenzo Florio.

Phylloxera that ravaged the island in 1880-1881 and the recent massive introduction of international grape varieties sadly caused the loss of many indigenous Sicilian grape varieties, that had adapted to the climatic and soil conditions over the centuries. Although the Sicilian territory would be more suitable for the production of red wines, 75% of the varieties at present grown are white.

The production of bulk wine is still predominant and the growers who bottle are a small percentage, but there is now more awareness of the value of autochthonous grapes and many more high quality wines are

being made.

We would like to invite you to taste the “real thing” having selected estates in the zones where indigenous varieties have survived and where wine is still made respecting tradition: the Etna, the island of Pantelleria, the area of Trapani and that of Ragusa. These areas are profoundly different the one from the other and give you an idea of how unique the island of Sicily is. All this is reflected in the wines: your senses can be intrigued by a “burgundian” Etna Rosso, a luscious Nero d’Avola or an aromatic and sensuous Passito di Pantelleria!◇

# TERRE NERE

**T**enuta delle Terre Nere is located in Sicily, on the northern slopes of the Etna Volcano. The estate is made up of roughly 30 hectares, of which 21 are vineyards. Roughly 4.5 of these have been uprooted (in the Calderara cru) and replanted, having let the soil “rest”.

Two vineyards, for a total of roughly 11-12 hectares are in the Calderara Cru. Less than 1 hectare of Calderara is prephylloxera, the rest (which has not been uprooted) is about 40-50 years old. The trellising is “en goblet” or self standing, but in wide spacing: 2.2 x 1 meters. The elevation here is between 650 and 700 meters above sea level.

Two vineyards are in the Guardiola Cru, for a total of 2.1 hectares. Both are 60-90 years old, except for replanted vines. 450 vines were replanted in Guardiola in 2005. Training is en goblet 1 x 1 meter tight traditional spacing, steep and terraced, which means the vineyards have to be worked by hand. The elevation here is 800 to 900 meters above sea level. Above 1,000 meters, perfect ripening is uncertain for red grapes, but still vineyards are planted at these altitudes. In any case, these are the highest altitude red grape vineyards in the “old world”!

Two vineyards are in the “Feudo di Mezzo” cru, for a total of 1.35 hectares. The vineyards are terraced, but not as steeply as the Guardiola vineyard. The vines are en goblet,

roughly 1 x 1 meter spacing. The soil here is a blend of volcanic ash and volcanic sand, quite unusual in this area. The vines’ average age is probably around 60-80 years old.

The soils differ vastly from patch to patch. 700,000 years of volcanic eruptions have created endless soil differentiations, many of which are radical. In this area the soil is roughly volcanic ash specked by black pumice and much more solid volcanic rock as well. Rocky is putting it mildly.

The great 2007 vintage will see the release of a new cru, Santo Spirito. A new hectare property was bought here after buying extraordinary grapes for three years. In 2008 we were able to buy 7 more hectares in this outstanding cru – adjacent to Guardiola! – and harvested here some of the finest grapes ever in 2008.

The weather variations in this area are profound and generally defined by exposure, “airyness”, and altitude. But there are also microclimatic curiosities, such as the fact that Calderara lies between two rainfall areas, from both of which, for some reason, it is spared.

“Airyness”, as they define it here, which is a well exposed vineyard that is not closed in by hills, is particularly important because mildew and oidium are rather rough here. In fact, due to the fact that the harvest here is roughly between mid and the end of October making it the latest harvest in Italy after Aglianico (first week of November), the weather

always breaks before the harvest, endangering the grapes at their most delicate stage. All in all, this is a very difficult climate, in many ways akin to Burgundy. And if - like me you grow grapes organically, or biologically, if you prefer - i.e., using only bordelaise mixture and organic fertilization - mostly dung - it makes it even harder.

Most important, the extraordinary elevation yields dramatic temperature excursions. This, in turn, makes the wines of Etna extraordinarily fine and elegant, devoid of the heat and overripe sensations that overwhelmingly define “southern” wines.

And, in fact, everyone who has tasted the wines of Terre Nere, particularly the 2004s, from the barrel or the bottle says they find them most akin to Burgundy or Barolo. And indeed the Etna could easily be seen as the Burgundy of the Mediterranean, as I mention on the Italian strip label.

This is particularly obvious as I’m releasing wines produced from four crus. The grapes are vinified and aged separately. Vinification is simple, classic, Burgundian: maceration-fermentation between 10-15 days, malolactic and aging in oak - 25% new - bottling after roughly 18 months.

The 2004 vintage marked the real birth of Tenuta delle Terre Nere, because for the first time the estate was self sufficient, and the grapes produced were vinified at the estate’s new cellars. ◇



## **Etna Rosso Calderara Sottana**

Zone: *Contrada Calderara, Randazzo*  
 Cru: *Calderara*  
 Varietal: *98% Nerello Mascalese, 2% Nerello Cappuccio*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *11-12 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *4,000 bottles*

# GIROLAMO RUSSO (not represented by Marc de Grazia Selections in the USA)

I was closing the gate to the Guardiola vineyard when a mutual friend, who was passing by, introduced me to Giuseppe Russo, a trained pianist with a degree in Italian literature, who had started managing his family's property (named after his father) on the northern slopes of the Etna since his father passed away the year before, in 2003. We struck up a friendship and, in the months that followed, I encouraged Giuseppe to pursue his project of vinifying the grapes - that had been sold up to then - and bottling the wine from the 15 hectares of vineyards that make up the estate.

The vineyards, mainly Nerello Mascalese with a small percentage of Nerello Cappuccio, stand within the township of Randazzo in the *contrade* (districts) of S. Lorenzo (8 hectares at 750-780 meters above sea level), Feudo (6 hectares at 650-670 meters altitude) and Feudo di Mezzo (1 hectare at 700 meters altitude). Giuseppe also manages 1 hectare in the district of Calderara Sottana belonging to his uncle. About 9

hectares are 50-100 year old vines, all strictly *en goblet* according to the tradition on the Etna, the rest are recently planted and the trellising *espalier*. Due to the declivity, all vineyards stand on terraces, but tractors can only enter in the aisles between the rows of the new vines (the only ones wide enough), the old vines can be worked exclusively with manual tools or with motorhoes.

The estate is certified organic for viticulture, only sulphur and copper base products, and manure is the only fertilizer used and this in small quantity. Vinification takes place in an old cellar where, in the old days, wine of the area was brought to be transported by the Circumetnea railway (in fact tracks can still be seen inside the cellar) to the port of Riposto, from where it was shipped to Northern Italy, France and America.

For the production of his wines, Giuseppe follows the same method as when he used to study the piano: extreme attention to details, but always keeping in mind the final result. Although yields are extremely

low (3.5 tons/hectare), only the very best clusters are selected for the bottled wines (the rest of the grapes are used for wine sold in bulk), harvest is carried out later than most producers of the area (around the end of October) in order to have perfectly ripe grapes and full and supple wines. One must also consider that the *vignerons* of the Etna, over the centuries, have selected the clones of Nerello Mascalese that ripened later so that vinification could be carried out in autumn when the weather was cooler (so that the temperature during fermentation did not get too high causing problems) and that low yields were considered here *condicio sine qua non* for good wine.

Three different Etna Rosso wines, released for the first time with the 2005 vintage, are made: two single vineyard from the San Lorenzo and Feudo districts, and "a'Rina" (meaning "sand") made from all the vineyards of the estate. ◇



## Etna Rosso Feudo

Zone: *Contrada Feudo, Randazzo*  
 Cru: *Feudo*  
 Varietal: *Nerello Mascalese with a small percentage of Nerello Cappuccio*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *6 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *3,200 bottles*



## Etna Rosso San Lorenzo

Zone: *Contrada S. Lorenzo, Randazzo*  
 Cru: *S. Lorenzo*  
 Varietal: *Nerello Mascalese with a small percentage of Nerello Cappuccio*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *8 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *4,400 bottles*

# CENTONZE SRL

**C**entonze Srl was established in 1998 by a family of oenologists, Giovanni Centonze together with his son and daughter Nicola and Carla. Giovanni is a well known Sicilian oenologist and former president of the Association of Sicilian oenologists.

Nicola studied viticulture and oenology at Conegliano Veneto (considered one of the best university level courses in Italy) and set up a consultancy company together with Vincenzo Bambina, also a very well known Sicilian winemaker, in 2000.

Nicola consults for a number of estates located in the most suitable zones for viticulture throughout Sicily and follows all phases of production from the planting of the vineyards to the bottling of the wines. At these estates the best grapes in the best vineyards standing in the most significant terroirs are chosen, vinified and bottled with the label of Centonze. Approximately 20 hectares of vineyards belong to the company in the area of Trapani.

The wines are mainly made with indigenous varieties, Grillo, Nero d'Avola, Frappato, Zibibbo (Muscat of Alexandria). The range also includes the only DOCG wine in Sicily, Cerasuolo di Vittoria (the blend being Nero d'Avola and Frappato), that dates back to 1606 when the town of Vittoria was founded by Vittoria Colonna Henriques daughter of the viceroy of Sicily. This Cerasuolo (from "cerasa", cherry in Sicilian dialect), entirely vinified in steel, is extremely pleasant and drinkable, with delicate floral and fresh red fruit notes.

The philosophy of the company is to offer wines that express at best the various Sicilian terroirs, but that can, at the same time, be easily appreciated and understood. Nicola and Giovanni, supported by Vincenzo Bambina, have given an important

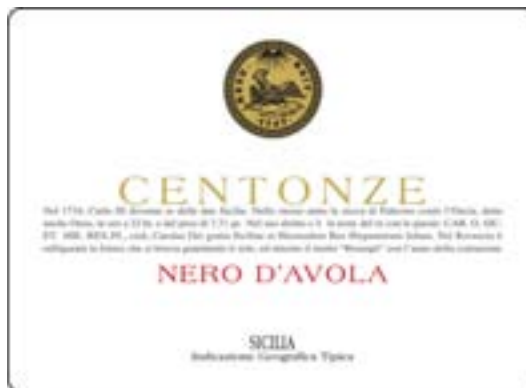
contribution to modern winemaking in the region and the Centonze label is a guarantee for high quality and typicality.

Tasting these wines will make you experience a tour of Sicily that I am sure you will find highly rewarding!◇



## Cerasuolo di Vittoria

Zone: *Eastern Sicily*  
 Varietal: *60% Nero d'Avola, 40% Frappato*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *8 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *12,000 bottles*



## Nero d'Avola

Zone: *Western Sicily*  
 Varietal: *100% Nero d'Avola*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *20 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *30,000 bottles*

# FERRANDES

The island of Pantelleria is a luminous volcanic fragment that lies at the center of the Mediterranean Sea, between the continents of Europe and Africa, exactly 40 nautical miles from Cape Mustafâ in Tunisia and 60 nautical miles from Cape Granatola in Sicily.

The climate is humid and windy, the predominant Scirocco and Maestrale blowing hard most of the year. Mean temperature is 25°Celsius in August, at harvest, and rainfall, at a yearly 349 mm, is the lowest in Europe.

The island's noble varietal is Muscat of Alexandria, planted in individual "conche" (dugouts), 20 cms deep, in order to protect the vines from the wind. The grape was most probably brought to Pantelleria by the Arabs around 800 A.D. - though previous vineyards planted by the Greeks certainly existed, and a Passito was equally produced - and was employed to produce raisins as well as wine. In fact, the grape is locally known as Zibibbo, "Zebib" being the arabic for raisin. And still today, notwithstanding a growing agricultural depression, Zibibbo remains the island's farming staple, both in raisin form and in wine. Indeed, the only significant wine of the island - aside from small quantities produced for local consumption - is Passito di Pantelleria, a wine produced from dried grapes, obviously the finest expression of this Muscat.

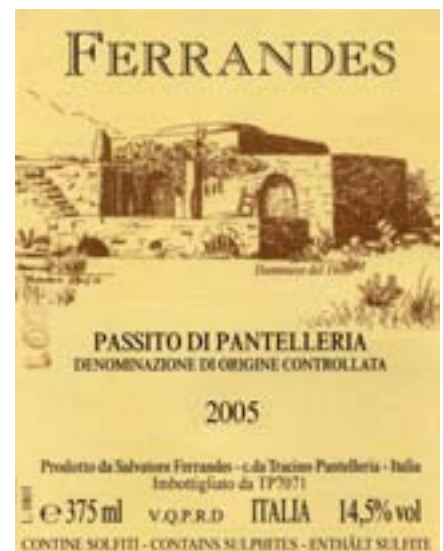
The Ferrandes family is of Spanish descent, established in Pantelleria in the 15th century. The tradition of producing Passito di Pantelleria, possibly Italy's most ancient dessert wine and the island's claim to fame, was passed on from father to son and is perpetuated today by Salvatore Ferrandes. The estate's entire production (of raisins as well as wine), is strictly organic. The Muscat grapes, carefully open-air dried for

two weeks against lava stone walls, are crushed and then fermented in tiny vats - given the 2,500 litre production! - deep in the estate's 17th century cellars. The wine decants and is left to mature for 1 year minimum, whereupon it is bottled.

The result is unique and truly remarkable. And, indeed, in mythology we find the Carthaginian goddess Tanit (Carthage being the closeby current day Tunis), substituting divine Ambrosia with the ancient Passito from Pantelleria (following Aphrodite's advice!), in order to seduce much desired Apollo, the inflexible Lord of the shining sun.

The wine's colour is a rich gold with deep amber hues. The bouquet is powerfully aromatic, clearly reminiscent of dried apricots and figs, hazelnuts and vanilla, layers upon layers of spice and musk - an unforgettable fragrance! On the palate it is honey-rich and deep-toned, a divinely lingering wine, truly embodying the full solar sensuality of the mediterranean spirit.

For this jewel, as for all Sicilian wine and experience, I am deeply indebted to my friend and excellent winemaker Salvatore Foti. ◇



## Passito di Pantelleria

Zone: *Pantelleria*  
 Varietal: *Moscato di Alessandria*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *1.6 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *2,500 bottles*

# SANTA LUCIA

On the Adriatic coast in the region of Puglia about sixty kilometres south of the spur of Italy's boot lies the port town of Trani. In full daylight the clean bright whiteness strikes the eye. At sunset, instead of the usual yellow and orange hues, the town turns a delicate pink. The entire port enclosure is constructed above and below from Pietra di Trani, a local white marble-like stone. The Romanesque Abbey of Santa Maria di Colonna, of the same reflective stone, rests massively and immaculately at shore's edge. These sights are seen often by Giuseppe Perrone Capano and his son Roberto, a world-class yachtsman, whether sailing into Trani or looking out from its solitary restaurant. In fact, this view has been shared by Perrone Capanos since the early 17th century, and for these same four hundred years viticulture has been part of the family.

Twenty kilometers inland from Trani, just beyond the town of Corato and rising 300 meters above is the Santa Lucia farm. A few kilometers further and rising higher, stands the extraordinary octagonal castle built by the Swabian emperor Friedrich II, visible except on the rare cloudy day. It is from this singular structure that Castel del Monte D.O.C. gets its name.

Here, the summers are long and hot, so hot that one's spirit sags and wilts. The single-level villa of about 300 square meters - from the same Pietra di Trani and dating back to the arrival of the family - has walls so thick that a complete bathroom was carved into one. Inside it is cool and in the subterranean cellar the temperature is never above 16° C, even in the hottest July and August days. But the most unusual aspects of this estate, so unusual as to be almost unheard-of, are its dimensions and the methods of production.

Puglia is completely dominated by co-op wineries where production is more and more in the hands of the beverage industrialists, and qualitatively vacillates between wines that are stripped and nondescript and those that are baked and dirty and still nondescript, Santa Lucia consists of 11 hectares of vineyard producing approximately 75,000 bottles per harvest; a small production by any standards, but minuscule by Puglia's. The vineyard is worked as if it were a garden, by hand and by people who know every plant and the idiosyncrasies of each nook and cranny. Vineyard density is 5,500 vines per hectare, Guyot and cordon spur are the vine training systems.

The red grape of this area is Troia (Troy), which like its western cousins in Campania, Greco and Aglianico, has its origins in Greek antiquity. Aging of Santa Lucia Castel del Monte Rosso is mostly in large Slavonian oak casks and lasts for about 6/8 months after which it rests in the bottle for 6 more months. The Castel del Monte Riserva sees 18 months of French oak barriques and rests 12 months in bottle. Because Castel del Monte is rarely made with the care exercised by the Perrone Capano family, with the intent of expressing fresh varietal character, it is rather impossible to judge it comparatively: the wines are simply different than those of Tuscany or even Abruzzo, one wonders at the unique but lovely vinosity and aromas. The Rosso is dark and luscious with a medium body betrayed by a full feel on the palate. The Riserva is finer, more tantalizing and longer finishing. In

## Vigna del Melograno Castel del Monte Rosso

Zone: *Castel del Monte*  
 Cru: *Vigna del Melograno*  
 Varietal: *Uva di Troia*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *5 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *30,000 bottles*

their price class these wines are hard to beat.

The estate also offers an Aleatico, an interesting Fiano (named "Gazza Ladra" after the opera of Rossini) and a red wine, Gazza Nera, 100% Negroamaro. A new release is a second Castel del Monte Riserva, aged 6 years in the underground cellar after maturing for 18 months in small oak casks. This wine bears the number 0,618 on the label which defines the "sectio aurea" used during the Medioeval times to design cathedrals and castles and synonymous of harmony.

Since 2001 the estate's winemaker, Luigi Cantatore, is supported by oenologist Paolo Caciorgna, who consults for many southern Italian wineries. ♦



# MASSERIE PISARI

I met Giordano Emo Capodilista during a sailing cruise at the Egadi islands in Sicily. Giordano, whose mother is from Lecce, and Francesco Marra, an agronomist and a “DOC *Leccese*” established the estate in 2005.

Masserie Pisari is in the “heel” of Italy in southern Salento, between Gallipoli and Leuca, in the Feudo d’Ugento (the ancient “Ozan”) in an area where Negroamaro and Primitivo vines have been grown for centuries, in fact there are 3 hectares of vines “en goblet” that are over 60 years old. The area is called “Conca d’oro” (Golden Conch) and the soils are clayey, red and rich in potassium. The vineyards are a few kilometers from the sea and it is rare to find such an extension of agricultural land in this position. Giordano and Francesco are supported by oenologist (an “orthodox” oenologist according to Giordano) Andrea Boaretti, a Venetian who is devoted to the Salento region and who consults for other wineries in Puglia.

The cellars, that have been totally restructured, are located right next to the old Salento “Sud-Est” railway and were built in the 1930s by a Piedmontese who used to grow grapes and send them north.

Only the best clusters are used to make the Salento Rosso Negroamaro, the Salento Rosato Negroamaro and the Salento Rosso Primitivo; grape yield is kept low (as shown by the production of just 29,500 bottles over 10 hectares) and temperature control in the vats keeps the fermentation process even (which is quite an achievement in such a hot climate!). The result is fresh, fruity and flawless wines that give a pure taste of this secluded and beautiful part of Italy. ♦



## Salento Rosso Negroamaro

Zone: *Ugento*  
 Varietal: *Negroamaro*  
 Average Prod.: *17,500 bottles*



## Salento Rosato Negroamaro

Zone: *Ugento*  
 Varietal: *Negroamaro*  
 Average Prod.: *4,000 bottles*



## Salento Rosso Primitivo

Zone: *Ugento*  
 Varietal: *Primitivo*  
 Average Prod.: *8,000 bottles*

# LORENZO COSTANTINI

Although we successfully worked with the wines of Villa Simone for over a decade, we decided to follow Piero Costantini's nephew and winemaker Lorenzo when he purchased, with his wife Fulvia, a small estate in Colle Mattia, one of the oldest areas of wine production in Frascati. The limited production, just 50,000 bottles, and the fact that Lorenzo is concentrating all his efforts and talents in the production of his own wines, convinced us to include his azienda agricola in our selection.

Lorenzo graduated at the Istituto di San Michele all'Adige (one of the best schools in Italy for viticulture and oenology) and worked as director of the famous Tenuta Ca' Bolani in Friuli and then for his family's estate in Frascati.

Lorenzo and Fulvia's vineyards stand in a zone where the historical estates of Frascati are located as the altitude (350 meters above sea level) and a perfect exposure make it ideal for viticulture: in fact the high temperature during the day and the cool nights favour aromas, while the volcanic/clayey soil, rich in minerals, and in potassium in particular, makes the wines particularly sapid. The azienda is tiny, the vineyard extension is only 5.5 hectares, strict organic practices are followed and only sulphur and copper base products are used. Bottles are stored in the hand hewn tufo (tuff) caves on the estate. In the old days one third of the whole production of Frascati wine was vinified in these vaults, 15 meters underground.

Two wines are produced, a lovely and elegant Frascati Superiore and a supple and fruity IGT red (a blend of mainly Sangiovese and Cesanese), first release the 2007 vintage. We are sure that you will approve our choice! ♦



## Massarosa Frascati Superiore

Zone: *Colle Mattia, Frascati*  
 Varietal: *30% Trebbiano, 30% Malvasia del Lazio, 40% Malvasia di Candia*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *5 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *40,000 bottles*



## Massarosa Rosso Lazio IGT

Zone: *Colle Mattia, Frascati*  
 Varietal: *45% Cesanese, 45% Sangiovese, 10% Montepulciano and Cabernet Sauvignon*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *0.5 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *10,000 bottles*

# TRENTINO ALTO ADIGE

The Trentino-Alto Adige, one of the finest wine producing areas in Italy, stands apart from all others chiefly for one striking particularity: for almost a century this region has been dominated by Coops. Therefore, unfortunately, given that most grapes were grown in order to be sold, it stands to reason that overcropping was customary rather than an exception. Although the Collio appellation in Friuli is reputed

to be the finest area for white wine in Italy, in my opinion the Trentino-Alto Adige has revealed itself, in the last two decades, as the area with the greatest potential. The terroirs and climates there are remarkably suited for the vine, the microclimates fabulous and highly diversified and the technology of winemaking the most sophisticated in the nation; the ingrained custom of crop selling to Co-ops for the lack of a market had

stultified all but very few efforts towards real quality winemaking. Yet, as I said before, the potential is unquestionably there and manifesting itself more and more as a number of enterprising producers appeared on the scene. The final proof is in the wines of La Cadalora, of Viticoltori Alto Adige and of Koefererhof. ◇

Azienda Agricola

## LA CADALORA

Situated in the town of Santa Margherita, in the southernmost part of Trentino, the estate of La Cadalora extends its 12 hectares of vineyards in three different plots: about 5 hectares on the calcareous soils close to Marco di Rovereto and the remaining 7 hectares in two calcareous conoids of Valle Cipriana and San Valentino, at the foothills of Monte Zugna. The soils of the latter contain higher percentages of clay while the former are gravelly/sandy and calcarous.

In the eighties Rodolfo and Tiziano (a trained oenologist from the renowned Institute of San Michele all'Adige) took over the management of their father's estate and immediately set to work: the traditional "Pergola

Trentina" training system was modified in order to obtain a vineyard density between 5,000 and 8,000 vines/hectare ensuring a maximum of 1 to 1.5 kgs per plant. Viticulture became strictly environment friendly by eliminating chemicals: "sexual confusion" practice is followed for insect control, only Bordelaise poulitice is sprayed and grass is left on the aisles. Green pruning, topping of the vines and deleafing keep the plants balanced and when necessary and depending on the varietal, fruit is thinned by cutting the second cluster or the "wings" of the clusters.

The varietals grown are Pinot Grigio, Chardonnay, a little Sauvignon Blanc, Gewürztraminer, Pinot Noir, Marzemino and Casetta

(these last two planted right after World War One, Casetta being a very ancient and rare varietal).

The stile of Tiziano is one after my own heart. The white wines are superbly characterized by a rich, buttery structure and powerful varietal aromas. The level of the reds is also very high, the wines made from Casetta and Marzemino definitely worth a try.

La Cadalora represents more than the discovery of a fine producer, it is the long sought find of a winemaker who, thanks to his outlook and capacity, produces outstanding wines from Italy. ◇



### Pinot Grigio La Cadalora

Zone: *Santa Margherita, Vallagarina*

Varietal: *Pinot Grigio*

Vineyard Ext.: *3 hectares*

Average Prod.: *35,000 bottles*

## VITICOLTORI ALTO ADIGE

**V**iticoltori Alto Adige is a cooperative representing and operating as a coordinating and consulting agency to 6 Cantine Sociali of the Alto Adige. By grouping together highly specialized and highly qualified producers, Viticoltori has initiated the most fruitful quality-oriented oenological innovation of the region, for it finally allows the very finest crus of Alto Adige to be known in their integrity.

The process is simple and effective. The oenologist of the cooperative works closely with the oenologists of the various wineries and chooses only the best lots of wine to be bottled (at the co-operative winery of St. Michael, Eppan) thus ensuring the highest quality possible. And here it must be added that the Trentino-Alto Adige boasts the finest white wine oenologists in Italy and the best school of oenology of the nation. All aspects concerning viticulture are supervised by a provincial committee that collaborates with the agronomists of the six wineries.

At the beginning of 2006

Viticoltori has developed a new selection of wines especially for me that groups the most representative varieties grown in South Tyrol - Pinot Grigio, Lagrein, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Noir, Schiava (Vernatsch), Müller Thurgau and Gewürztraminer - from the very best crus.

Remarkable to the neophyte will be the recognition that there is no single cru where all varieties thrive at their best. Rather, each variety has a particularly felicitous cru of its own which, due to geophysical aspects of soil, exposure and microclimate, yields the finest wine of its kind.

Pinot Grigio is presented in two bottlings in the new selection: a "base" version from the vineyards of the Bassa Atesina hills and a top line wine from vineyards in the Oltradige region. Both areas are long known for their superb white wines and offer the ideal growing conditions for this particular variety. These wines are full but soft to the palate with a good acidic balance with a slight note of ripe fruit. The aroma is of tropical fruit and honey. Truly lovely wines!

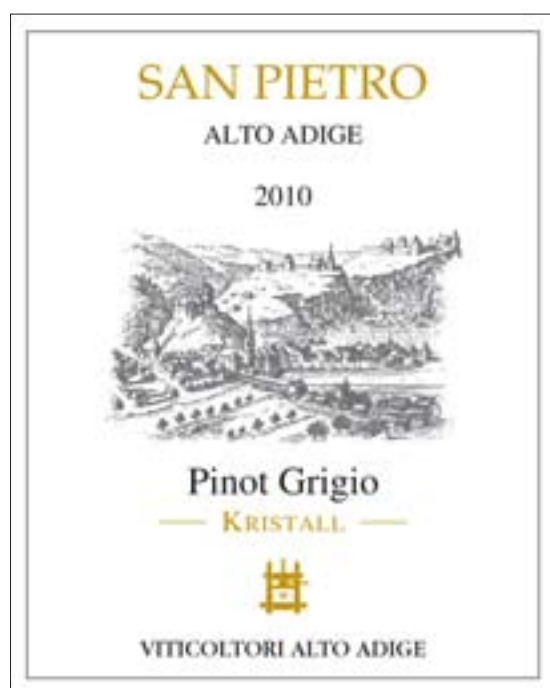
Lagrein is a typical variety of Alto Adige and it is mentioned in XVII Century documents of the Benedictine Monastery of Muri near Bolzano. It produces full-bodied wines, with red berries and violet notes.

Schiava (Vernatsch) is another grape often found in this region. Viticoltori bottle this light and fruity wine produced from a number of small vineyards in the township of Appiano (Eppan).

Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Noir give superb results in this part of Italy and these wines are among the best one can taste.

Müller Thurgau and Gewürztraminer grapes are traditionally grown in Alto Adige and Viticoltori offer an excellent version of wines made from these varieties.

I am extremely happy to be able to present this interesting and well-priced range and all the wines are definitely worth a try! ◇



### Alto Adige Pinot Grigio "Kristall"

Zone: *Otradige/Alto Adige*  
 Varietal: *Pinot Grigio*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *10 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *70,000 bottles*

Tenuta

Trentino Alto Adige

## KÖFERERHOF

**W**eingut Koefererhof is located in the Isarco Valley, the most northern tip of Italy. The 5.8 hectares of vineyards of the estate are planted on loose and loamy-sandy soils at an average altitude of 650 meters on sea level. The farmstead dates back to the twelfth century and since then grapes have always been grown and wine was sold directly at the farm. The Kerschbaumer family has run the estate since 1940.

Up to 1995, when the cellar was completely rebuilt and wine started being produced again and estate bottled, grapes were sold to Abbazia di Novacella, the local Co-op. Günther Kerschbaumer is the agronomist and winemaker and the wines produced are typical of this area and more similar to the wines made across the border in Austria than to the traditional Italian whites. Dense plantings (6,000-7,500 vines per hectare) combined with altitude, high temperature during the day and cool nights in summer result in fresh, aromatic and fruity wines with a good structure and mineral notes.

The Kerschbaumers make eight Alto Adige Valle Isarco DOC wines made from the classical varieties of the region: Pinot Grigio, Sylvaner (a “base” and a single vineyard wine are produced), Kerner, Müller Thurgau, Grüner Veltliner, Gewürztraminer and Riesling. ◇



### **Alto Adige Valle Isarco Pinot Grigio**

Zone: *Varna*  
Varietal: *Pinot Grigio*  
Vineyard Ext.: *1.2 hectares*  
Average Prod.: *10,000 bottles*

# BOCCADIGABBIA

**F**or many reasons Boccadigabbia is one of the most interesting domaines in the Marche region. Until 1950 the estate belonged to Prince Luigi Girolamo Napoleon Bonaparte, direct descendant of the Napoleon we all know. In fact, ever since the early 19th century, French grapes were planted at Boccadigabbia under the Napoleonic administration, varieties the locals described as “bordò” and “francesi” - a heritage unfortunately wholly lost in the breakdown of the imperial properties that ended in their sale.

It, then, makes perfect sense that Elvio Alessandri, the present owner, decided to plant Pinot Blanc, Chardonnay, Pinot Gris, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon alongside the traditional Sangiovese, Trebbiano and Montepulciano: the choice had a historical as well as qualitative significance.

Boccadigabbia produces about 3,500 bottles of “Akronte”, a Cabernet Sauvignon of remarkable complexity; 60,000 bottles of Rosso Piceno, soft, fresh and forward; 3,500 bottles of “Pix”, 100% Merlot, a very soft and aromatically complex wine; 12,000 bottles of Sangiovese Marche

“Saltapicchio”, with soft tannins and fine and elegant fragrances; 6,500 bottles of “Il Girone”, 100% Pinot Noir; 6,500 bottles of “Montalperti”, a barrel fermented Chardonnay among the best to be found in Italy; 7,500 bottles of “Le Grane” a Colli Maceratesi Ribona D.O.C (100% Maceratino, a very old local varietal); 12,000 bottles of “Garbi” (a blend of Chardonnay, Sauvignon and Verdicchio); 3,500 bottles of “Roseo”

(a rosato, a blend of Sangiovese and Montepulciano).

One cannot help admiring the care in the vineyard and in the cellar, both testimonials to an uncompromising drive for quality and quality alone. The excellence and excitement one tastes in each and every wine is a tribute to the owner and to the dedicated winemaker, Fabrizio Ciufoli. ◇



## Rosso Piceno

Zone: *Civitanova Marche*  
 Varietal: *Montepulciano, Sangiovese*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *5 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *60,000 bottles*



## Akronte

Zone: *Civitanova Marche*  
 Varietal: *Cabernet Sauvignon*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *2.5 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *3,500 bottles*



## Saltapicchio

Zone: *Civitanova Marche*  
 Varietal: *Sangiovese*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *1.8 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *12,000 bottles*

# BISCI

**V**erdicchio is a commonplace name among wine consumers. But few, even among the experts, know that there are two appellations where Verdicchio is produced - Castelli di Jesi and Matelica - both employing the same Verdicchio varietal, but yielding wines so radically different as to really call for a more definite distinction than the one employed today.

The wines from the Castelli di Jesi appellation are responsible for Verdicchio's reputation as a supremely drinkable wine of refreshing simplicity and very affordable price.

Verdicchio di Matelica is still

virtually unknown outside of its appellation, a very small township couched in the hilly rural central part of the Marche region. The Bisci estate is without doubt Matelica's finest expression, its owners devoted solely to quality: rigorously enforcing short pruning and the strictest cluster selection during harvest; bottling only wine from first run must, and actually skipping vintages when not entirely satisfied with the final result. Releasing their Verdicchio (they produce a regular, a single vineyard Vigneto Fogliano - and a Riserva) after most others have already been consumed, the Bisci estate makes a clear statement as to the character of its wines. These wines are rich,

creamy, engagingly structured of remarkable amplitude and length on the palate. When young the bouquet has varietal grassy qualities backed by a spicy nature that with age evolves into complex and seductive resinous suggestions, displaying characteristics so bold and distinctive as to warrant a redefinition of both varietal and wine.

Bisci also produces two Marche Rosso, "Rosso Villa Castiglioni" and "Rosso Piangifame (both 100% Sangiovese) and a Passito (100% Verdicchio). ◇



## Verdicchio di Matelica

Zone: *Matelica*  
 Varietal: *Verdicchio*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *12 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *40,000 bottles*



## Verdicchio di Matelica Vigneto Fogliano

Zone: *Matelica*  
 Varietal: *Verdicchio*  
 Cru: *Fogliano*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *4 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *13,500 bottles*

# LE TERRAZZE

When Attilio called and said “Let’s go for a ride and a taste in the Marche”!, I jumped at the idea and off we went. I like the Marche, and my experience with Bisci’s Verdicchio di Matelica and the wines of Boccadigabbia had been so positive that I harboured good feelings for this little known and underrated area. Then also, Attilio Pagli is a fine winemaker as Tuscany has, a man of integrity and a good friend. So we ended up at Le Terrazze and, under a ripe rain, we slushed through the vineyards, impeccably kept, clusters and clusters of Montepulciano cut and lying discarded on the ground, firmly discouraging overproduction, the healthiest grapes enriching the canopy with purple.

Then, back to the estate for tasting and lunch and talking with Antonio Terni and his gracious wife,

Georgina, vigneronne and excellent cook to boot!

And we’re all a bit uneasy - as often happens amongst people who care about wine - when we approach “business matters”, always an embarrassing subject. But the wines were very fine, the future promised things finer and finer to come, the company was precious. Thus, we met again, in Florence, for all details.

Rosso Conero, or at least its ancestor, had been produced in the small hilly enclave that is its appellation ever since Roman days, testifying to the area’s viticultural aptitude. Fattoria Le Terrazze belongs to the Terni family since 1882 and the aim of the estate is to make the finest wine possible in the appellation.

An average of 40,000 bottles of rich and elegant Rosso Conero are released on a yearly basis. Besides the Rosso Conero “base”, Antonio

Terni makes other two Rosso Conero (Conero DOCG from the ‘04 vintage) wines: a single vineyard for long aging, called Sassi Neri (made to compete with some of the very best reds around) and, only in the best vintages, a selection Visions of Johanna - a tribute to Bob Dylan of whom Antonio is a fan.

The range of wines also consists of three IGT/proprietary wines: “Chaos” (a blend of Montepulciano, Syrah and Merlot), “Le Cave” (100% Chardonnay) and “Planet waves” (a blend of Montepulciano and Syrah), that was created following a specific request of Bob Dylan. A young and fresh Rosso Conero, “Preludium” and a Rosato were recently released. ◇



## Rosso Conero

Zone: *Numana*  
 Varietal: *Montepulciano*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *10 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *40,000 bottles*



## Sassi Neri Conero Riserva DOCG

Zone: *Numana*  
 Cru: *Sassi Neri*  
 Varietal: *Montepulciano*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *3 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *13,000 bottles*

# TAVIGNANO

Get great deal of pleasure poring over the varied and unique histories of the people and farms with which I work. So many reach back to Renaissance and Medieval times involving generations upon generations of families, some noble, some not, all fascinating. But the saga of the owners of this estate, the Lucangeli Aymerich di Laconi lineage, takes the cake.

The Aymerichs were originally Ostrogoths who descended into the Iberian peninsula at the time of the German tribal migrations. By the turn of the last Millennium they had arrived in Sardinia. The activities recorded in Catalonia reveal participation in the reconquest of Lerida in 1140 and Valencia in 1239. An Aymerich named Guillermo, during the conflict between the excommunicated King Pedro and Charles of Valois brokered the papal truce in 1283. In 1286, at the court of Aragon, Arnaldo arbitrated Alfonso III's claim to the throne. By 1476 their coat of arms included Aragon and Sicily and Emperor Charles V in 1535 granted the addition of the imperial two-headed eagle and the extraordinary right for the nobility to pass through the females of the family. All Dons and Donnas with a capital D - Grandees of Spain 1st class! Through the centuries we find Knights of the highest order in Spain and Italy, Governors, Viceroy's, Bishops and Senators. Aymerich became one of the most important names of Sardinia. Did I say names? Marchese di Laconi, Count of Villamar, Viscount of Valuri, Baron of Ploghe, Lord of Stuanu, Crastu, Lionesu, Riutortu and Montis di Ledda. But what brought us together was the recent connection of Aymerich to the Lucangeli of the Marche: Stefano marries Beatrice.

The Tavignano estate has been fully reconstructed: villa, surrounding houses, and most importantly the

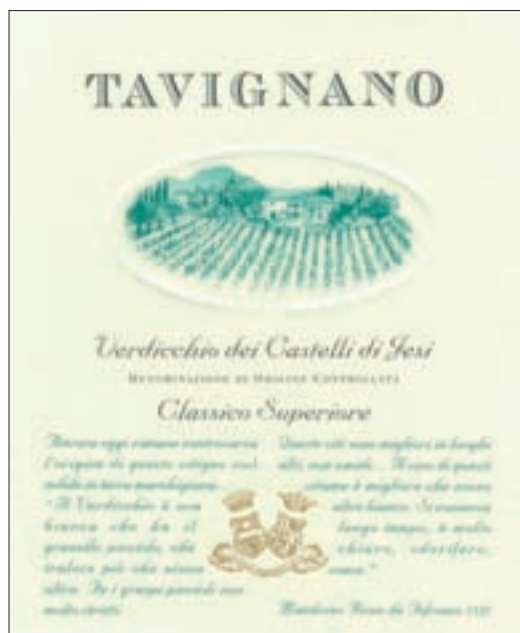
vineyards and cellars. The total vineyard extension is 30 hectares of which 15 planted with Verdicchio and the rest dedicated to red wines: Rosso Piceno D.O.C. made in two different versions.

Verdicchio in the Jesi area contrasts sharply with that of Matelica. Instead of massive structure, straw colours, exotic bouquets and weighty mouth-feel, Jesi offers less musculature, greener tints, aromas of flowers and fresh fruits, a crisp palate sensation closing with a hint of bitter almonds. Tavignano's single vineyard Misco Verdicchio (also produced as a Riserva), however, is rich - but deliciously plump rather than heavy. ◇



## Misco Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi

Zone: *Cingoli, Jesi*  
 Cru: *Misco*  
 Varietal: *Verdicchio*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *3 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *10,000 bottles*



## Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi

Zone: *Cingoli, Jesi*  
 Varietal: *Verdicchio*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *9 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *60,000 bottles*

# PALAZZONE

**O**rvieto Classico is certainly the most representative wine from Umbria. Unique among white Italian wines for its complex blend of five varietals, it is not an easy wine to make due to differing ripening timetables and the problems of proportionate blending. But when well made it can be truly remarkable.

Unfortunately, given the widespread custom of overcropping, and to hasty and poor practices of vinification, Orvieto has lost much of the reputation that had made it in the past a household name in Italy and abroad, and today it is indeed tasking to find an excellent wine from this appellation.

Il Palazzone Orvieto Classico Terre Vineate is a notable exception to the rule.

The Dubini family bought Il Palazzone in 1970 and by 1972 they had restructured a neglected property into what was to become a model estate. The semi-abandoned country house was fixed up and eighteen hectares of vineyards were planted on soils of sedimentary origin with ideal South-Eastern exposure.

At first the grapes were simply harvested and sold; but by 1984 small quantities, selected from different plots, were vinified, and the limited production estate bottled. The results showed great quality but even greater potential, so much so that today the estate vinifies the finest grape selection for an average of 100,000 bottles a year.

A new ageing and storage cellar has been recently built in front of the previous cellar now used only for vinification.

The possibility of operating strict grape selections and blending accurately and proportionately, the employment of soft pressing and temperature controlled fermentation, guarantee the high quality of Terre Vineate.

Equally essential is Giovanni Dubini's philosophy of production. The manifest goal is not merely that of generic improvement, but reflect itself specifically in the yearning to produce a complex white wine suited for aging. These propositions have been embraced with great vigour, and have found their highest expression in

Il Palazzone's Campo del Guardiano Orvieto, a "reserve" produced from the estate's finest grapes and released a full year later than Terre Vineate.

Gifted with a wonderfully rich and silky body and an intensely fruity bouquet, both Terre Vineate and Campo del Guardiano, grow with age, developing a complexity indeed rare among Italian white wine.

In 1986 a small Cabernet Sauvignon vineyard (from which Armaleo, a jewel of the estate, is made) was added to the 18 hectares of Orvieto Classico. In 1991 other four hectares were planted with Sauvignon (from which a dessert wine, Muffa Nobile, is produced), with Viognier (used for L'Ultima Spiaggia) and with Grechetto (for Grechetto IGT). Finally in 1999-2000 other three hectares planted with red grapes were added for the production of Rubbio (a blend of Sangiovese and local varietals). Giovanni also makes a fresh and fruity white wine, Dubini Bianco (a blend of Procanico, Verdello and other indigenous varietals) and Piviere, 100% Sangiovese. ♦



## Terre Vineate Orvieto Classico Superiore

Zone: *Orvieto*  
 Varietal: *Procanico, Grechetto, Verdello, Drupeggio, Malvasia*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *16 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *45,000 bottles*



## Campo del Guardiano Orvieto Classico Superiore

Zone: *Orvieto*  
 Cru: *Campo del Guardiano*  
 Varietal: *Procanico, Grechetto, Verdello, Drupeggio, Malvasia*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *1.8 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *7,000 bottles*

# FRATELLI PARDI

The origin of Sagrantino is uncertain: in *Naturalis Historia* Pliny the Elder mentioned the Itriola grape grown within the area where Sagrantino di Montefalco is now produced, but it is likely that this varietal was brought by the Franciscan monks returning from their travels in Asia Minor in the XIV-XV century.

Montefalco, one of the few towns in Italy where vineyards were planted within the city walls, boasts a very old tradition in viticulture and winemaking: already in 1400s laws regulated this sector and starting from 1640 the beginning of harvest was established by a decree of the town council.

Moreover, the agricultural planning of the XV century can be seen in the wonderful frescoes by

Benozzo Gozzoli of the Monastery of San Francesco, in the cellars of which the great-grandparents of the present owners used to vinify their grapes from 1919 to 1945. The wines were then sold throughout Umbria and in the Vatican City. After 1945 the family decided only to sell grapes up to 2002 when a new winery was established and wine started being bottled again under the supervision of Giovanni Dubini, owner of Palazzone.

The Pardi family has owned a textile factory for three generations, the only one in Umbria where cotton and linen are still woven with traditional mechanical looms, and the same passion and research for beauty and perfection can be now found in the wines.

Four different wines are made: a Sagrantino secco (matured in

wood for 18 months, robust, but elegant, with a fantastic nose of red berries with slightly spicy notes); a Sagrantino Passito (made with grapes that are dried for two months on straw mats before being pressed, it is sweet, intense, fruity, ideal with desserts or cheese); a delicious Montefalco Rosso (a blend of mainly Sangiovese with Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Sagrantino) and a Montefalco Bianco (60% Grechetto, 25% Trebbiano and 15% Chardonnay).

I am very grateful to Giovanni Dubini, who introduced us to this charming family and to their lovely wines, and I strongly recommend to give them a try! ◇



## Montefalco Rosso

Zone: *Montefalco*  
 Varietal: *70% Sangiovese, 15% Sagrantino, 15% Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *3.3 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *10,000 bottles*

## Sagrantino di Montefalco

Zone: *Montefalco*  
 Varietal: *Sagrantino*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *6.93 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *10,000 bottles*



# FILOMUSI GUELFY

In the unappropriately vast appellation of Montepulciano d'Abruzzo, where the Montepulciano grape is cultivated in a spectrum of climates, altitudes and pedological conditions that is boggling in its variety, Montepulciano d'Abruzzo D.O.C. can present itself to the neophyte with characteristics so varied as to make one wonder why all these radically different wines go by the same name.

Tocco di Casauria, a small town of the Abruzzi region (in the province of Pescara) has always produced a Montepulciano d'Abruzzo with qualitative characteristics that brand it as unique among wines produced in other areas of the Abruzzi. Within this township we find the county of Ceppeto, where the Filomusi Guelfi Estate is situated, and where the microclimate is so outstanding as to warrant its qualification as a veritable cru.

Filomusi Guelfi's Montepulciano d'Abruzzo is blessed with a richness and a depth of colour indeed rare. Its bouquet is powerfully evocative of cherries and currants, its structure firm and concentrated, its taste ample and generous on the palate with a lingering finish of berries and liquorice. The cellar is located in an historical building that dates back to the end of the fifteenth century, but the equipment is extremely modern!

The range of wines of the estate also includes a Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Riserva, a Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Cerasuolo (a cherry red rosé wine) and two Colline Pescaresi IGT whites (one a blend of local and international varietals, the other made with Pecorino, an ancient varietal grown in the Marche and in Abruzzo that has recently been recovered). ♦



## Montepulciano d'Abruzzo

Zone: *Tocco di Casauria*  
 Cru: *Ceppeto*  
 Varietal: *Montepulciano d'Abruzzo*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *6.8 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *45,000 bottles*

## GINI

The Gini estate is a marvelous example of family synergy: after Olinto recently passed away, his sons Sandro and Claudio are managing the estate working side by side to reestablish Soave's reputation as one of Italy's finest white wines, and decidedly one of the most enchanting and seductive wines anywhere. Have you ever even associated Soave with crus and terroir? Well, first of all let's start by distinguishing Soave from Soave Classico: the latter is the "true" historical appellation, the one with hills and slopes, where clearly the vine finds its finest habitat in leaner soils, naturally producing lesser quantities but far better grapes. The former represents a "political" enlargement of the appellation to encompass the adjacent flatlands, a measure due to the great popularity that the Soave produced in the hillsides enjoyed. Needless to say, vineyards in the flatlands produced - and continue to produce - outrageous amounts, the results being that pale-white beverage commonly recognized as Soave today. In fact, Soave's reputation has been so systematically destroyed by the seas of mediocre wine that have abused its name, that it must come as a surprise that any Soave vigneron you ask will proudly state that, indeed, there are two universally acknowledged grand crus in the Soave Classico appellation, and these are La Frosca and Col Foscarin. Now, Gini produces a lovely Soave Classico "tout court" - rich, velvety, redolent of cherry blossoms, and with a most sweet, fresh and fragrant finish. But the estate also has vineyards in both grand crus! From La Frosca's best south-east slope (which belongs to the family since the 18th century), comes a superlative single vineyard Soave of stunning character and structure, whose elevated floral harmony stands alone, rivalling the best white

wines in Italy. The same grapes are responsible for Gini's splendid Grand Cuvée Brut Millesime (48 months on the yeasts!). And from a tiny plot of 50-75 year old vines within La Frosca - acquired by the Gini family in 1852 and known as "Salvarenza" - comes a barrel-fermented Soave so extraordinary that there are simply no parameters in the appellation to judge it by.

The cru of Col Foscarin yields the grapes that the Gini family harvest and dry until March, then crush and barrel-ferment until the wine reaches 13.5 alcohol. It will then be repeatedly racked until fermentation is inhibited and stops, whereupon the wine will return to the barrels for almost a year before being bottled as Recioto di Soave Col Foscarin, the most delicate and lovely Italian dessert wine.

I would like to add that all Soave produced by Gini comes from 100% Garganega grapes: for the appellation, it must be said, legally allows up to 30% of Trebbiano di Soave, Pinot Bianco and Chardonnay to supremely dilute its wine.

The Gini family also makes a second Recioto, Re Nobilis, a Veneto Chardonnay IGT, a Veneto Sauvignon IGT, a Pinot Noir IGT and has recently released a Monti Lessini Bianco DOC. ◇

**Soave Classico**

Zone: *Monteforte d'Alpone*  
 Varietal: *Garganega*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *9 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *70,000 bottles*

**Soave Classico  
La Frosca**

Zone: *Monteforte d'Alpone*  
 Cru: *La Frosca*  
 Varietal: *Garganega*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *6 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *25,000 bottles*



# TAMELLINI

When Soave is excellent when it comes from good hillside vineyards that aren't brutally overcropped; when the intentions are fine and the drive generous and well aimed; when it is produced from Garganega alone, (perhaps with a touch of the mysterious "Trebiano di Soave" that many identify as Verdicchio) - then it is irresistible. The most treacherously tempting and the

most luxuriantly satisfying of white wines, it is no wonder that it became a household name the world over. Even less of a wonder that it became the wine industry's first major investment, a drive that devastated the appellation. Still today it may be wise to reflect upon the fact that in the appellation there are, I believe, only 20 vigneroni that bottle Soave, and rather small ones at that. The rest is monopolized by the Soave Co-op

that vinifies approximately 800,000 hectolitres, and sells to negotiants throughout.

When Gaetano Tamellini contacted me through a common friend, bringing me a superlative bottle of Recioto he had bottled for family use, I was interested to hear that he wanted to start bottling, instead of selling grapes to the Co-op. He came to see me for advice. So we talk, reciprocally visit, build a relationship, and we begin. Having furnished the cellar from scratch with state of the art equipment just in time for the 1998 harvest, I send in Paolo Caciorgna, the best white wine maker I know, to follow each step of the vinification. In the meantime Gaetano and his brother Pio Francesco work beyond any call of duty in order that the difficult harvest may yield the loveliest of wines.

When I drive up to taste the wines, I'm simply in love: that ineffable girlish sweetness that is the trademark of Soave; that wildflower bouquet that makes you swoon; that spring in bloom that it conjures up - all are there, and more. In short, they are all irresistible. ◇



## Soave DOC

Zone: *Soave*  
 Varietal: *Garganega*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *20 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *200,000 bottles*



## Soave DOC Le Bine de Costiola

Zone: *Soave*  
 Cru: *Le Bine*  
 Varietal: *Garganega*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *3 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *20,000 bottles*



## Recioto di Soave DOCG Vigna Marogne de Costiola

Zone: *Soave*  
 Cru: *Vigna Marogne*  
 Varietal: *Garganega*  
 Average Prod.: *6,000-7,000 bottles*

## MAZZI

The Veneto probably produces more wine than any other region of Italy. Experience has led me to suspect that one unfortunate reason is the all too frequent practice of overcropping. Fine exceptions to this rule happily exist and, today, in Roberto Mazzi's Estate I believe I've found the integrity indispensable to fine winemaking.

An agronomist with a passionate organic bent, Roberto Mazzi perpetuates the rigorous, labour intensive practices that made Amarone and Valpolicella world famous.

A first small crop - destined for Amarone (two Amarone are made, "Punta di Villa" and "Castel") - is harvested, the clusters placed in shallow wooden crates to be piled up in a cool, ventilated granary where they will partially dry until crushing in January - the clusters

hand selected, as they must be perfect to avoid rot as they dry. The second harvest is crushed immediately, and will become Valpolicella Superiore.

The practice of drying the grapes used in Amarone, (and in Mazzi's case also used for his Valpolicella Superiore "Poiega"), naturally results in uncommon concentration, alcoholic and otherwise. However, there are risks in this procedure - aside from simple rot - for a wine may end up overly cloying, too heady and hot, easily one of the reasons for Amarone's overall decline in popularity.

Mazzi's wines are a happy exception. The Estate's vineyards are positioned in the highest hills of Negrar. One of the five townships of Valpolicella's classic appellation, Negrar has always been the focal point of my research because its lean, calcareous soils yield the

appellation's most elegant wines. The added element of altitude endows Mazzi's wines with rare balance and a silky, rather than meaty, texture.

Mazzi's Valpolicella Superiore Poiega may be considered as their Amarone's younger brother: clusters are dried for 30 days before crushing, after which the wine is aged in oak for 18 months and rests in the bottle for 6 months before being released. The Valpolicella Superiore is a fruity, fresh, medium bodied red, extraordinarily fragrant and eminently drinkable upon release. Recioto Le Calcarole is a delightful dessert wine.

These are all seductive wines whose appeal lies in elegance rather than clout - a style I've always been partial to. ♦

**Amarone Punta di Villa**

Zone: *Negrar*  
 Cru: *Villa*  
 Varietal: *70% Corvina,  
 25% Rondinella,  
 5% other red var.*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *3 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *8,000 bottles*

**Valpolicella Classico Superiore Sanperetto**

Zone: *Negrar*  
 Cru: *Poiega, Villa,  
 Sanperetto*  
 Varietal: *Corvina,  
 Rondinella,  
 Molinara*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *7.5 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *20,000-22,000 btl*

**Valpolicella Classico Superiore Poiega**

Zone: *Negrar*  
 Cru: *Poiega*  
 Varietal: *Corvina,  
 Rondinella,  
 Molinara*  
 Vineyard Ext.: *4 hectares*  
 Average Prod.: *10,000 bottles*

# UMBERTO BORTOLOTTI

It was not easy to find a Prosecco that could satisfy our requirements, but finally we came in contact with Cantine Umberto Bortolotti and the wines are a great addition to our portfolio. The average production, although it is approximately 1 million bottles a year, is not large in comparison to other wineries of the Valdobbiadene.

The Cantine were established in 1947 by Umberto Bortolotti who had a real passion for Prosecco; together with a group of friends he founded the “Consorzio di Tutela del Prosecco” (Consortium for the safeguarding of Prosecco), the Prosecco brotherhood and he also set up the National Fair of sparkling wines in 1963.

The cellars have been in the present location since 1954 and have recently been completely renovated. The business is now run with much enthusiasm by Umberto’s son Bruno and this winery is a perfect blend of extremely modern technology and respect for tradition. A group of viticulturists within the Valdobbiadene appellation has been carefully selected over the years, together with oenologist Enrico Baratto, so that only grapes of the highest quality are vinified. 100% of the wines is made with the Charmat method.

There are two different lines of products, mainly Valdobbiadene Prosecco DOCG although a few other varietals are vinified, the *Linea UB* and the new *Linea Astralis* (that includes 4 millésimé sparkling wines).

All wines can satisfy even the most difficult customers and are ideal not only as an aperitif or with desserts, but also for unusual and interesting food matches. Apart from the delicious Prosecco, the sparkling Nosiola and Lagrein are definitely worth a try. ♦



## Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore Extra Dry “47”

Zone: *Comune di Valdobbiadene*  
 Varietal: *90% Glera (the name “Prosecco” now refers to a zone, the grape varietal is now called “Glera”), 10% Pinot Bianco*  
 Average Prod.: *39,000 bottles*



## Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore Brut

Zone: *Comune di Valdobbiadene*  
 Varietal: *90% Glera, 10% Pinot Bianco*  
 Average Prod.: *120,000 bottles*



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