

Top Italian Wines Roadshow. Monte del Frà: the discreet charm of Custoza

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MONTE DEL FRÀ IS THE ABSOLUTE REFERENCE POINTS OF VERONA OENOLOGY: HERE'S ITS HISTORY.

Literally nestled in the vineyards that lie on the morainic hills of Custoza, the cellar owned by the Bonomo brothers, for over sixty years, has been one of the absolute reference points of Verona oenology. A close bond with the land, so much so that even the adventure in Valpolicella, which began a few years ago, saw the family committed to acquiring the most beautiful vineyards available in the classic area. Today the vineyard park extends for about 200 hectares, intended for a production that has elegance and refinement as its beacon. “Monte del Frà was born in 1958 in Sommacampagna – Marica tells us, third generation at the helm of the winery – and in these 62 years of love for wine we have become owners of 137 hectares plus we rent another 65 hectares. The challenge is to represent a territory, Verona, which, although not large, thanks to the ice ages boasts a variety of soils and climatic conditions that give native grapes totally different characteristics from area to area.



Vineyards that “feel” the lake

South of Lake Garda we produce Custoza and Bardolino from soils rich in moraines lending lots of minerality. To the south east of the lake, the soil becomes richer in clay, maintaining a constant microclimate thanks to breezes from the lake. All the way to Fumane, in Classic Valpolicella we find volcanic soils and important temperature shifts between day and night, with excellent ventilation.” Managing such a large and varied territory has led the company towards necessary reflections on environmental and sustainability issues: “different terrains, different areas, different climates lead as a natural consequence to heterogeneous problems, but our goal is only one: to guarantee the longevity and health of our vineyards, essential elements bringing character and uniqueness to our wines. Since last year we have been SQNPI certified (community certification relating to integrated production) and from this year we will start an important corporate restructure project that increases the issue of sustainability in every cycle, from production, to storage, to components, as well as obviously in the vineyard.”

Tasting

“Elegance is the oenological key with which we interpret and produce our wines, to give our expression of the territories and grapes in a glass.” This is the guideline chosen by the company for its production. The 2018 harvest brought as a dowry an aromatic set dominated by ripe and pulpy yellow fruit, which in the Custoza Superiore Ca’ del Magro finds a shoulder in the notes of dried flowers and citrus fruits. In the mouth it stretches with grace and consistency, resulting savoury and very long. *“For us the Garganega grape variety is the essence of our being,”* explains Marica. *“We have interpreted it in various styles, including in Cà del Magro, which is dearest to me emotionally, a wine that draws longevity and complexity from this grape, its character from an old vineyard, and represents the dialogue of two generations that designed it.”* And she adds, *“The great satisfaction this wine gives us is that it represents the essence and uniqueness of a territory, but at the same time becomes an excellent pairing with international cuisines. Excellent with sushi, perfect with oysters from Brittany, sublime with asparagus spears smothered in hollandaise sauce, tailored fit with Peking duck, emotional with my mom’s rosemary and parmigiano risotto.”* But the great potential of Monte del Frà doesn’t stop here: Scarnocchio ’15, an Amarone Reserve that presents intensely fruity and spicy aromas, are enhanced in a sip where volume is perfectly governed by acidity and tannin.

by William Pregentelli