



BERLUCCHI '61 NATURE 2016
Franciacorta Millesimato

GRAPES: Chardonnay (70%) and Pinot Noir (30%), grown in the Arzelle, Rovere, San Carlo, and Ragnoli estate vineyards, all planted to a high density 10,000 vines per hectare.

HARVEST PERIOD: Second third of August 2016.

VINEYARD YIELD: 8,000 kg of grapes/hectare, with 30% yield in must, equivalent to 3,200 bottles/hectare.

VINIFICATION: The clusters are given a gradual, gentle pressing, yielding multi-quality fractions of must. Fermentation is in stainless steel, then the finest lots of wine mature 6 months sur lie in oak barrels.

MATURATION: The cuvée is assembled, in the spring following the harvest, with base wines 100% of the same growing year. The wine re-ferments and matures sur lie in the bottle for a minimum of 5 years, followed by a further 6 months after disgorging.

DOSAGE: Zero dosage.

SIZES: 750ml bottle and 1.5l. magnum.

SENSORY PROFILE:

APPEARANCE: Generous, creamy mousse with a delicate, supple bead and a lingering crown of pin-point bubbles.

COLOUR: Intense straw yellow, with impressive heritage-gold highlights.

BOUQUET: Stylish and elegant, opening to ripe apricot and melon, which yield to fresh-baked petits fours and citrusy notes of candied citron.

PALATE: Superbly balanced, with a magisterial structure, judicious acidity, dynamic progression, and long-lingering, savoury finish that all combine to create a wine with a stunning, complex personality.

SERVING SUGGESTIONS: Heightens the character of elaborate first courses and filled pastas, main courses of meats and poached fish, and aged cheeses as well.

SERVING TEMPERATURE: 10-12 °C.

DATA AT DISGORGING:

Alcohol 12.5% - Sugars: Trace.
Total acidity 7.20 g/l - pH 3.10.

INITIAL VINTAGE: 2009

TECHNICAL BACKGROUND

BERLUCCHI '61 NATURE 2016

VINEYARD

The grapes that produce Berlucchi '61 Nature are grown in the communes of Corte Franca and Provaglio d'Iseo: in the Arzelle, Rovere, and San Carlo vineyards--all planted to Chardonnay--, and Ragnoli, planted to Pinot Noir. All average more than 20 years old and are thus optimally mature, perfectly suited for producing long-lived Franciacortas. The vineyards are planted to a very high density of 10,000 vines per hectare, trained to permanent spurred cordon and Guyot, and managed in accord with low environmental-impact, sustainable viticultural practices. Weather and soils play a crucial role as well. The Arzelle vineyard is planted in deep morainic soils, which gives outstanding structure to the grapes for base wines, while the fine-grained sediments of San Carlo and of Rovere ensure crisp acidities in the wines. An overall balance of characteristics is what the Ragnoli vineyard offers, with its fluvial-glacial soils. The high-density plantings help to bring to the fore the grapes' varietal characteristics, in terms of both technological and phenolic ripeness. In the latter case, the grapes are ripe in terms of their polyphenols and aromatic precursors, which translates into notable aromatic richness and structural solidity. Technological ripeness heightens the organoleptic characteristics desirable in a Franciacorta base wine, as well as a solid acidity, low pH, and a promise of significant cellarability.

GROWING YEAR

The 2016 growing season began normally, with budbreak occurring in early April. Favourable weather encouraged vine growth, which proceeded rapidly until flowering, about 20-30 May. May and June were fairly rainy, and from veraison onwards, significant differences developed between early-ripening parcels and those cooler and later-ripening areas, compared to the norm; the result was a stretching out of the various stages of the harvest. August was fortunately quite cool, and wide day-night temperature differentials occurred, particularly after mid-August, with a consequent further slowing of the ripening process. Such overall positive weather conditions gifted base wines of outstanding quality, with surprisingly complex, intense aromatics and firm structures well integrated with vibrant acidities.

VINIFICATION

The grapes were harvested exclusively by hand upon reaching optimal ripeness, in the second third of August 2016. The 18-kg crates were rapidly brought to the cellar, and the clusters placed into specialised, inclined-plate presses designed to provide a gentle, gradual pressure on the whole clusters, immediately releasing the juice. The base wines for Franciacorta '61 Nature were made exclusively from the very first pressing fractions, the so-called free-run must, which for this vintage is 30 litres per 100 kilos of grapes. The musts were rapidly chilled to 10°C and transferred into small tanks, where an overnight gravity settling resulted in pure, clear musts, perfect for fermentation. That took place in stainless steel fermenters, temperature-controlled to preserve the aromas that emerge during the process. After the fermentation, the wine went into other tanks, together with its fine lees, since a maturation "sur lie" improves the final wine's structure and complexity. In the meantime, some of the finest-quality base wines were transferred to once- or twice-used barriques and tonneaux for the same maturation process, during which the oak heightens the wine's sensory profile. Following more than five years of resting sur lie and a minimum of six months' ageing after disgorgement, '61 Nature is ready for enjoyment.

SENSORY PROFILE

Tasting '61 Nature 2016 reveals it as the purest expression of Franciacorta, through its marriage of the fleshy elegance of Chardonnay to the vibrant minerality of Pinot Noir. Further, since it is made without the "touch-up" of a liqueur d'expédition, it represents the purest, uncompromised soul of this growing area. Its complex, expressive bouquet; vibrant progression; and near-endless finish give this Millesimato its amazing "dynamic balance."