

VIGNETI MASSA SUSTAINABLE



It is undoubtedly the sound and fury of Italian sommeliers: Massa's Timorasso. Modigliani curves (this wine is full bodied) focused by the angled faces; some fruit, a warm minerality, and all carried by an acidity that recalls a heavyweight with agile footwork. It's hard not to get worked up about Walter Massa's wines: he had a vision for a variety nobody wanted, worked in obscurity for years, rescued the grape, and doesn't talk about himself but about the territory of Colli Tortonesi. When you get lost going there, start asking people 100 km out and they know and love hi, from the gas station guy to the producer next to him. Even Jancis Robinson, who mostly

- WALTER MASSA - PROPHET AND RESCUER OF TIMORASSO
- AN ITALIAN WHITE THAT AGES
- NATIVE GRAPES FROM THE LITTLE-KNOWN COLLI TORTONESI

saves her love for the French, is titillated:

"I absolutely loved this white wine [2006 Massa Derthona Timorasso] and found more aromas and flavours, and more pleasure, as I drank it over the course of a few days...Very inviting spiced honeyed nose and some creamy...Nutty, citrus, with just discernible floral and apricot notes. Full of flavour and yet restraint, cool and fresh and lingeringly elegant and aromatic...as the week went by, I found even more flavours emerging - white flowers, ginger, mineral and still nutty. I also noted a firmness in the texture but it was still alluringly creamy. Long, powerful and sophisticated with a gently floral finish."

The zone of the Colli Tortonesi is composed of various soils (clay, chalk, stone, sand) and perched around the abandoned hill top town of Monleale Alto, around 200-300 meters. Walter is quite the host, and this sleepy place comes alive through his passion. Walk down, and then back up, the steep vineyards and into the cantina, have lunch with his Mom and his family, uncork say 12 bottles of various years, make nice with the journalists and kids running around, nudge an older aunt because you're dizzy with joy, ask Milan's top wine rep how he sells so much, smile and thank the vineyard workers having lunch, praise the two women who personally took care of the new vine planting: a whirlwind of nonchalance and serious wine.

In the corner of these rooms, you catch your breath, triple-fisted with a '99 Croatina, '02 Barbera Monleale, and a Timorasso whose age you have to guess. Someone joins you, you can only nod No!, in disbelief, and Yes!, in awe of being in the presence of one of Italy's great lands, and a man in touch with that land, a man who is half circus conductor and half prophet grounded with vision. His feet are roots; his arms spring shoots; his fingers offer you another glass or point out something in the vineyard.

He produces amazing reds as well from the local grapes (Croatina, Barbera, Freisa, Nebbiolo). Most bottles of Barbera fail to answer the question of whether the grape, with a touch of wood, can truly age (instead of merely keep). Massa's Cru Barbera Monleale may be the start of an answer; we've tasted examples going back 15 years, and we brought in some library wines for you to taste. His Cru Barbera in steel is Sentieri, with light-saber Barbera fruit. His entry-level Barbera we bring in under the label FUSO, a daily drinker that goes with everything and is priced right



VIGNETI MASSA CROATINA 'PERTICHETTA'



Tasting Notes: Complex, tightly wound nose (even with some time in bottle); ferrous with a taut roasted cranberry presense; clean

and precise length that's supported by Assam tea tannins. Very serious.

Vineyard: Valverta 2005; 1.65 ha; 25 m.p.; Northern exp.; clay-calcerous soil. Scaldapulce 1994; 0.15 ha - 2.5 m.p. - Eastern exp.; clay soil; Pertichetta 2008; 0.32 ha; 5.0 m.p.; Western exp.; clay.

Vinification: Vinification: 22-month refinement; the first 10 months in inert containers and the subsequent 12 months in large wood to promote micro-oxygenation. No filtration.

Awards: Probably an award winner somewhere; on of the finest examples of Croatia we've ever tasted.

VIGNETI MASSA BARBERA CRU 'SENTIERI'



Tasting Notes: This is the Cru but only done in steel; it sees no oak. Swirls of Barbera fruit (raspberry, cherry) cran-

berry acidity gives a delicious and tight knit texture.

Vineyard: Colli Tortonesi; calcerous & clay; 30-57 yr. vines; E & N exposure.

Vinification: Native yeasts; in steel; no filtration.

VIGNETI MASSA BARBERA CRU 'MONLEALE'



Tasting Notes: Monleale is the name of the town where Massa is located; there's the high, alto, and low parts of town; Massa

is in Monleale Alto. All the classic Barbera cherry and raspberry fruit but the grape's high acidity is honed into a tight knitted complexity. One of the few Barbara's that age and become more complex.

Vineyard: Colli Tortonesi DOC: Bigolla 1965/68 - 1.25 ha - 19.0 m.p. - eastern exp. - calcareous soil Campolungo 2002 - 1.4 ha - 21.5 m.p. - northern exp. - clayey soil Fontana 1978/84 - 1.28 ha - 19.5 m.p.

Vinification: Individual vineyards vinified separately; 228 liter barrique for about 22 months; placed on the market at least 36 months after vintage. No filtration.

Awards: Consistent Gambero Rosso 2 Bichi-erri Award winner; numerous others.

VIGNETI MASSA TIMORASSO 'DERTHONA'



Tasting Notes: DOC Colli Tortonesi. 'Derthona' is the regional dialect for Tortona, the main town nearby. Full bodied but also an acidity that gives

the fruit and minerlas a focus. Complex, will age, and, for one of the few Italian whites that will age, we've tasted fascinating bottles up to 9 years old.

Vineyard: Guyot. Vineyards: Costa del Vento 1990/04, 1.40 ha, 21 m.p., western exp. clay and cal. soil Costiolo 1997, 0.50 ha, 8 m.p., southern exp., calcareous soil Sterpi 1996/06, 1.

Vinification: Native yeasts. Maceration press 48-60 hours; fermentation 18-22 °C; batonnage; minimum 6 months bottle aging before released on market. Light filtration.

Awards: Consistent top award winner in gambero Rosso and other guides. 2009 top Quality / Price Award winner in Gambero Rosso guide; 3 glass award winner for cru Strepi.