

FRANCIACORTA  
  
*Guido Berlucchi*  
**BERLUCCHI**



**BERLUCCHI '61 NATURE BLANC DE BLANCS 2012**  
**Franciacorta Millesimato**

**GRAPES:** 100% Chardonnay, grown in a single parcel in the central block of the Arzelle estate vineyard, planted to a density of 10,000 vines per hectare.

**HARVEST PERIOD:** Middle third of August 2012.

**VINEYARD YIELD:** 8,500 kg grapes per hectare, with a yield in must of 28%, equivalent to 3,170 bottles per hectare.

**VINIFICATION:** The clusters are given a slow, gentle pressing, with quality-fractioning of the juice. The must ferments in steel, and the finest lots then mature sur lie for 6 months in French oak barrels.

**MATURATION:** The cuvée is assembled in the following spring, solely with wines of the previous year, then the wine undergoes a second fermentation in the bottle and matures a minimum of 5 years sur lie, followed by an additional 6 months after disgorgement.

**DOSAGE:** Zero dosage

**SIZES:** Standard 750ml bottle

**SENSORY PROFILE**

**APPEARANCE:** Abundant, creamy mousse and slender, sinuous bead of pin-point bubbles; notably long-lasting crown

**COLOUR:** Intense straw-yellow with subtle gold highlights.

**BOUQUET:** Broad and deep, with notes of ripe plum and lime blossom, and evolved impressions of caramelised hazelnut.

**PALATE:** Elegance and fine balance are the hallmarks of the palate, which showcases both a velvety smoothness and a well-calibrated acidity. The finish is impressively satisfying, with a near-tactile consistency lifted by a delicate bead.

**PAIRINGS:** This vintage-dated wine is recommended for all courses of a meal, in particular with elaborate antipasti, with main courses of fish, veal, and poultry, and with medium-aged cheeses.

**SERVING TEMPERATURE:** 10-12°C.

**TECHNICAL DATA:** Alcohol: 12.5%; residual sugar: trace; total acidity: 7.8 g/l; pH: 3.04

**FIRST YEAR PRODUCED:** 2012

## TECHNICAL BACKGROUND

### BERLUCCHI '61 NATURE BLANC DE BLANCS 2012

#### IN THE VINEYARD

The grapes that yield Berlucchi '61 Nature BdB 2012 are grown exclusively in the central block of the Arzelle vineyard. The vines average 20 years old and are hence ideally mature to provide a vintage-specific--Millesimato--sparkling wine of exceptional quality, a wine that can perfectly display the unique qualities of this estate vineyard. Guyot-trained to a very high density of 10,000 vines per hectare and rigorously managed in accord with environment-friendly principles.

Soils are an important factor: the Arzelle vineyard is planted in deep glacial soils that give the base wines excellent structure. In addition, the special climate specific to this vineyard results in warm soils, as the name Arzelle testifies, a local dialect term for "burnt by the sun." This, and optimal exposure, ensures ideal ripeness to the grapes, and the predominance of phenolic over physiological ripeness is a guarantee of base wines that will be complex and decisive, yet at the same time refreshing and full-flavoured.

The dense planting, on the other hand, contributes to heightening the varietal qualities of the Chardonnay grape, in terms of both phenolic and physiological ripeness.

Phenolic ripeness means grapes are ripe in terms of polyphenols and varietal aromatic precursors, which translates into significant aromatic and structural excellence. Physiological ripeness refers to the sensory features desired in a Franciacorta base wine: good acidity and a low pH, which ensure fine ageing potential.

#### HARVEST

Budbreak took place over a fairly wide space of time, compared with other growing seasons. The first buds already appeared in the last week in March, while in the north-easterly areas, where growth stages occur later, budding lasted until mid-April.

Weather data reveal that, from the latter third of April through late July, average temperatures were lower than the 2002-2011 ten-year norm. This slowed down vine growth, lengthening the period between budbreak and flowering. That same period saw abundant rainfall, often above the 10-year average.

Colder than average weather conditions during flowering brought—though not everywhere—reduced fruit-set, which in turn resulted in below-average crop levels.

Late July experienced a turnabout in the weather, with a significant rise in temperature, well above seasonal norms, which reversed the accumulated delays and brought the fruit to optimal phenolic ripeness.

#### IN THE CELLAR

The grapes were hand-picked when perfectly ripe in the middle third of August 2012. The 18kg boxes were quickly taken to the cellar and the clusters placed in special inclined-plane presses designed for slow, gradual pressing of the grapes with immediate separation of the juice.

The wines selected for Franciacorta '61 Nature BdB 2012 are exclusively from the first pressing, the free-run must, which yielded 28 litres per 100 kg of grapes this year.

The musts were immediately cooled to 10°C and stored in small tanks overnight to achieve perfect gravity settling. At the end of this process, the must was perfectly clear and pure, in the best condition for undergoing fermentation in stainless steel tanks at controlled temperatures to preserve the fragrances released during the process.

At the end of the first fermentation, the wine was moved to tanks, preserving the fine lees to allow sur lie maturation to develop enhanced body and complexity. Meanwhile, part of the best base wine was placed in once- or twice-used oak barrels for the same type of maturation, during which the oak enhances the sensory profile. To preserve the wine's grip and allow maximum development of the wine's fruit, there was no malolactic fermentation. After 5 years of maturation sur lie and a minimum of 6 months rest after disgorgement, Berlucchi '61 Nature BdB 2012 is ready to enjoy.

#### SENSORY PROFILE

On the palate Berlucchi '61 Nature BdB 2012 displays the purest possible expression of its terroir, as embodied in Franciacorta's "Queen grape," Chardonnay. In addition, since there is no sugar-syrup dosage, the wine is the truest expression of the growing area's most natural, innermost character.

The already-evolved aromatic components, as well as its linear, long-lingering palate make this an intense, ultra-ap-pealing Millesimato.

