



BERLUCCHI '61 NATURE BLANC DE BLANCS 2014
Franciacorta Millesimato

GRAPES: Chardonnay (100%), grown in the central parcel of the estate Arzelle vineyard, planted to a high density of 10,000 vines/hectare.

HARVEST PERIOD: Last third of August 2014.

YIELD: 8,500 kg of grapes/hectare, with a must yield of 30%, equivalent to 3,400 bottles/hectare.

VINIFICATION: The whole clusters are pressed gently and slowly, yielding various fractions of must. Fermentation is in steel, then the finest lots mature sur lie in oak barrels for 6 months.

MATURATION: In the spring following the harvest, the cuvée is assembled, with 100% of the wine of that harvest. The final blend re-ferments in the final bottle and matures sur lie a minimum of 5 years, followed by a further 6 months' bottle-ageing after disgorging.

DOSAGE: Zero dosage.

SIZES: 750ml standard bottle.

SENSORY PROFILE:

APPEARANCE: Abundant, creamy mousse; sinuous, slender bead; and subtle, long-lingering crown at the rim.

COLOUR: Intense straw-yellow edged with antique-gold highlights.

BOUQUET: Dense and emphatic bouquet, with generous lime blossom, peach and apricot, and evolved impressions of fresh-baked petits fours.

PALATE: A vivacious acidity bolsters a finely-sculpted, emphatic structure, and an energy-laden, richly-flavoured finish provides a tangy, sensory tension.

SERVING SUGGESTIONS: This vintage-dated Millesimato can be enjoyed throughout a meal. It will be at its best partnered with elaborate aperitif assortments, seafood, and risottos; with main courses of fish, poultry, and veal, as well as medium-aged cheeses.

SERVING TEMPERATURE: 10-12°C.

TECHNICAL DATA AT DISGORGING:

Alcohol: 12.5% Vol. - Sugars: trace

Total acidity: 6.80 g/l pH: 3.20

FIRST PRODUCTION: 2012

TECHNICAL BACKGROUND

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VINEYARD

The grapes that yield Berlucchi '61 Nature Blanc de Blancs 2014 are grown in the central portion of the estate Arzelle vineyard, which is 20 years old, a fully-mature vineyard perfect for producing the high quality required for vintage-dated Millesimo wines.

The vineyard, planted to a very high density of 10,000 vines per hectare and trained to the Guyot system, is managed in accord with sustainable agricultural practices respectful of the environment.

The soils and climate too are exceptional. Arzelle's deep morainic soil, complemented by the aspect of the site, produces superbly-structured base wines, while its special, terrain-specific climate warms the soil. The result is outstanding, ripe fruit, with phenolic ripeness predominating over the physical ripeness parameters, which guarantees base wines that are complex and powerful yet at the same time richly-flavoured.

The high vineyard density significantly contributes to bringing out the varietal characteristics of the Chardonnay, both in terms of phenolics as well as physical ripeness. In the first case, high levels of phenolics precursors translate into wines with complex aromatics and firm structures. In the second, ideally ripe grapes display generous acidities and low pH in the base wines, essential qualities for long-lived, complex Franciacortas.

GROWING YEAR

A mild winter was followed by a very uncharacteristically-warm March, which led to an early start for vine awakening: the first buds actually appeared in the final days of that month. Shoot-growth took place normally, and fairly high temperatures encouraged rapid development. Flowering started around 8-10 May, which presaged a fine crop. Phenolic development, which had been solid during the spring, was brusquely interrupted by frequent rains in June and by equally sudden drops in temperature, weather that continued through the entire summer.

Nonetheless, the ripening process was slow and consistent, which allowed the viticultural team to carefully plan out the harvest in a way that respected the phenological and physical moment of ripeness for each individual vineyard parcel whose grapes were dedicated to this Millesimato Franciacorta.

The initial crop was a generous one, but final levels were brought down to well below those allowed by the Production Code through rigorous quality-sorting in the vineyard, which gave the winemaking team optimally ripe, sound, healthy clusters.

WINEMAKING

As soon as the grapes reached optimal ripeness, in the latter third of August 2014, the clusters were harvested entirely by hand into 18kg crates and brought immediately to the winecellar and placed into specialised, inclined-plane pneumatic presses. They were specifically designed to give the clusters a slow, gentle, gradual pressing, with immediate separation of the juice from the berry. Franciacorta '61 Nature Blanc de Blancs 2014 is made exclusively from the very first juice fraction to emerge, called the free-run must, which in 2014 was 30 litres per 100 kg of grapes. The lots of must are then quickly chilled to 10°C and put into special tanks, where they gravity-settle overnight; the result is totally clear, clean musts perfectly suited for the fermentation process. That step takes place in temperature-controlled steel fermenters, to preserve the natural aromas released during the alcoholic fermentation. The new wine is then transferred to another tank, along with its "fine lees," and prolonged contact with this sediment gives the wine a firmer structure and improved complexity. In the meantime, lots of the finest base wines undergo the same *sur lie* maturation in once- and twice-used oak barrels, which deepens their sensory qualities.

After more than five years *sur lie* and a minimum of six months' rest after disgorging, '61 Nature Blancs de Blancs 2014 is ready for enjoyment.

SENSORY PROFILE

Tasting '61 Nature Blanc de Blancs 2014 immediately reveals it as the purest expression of the Franciacorta growing area, represented by the area's "queen variety," Chardonnay. Further, since it receives no sweet-syrup dosage during disgorging, it represents in its purest, most uncompromising form the soul of the denomination. Its already-evolved, complex character, the linearity and driving length of its progression and finish make this an intense, and intensely-appealing, Millesimato.



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