

FRANCIACORTA

Guido Berlucchi
BERLUCCHI



BERLUCCHI '61 NATURE 2012

Franciacorta Millesimato

GRAPES: 70% Chardonnay and 30% Pinot Noir, grown in estate vineyards in Arzelle, Rovere, San Carlo, and Ragnoli; all vineyards are planted at a high density of 10,000 vines/hectare.

HARVEST PERIOD: Second third of August 2012.

VINEYARD YIELD: 9,000 kg grapes per hectare, with a yield in must of 28%, equivalent to 3,360 bottles per hectare.

VINIFICATION: The clusters are given a slow, gentle pressing, yielding different must fractions, which are then fermented in steel tanks. The finest lots mature sur lie for six months in French oak barrels.

MATURATION: The cuvée is assembled in the following spring, with wines solely of the preceding growing year. The final wine then ferments sur lie in the bottle for a minimum of 5 years, followed by an additional 6 months after disgorgement.

DOSAGE: Zero dosage.

SIZES: Standard 750ml bottle and 1.5 l. magnum.

SENSORY PROFILE

APPEARANCE: Abundant, creamy mousse and slender, sinuous bead of pin-point bubbles; notably long-lasting crown.
COLOUR: Intense straw-yellow with subtle coppery highlights.

BOUQUET: Complex and elegant, with pronounced notes of apricot, yellow peach, and candied citrus that interweave with just-baked croissant

PALATE: Its firm structure and decisive character are bolstered by a vibrant acidity, while a richly-flavoured finish contributes to the well-calibrated energy and tautness of the palate.

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: 7.9 g/l; pH: 3.07

FIRST YEAR PRODUCED: 2009

TECHNICAL BACKGROUND

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IN THE VINEYARD

The grapes that produce Berlucchi '61 Nature 2012 come from estate vineyards located in the communes of Corte Franca and Provaglio d'Iseo: Arzelle, Rovere and San Carlo (planted to Chardonnay), and Ragnoli (planted to Pinot Noir). The vines average 20 years old and are hence ideally mature to provide vintage-specific sparkling wines.

The vineyards, planted to the very high density of 10,000 vines per hectare and permanently trained to the spurred cordon system, are 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, while the soil at San Carlo and Rovere, consisting of fine sediment, ensures lively acidity and crispness. Finally, the grapes from the Ragnoli vineyard, growing in soils of fluvio-glacial origin, provide overall balance. High-density planting enhances the varietal traits of the grapes, 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 turnaround 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 2012 are exclusively from the first pressing, called 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 2012 is ready to enjoy.

SENSORY PROFILE

On the palate Berlucchi '61 Nature 2012 displays the purest possible expression of its terroir: Chardonnay's elegance and pulpiness marries beautifully with the mineral nature of Pinot Noir. In addition, since there is no sugar-syrup dosage, the wine is the truest expression of the growing area's most natural, innermost character.

Expressive, complex aromas and a linear, long-lingering palate make this a Millesimato of astounding dynamic balance.

