



BERLUCCHI ' 61 NATURE 2017
Franciacorta Millesimato (Vintage-dated)

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

HARVEST PERIOD: Second third of August 2017.

YIELD: 6,000 kg of grapes per hectare, with a 30% yield in must, equivalent to 2,400 bottles per hectare.

VINIFICATION: Gentle, gradual pressing of the clusters, with quality-fractioning of the musts, then fermentation in stainless steel, and maturation of the best vineyard parcels in oak barrels, where they mature 6 months sur lie.

MATURATION: Assemblage of the cuvée in the spring following harvest with 100% wines from 2017 vintage, followed by in-bottle fermentation, then a minimum of 5 years' maturation sur lie, with further 6 months' bottle-ageing after disgorgement.

DOSAGE: Zero dosage.

SIZES: 750 ml bottle and 1.5 l. magnum.

SENSORY PROFILE:

APPEARANCE: Generous, creamy mousse; delicate, supple bead; and long-lingering, pale crown of bubbles.

COLOUR: Intense straw yellow shot through with antique gold.

BOUQUET: Delicate and elegant, opening to apricot and yellow peach, segueing into citrusy hints of candied citron and fresh pastry.

PALATE: Superbly balanced on the palate, where a firm structure, judicious acidity, and a long-lingering, savoury finish combine to give it impressive energy and a strong personality.

FOOD PAIRINGS: It will heighten elaborate first courses and filled fresh pasta, poached fish, meat-based dishes, and most, even aged, cheeses.

SERVING TEMPERATURE: 10–12°C.

TECHNICAL DATA AT DISGORGING:

Alcohol: 12.5% Sugars: Trace

Total acidity: 7.00 g/l. pH 3.10.

FIRST YEAR OF PRODUCTION: 2009

TECHNICAL BACKGROUND

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VINEYARD

The grapes that yield Berlucchi '61 Nature are grown in the central, and therefore most protected, nuclei of the Berlucchi estate vineyards, in the communes of Corte Franca and Provaglio d'Iseo. Rovere and San Carlo, planted to Chardonnay, and Ragnoli, to Pinot Noir, average over 20 years old, and are therefore perfectly mature and well-suited for producing a Franciacorta with significant cellarability.

The vineyards, planted at a very high density of 10,000 vines per hectare and trained to permanent spurred cordon and to Guyot, are managed in strict accord with organic and sustainable principles, in full respect, therefore, for their local environment.

Soils are also crucial components. The delicate deposits that comprise the soils of San Carlo and Rovere ensure excellent acidities and crispness in the base wines, while Ragnoli, in fluvial-glacial complexes, provides good overall balance. The dense vineyard layouts contribute to heightening varietal characteristics in the grapes, both in terms of phenolic and physical ripeness. In the first case, ripe phenolics and aromatic precursors translate into rich, complex aromatics and firm structure. With regard to physical ripeness, the grapes yield organoleptic qualities in the grapes desired in a Franciacorta base wine, and the firm acidity and low pH fundamental for significant for evolution over time.

GROWING YEAR

The 2017 growing year was deeply marked by the historic freeze of 18-19 April, when night-time temperatures plunged to -2/-3 °C around 6.00am. Records in the Po river valley reveal that late freezes of this magnitude, in the latter third of April, occur less than once in 40 years.

The season opened on a positive note, with advanced vine growth achieved rather early, compared to the historical norm. The effects of the freeze, observed early the next morning, were devastating, with losses that, at harvest's end, amounted to some 49% of the crop. The season as a whole proceeded normally. May and June saw temperatures reach both high maximums and low minimums, and day-night temperature differentials were somewhat elevated. Vineyards unscathed by the freeze saw an even season of good quality, yielding grapes with a good balance of acidity and ripeness, and the Franciacorta base wines were well-structured and exhibited complex aromatics.

WINEMAKING

The grapes were all picked by hand into 18kg crates as soon as they reached optimal ripeness, in the second third of August 2017. They were brought rapidly to the winecellar and the whole clusters were fed into specialised incline-plane presses designed for slow, gentle, gradual pressing of the clusters and for immediate separation of the juice. Franciacorta '61 Nature is produced exclusively from the very first pressings, the free-run must, equivalent in this vintage to 30 litres of must for every 100 kilos of grapes.

The musts were rapidly chilled to 10°C and transferred to small tanks, where they rested overnight to gravity settle to achieve perfect clarity and purity. Fermentation took place in stainless-steel tanks, temperature-controlled to preserve grape aromas released during this step. The wine was then transferred for maturation, still containing the fine lees, since "sur lie contact" gives the wine improved structure and complexity. Some of the finest lots of the base wine were put into once- and twice-used oak barrels and larger tonneaux for maturation, since the oak expands its organoleptic properties. Following more than five years' maturation sur lie and a minimum of six months' bottle-ageing after disgorging, '61 Nature is ready for tasting.

SENSORY PROFILE

Tasting '61 Nature 2017, it is immediately clear that it represents the purest expression of its Franciacorta terroir. Not only does it marry the elegance and fleshy weight of Chardonnay to the earthy minerality of Pinot Noir, but it bears no "makeup" as well: it is not given a syrup dosage during disgorging, so it represents the uncompromising, true soul of Franciacorta. Its pronounced, complex bouquet, linear palate, and long-lingering finish give this Millesimato its amazing "dynamic equilibrium."