



Winemaker: Giovanna Brazzola
Generation: 8th



MONTELIO

Sero Cortese Oltrepo Pavese DOC

Made from old vines (dating in some cases back to the 1950s), this vibrant Cortese from winemaker Giovanna Brazzola delivers remarkable depth and acidity on the palate, with an array of lemon grove flavors and a long saline finish. Located just 10km from the border with Piedmont and a morning's drive from the Ligurian Sea, these vines benefit from a Mediterranean (vs. sub-alpine) climate. That, combined with clay soils dotted with pockets of chalk, helps to ensure a style that is elegant yet ample at once. Just 500 cases made.

WINEMAKER BIOGRAPHY

From old vine Cortese to the production of rare local varieties, winemaker Giovanna Brazzola and her family seek to make honest, clear-headed expressions of Oltrepò Pavese. Located 30 km south of the river Po and right next-door to Piedmont, their vines benefit from mild winters, breezy summers, and calcareous soils with pockets of chalk.

ENOLOGIST

Leonardo Valenti



TASTING NOTES

- Color** Pale straw
- Nose** Subtle notes of citrus, orchard blossoms, and fresh herbs
- Palate** Remarkable depth and acidity, with vibrant, lemon grove flavors
- Finish** Long, balanced, and salty



VINEYARD & VINIFICATION

- Vineyard Location** Oltrepò Pavese DOC, Lombardia
- Vineyard Size** 4 ha
- Varietals List** 100% Cortese
- Farming Practices** Organic (non-certified); dry-farmed; grapes picked by hand
- Elevation** 180-260 m
- Soils** Argilloso with limestone and spots of chalk
- Maturation Summary** In Steel for 6 months and Bottled for 2 months
- In Steel** 6 months
- Alcohol** 12.5 %
- Acidity** 6 g/liter
- Annual Production** 6,000 bottles



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LOMBARDIA

Home to Italy's second-largest city, tourists know Lombardia for Milano itself, for the stunning environs of Lake Como, and perhaps (placing a distant third) for the elegant, classic-method DOCG sparkling wine known as Franciacorta. Situated across the Alps from the Swiss canton of Ticino, Lombardia is flanked by Piedmont and Veneto on either side and by Emilia-Romagna to the south. While less known to wine consumers in the U.S., the region can boast nearly 60,000 acres of vineyards along with 5 DOCGs, 21 DOCs, and 15 IGP. Of these, 3 zones typically rank as the most important: the Franciacorta growing zone, situated between Brescia and Lake Iseo... Valtellina, known for its far-north, alpine take on Nebbiolo... and last but not least, the green hills of Oltrepò Pavese south of the River Po, famed for its own *metodo classico*, abundant Pinot Nero and, more recently, for its DOC Pinot Grigio. Overall, southern Lombardia is more influenced by the Ligurian Sea and enjoys a Mediterranean climate. The region's north, by contrast, is alpine continental with its lofty altitudes, mountain winds, and the cooling effects Lakes Iseo, Como, Maggiore, and Garda.

Historically, vines were first planted here by the pre-Roman Etruscans, with winemaking dating back well over 2500 years. Next, the lands were conquered by the Gauls - beginning a long push and pull with French vs. Italian dominance - followed in the 6th century by the Germanic Langobards (aka the "long-beards" or Lombards, after whom the region is named). Ultimately, this conquering force assimilated and became "Italian", with the arrival of the Franks (late 8th century) putting an official end to their reign. Beginning early in the next millennium, the House of Savoy began its long and far-reaching dynasty, eventually culminating in the peninsula's unification and the first Italian Kingdom. With influence ebbing and flowing across the border of modern-day France, it comes as little surprise that main grape varieties planted today go beyond the local Croatina (17%) and Barbera (12%) to include the all-important Pinot Nero (14%) and Chardonnay (13%).

OLTREPÒ PAVESE DOC

Located in the southwest corner of Lombardia, Oltrepò Pavese is a prolific zone best known for its *Metodo Classico* wines, as well as for being the world's third largest growing zone for Pinot Noir (behind only Burgundy and Champagne). Around 1850, Pinot vines were imported directly from Burgundy and swiftly became the mainstay for both still and sparkling wines.

While the Oltrepò has fewer than 200 producers on paper, the list includes several large co-ops, and output is huge. The sub-region produces more than half of Lombardia's total wine and comes close to rivaling Asti's volume across the Piemontese border. Primary white varieties include Chardonnay, Cortese, Malvasia, Moscato, Sauvignon, and Welschriesling, with Barbera, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Croatina (the baseline of the popular Bonarda style) growing alongside the ubiquitous Pinot Nero. To be labeled monovarietal in this DOC, wines must contain a minimum 85% of a permitted grape.

Established as a DOC in 1970, the Oltrepò's terrain consists largely of gentle, green slopes positioned between the Po River and the Apennines (Oltrepò Pavese translates "on the other side of the Po"), with an average altitude of 300-400 meters. Despite the sub-alpine locale and ample diurnal swings, proximity to the Ligurian Sea ensures the overall climate is Mediterranean, complete with breezy summers and cool, dry winters.



MONTELIO

Having recently celebrated the 220th anniversary of her family's farm, winemaker Giovanna Brazzola takes great pride not only in making fantastic *metodo classico* and Pinot Nero - as is the trend in Lombardia - but also in sustaining the rare, historic wines of her native Oltrepò Pavese. Rather surprisingly, Montelio is one of fewer than 10 producers left cultivating Cortese in their area, so close to the border with Piedmont but where they use a different clone than in Gavi (with yellow skins as opposed to green). Perhaps more notably, the estate has also been working with the University of Piacenza to restore a historic grape nearly lost to the ages: Uva della Cascina. Re-discovered by famed enologist Attilio Scienza, this fruity, spicy variety is genetically related to the equally rare Moradella (native to the Pavia province) and yields a medium-bodied red wine with good tannins. Having planted a few rows in 2009, Giovanna and her family are now ready to start cultivating this restored grape in earnest and have recently helped get it registered under the Oltrepò Pavese DOC.

Beyond the enological, the Montelio estate and surrounding lands are steeped in history: in June of 1800, days after they'd captured Milan from the Austrians, Napoleon's forces won the battle of Montebello just 4 or 5 kilometers from the location of today's farm. At first, the French leader simply took possession of all the lands in southern Lombardia... but in 1803, in order to continue financing his wars, he began selling parcels to the locals. (As an interesting sidebar, this was the same year as the Louisiana Purchase, when the United States paid Napoleon 15 million dollars and virtually doubled in size overnight.) Giovanna's great-great-great-grandfather, Angelo, was able to secure the lands which had once belonged to the Benedictine convent of Santa Maria and Sant'Aureliano, whose own records went back to the year 1200. Today, she and her family still own the 78-hectare estate in the town of Volghera, with its 30 hectares of contiguous grape vines along with crops of wheat, alfalfa and herbs. She works alongside her grown children, Eduardo and Irena, and nephew, Roberto (the three cousins work side by side in cellar). "They are all true farmers," says family friend and fellow winemaker Antonio Sanguineti, "in everything they do. And they live in a community where all the winemakers really take care of one another." In the spirit of small production, Montelio also became members of the Italian Federation of Independent Winegrowers (or *FIVV*) in 2017.