

Winemaker: Giuseppe and Silvia Lonardi
Generation: 4th



GIUSEPPE LONARDI

Amarone della Valpolicella Classico Riserva DOCG

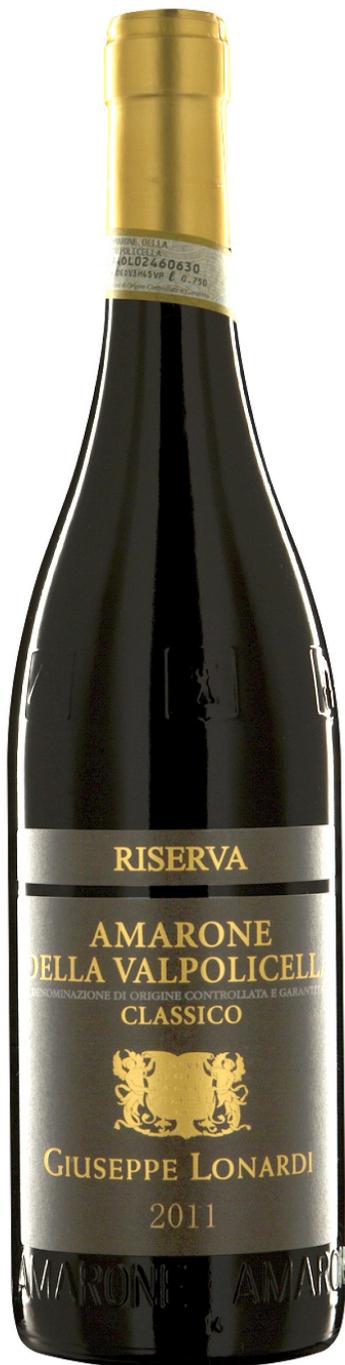
To taste the Amarone of Giuseppe Lonardi is to enter the mind of a purist -- a man who has a classic flavor in his brain that he cannot shake, and has complete fidelity to. Although it is difficult to define a "classic" Amarone, Lonardi's dares to be high concept and elegant, with taut acidity lifting an unctuous, lovely palate of rolling, dark, smoky-ripe dried fruit. Enter his extraordinary Riserva, boasting an extra year of aging in the bottle. This, after a hyper-careful selection of the top 5% of his grapes! A masterpiece from a true master.

WINEMAKER BIOGRAPHY

A true father-daughter team, Giuseppe and Silvia combine forces daily to make some of the last, old-fashioned Amarone from the Valpolicella Classico region. Given the level of care – and the number of years – that go into their wines, "hand-crafted" doesn't quite do their process justice. Despite its small size, their estate produces wines with enormous character and presence.

ENOLOGIST

Giuseppe Lonardi



TASTING NOTES

- Color** Deep garnet
- Nose** Port-like aromas of dried cherry, chocolate, and fig
- Palate** Unctuous, ripe, and full-bodied
- Finish** Smooth, velvety, long finish



VINEYARD & VINIFICATION

- Vineyard Location** Amarone della Valpolicella DOCG, Veneto
- Vineyard Size** 7 ha
- Varietals List** 75% Corvina
20% Rondinella
5% Croatina
- Farming Practices** Organic (non-certified); dry-farmed; grapes picked by hand
- Elevation** 350 m
- Soils** Dense clay
- Maturation Summary** In French and Slovenian barrels for 48 months and bottled for 6 months
- Alcohol** 15.5 %
- Acidity** 5.65 g/liter
- Residual Sugar** 2.5 g/liter



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GIUSEPPE LONARDI



REGION

VENETO

Home to the iconic cities of Venice and Verona, Veneto is also Italy's second most prolific region in terms of wine production. Whites like Pinot Grigio and Prosecco, in particular, are made en masse in the lowlands proximate to the Adriatic. Beyond this, however, Veneto is also home to world-class estates and wines that couldn't be made anywhere else (not least of all the renowned Amarone della Valpolicella). From coastal flatlands to subalpine hills, a vast diversity of microclimates gives this wine region a unique edge. There are an impressive 28 DOCs and 14 DOCGs, with Prosecco, Pinot Grigio, Soave, and the red wines of Valpolicella all calling the Veneto home.

Beginning on the edge of Lake Garda, this NE region has 7 provinces: Belluno, Treviso, Venezia, Verona, Vicenza, Padova and Rovigo. Its northern boundary is protected from harsh weather conditions by the Dolomites, and cooler conditions in the north are well-suited to white varietals like Garganega (the main grape in Soave). In contrast, the warmer Adriatic coastal plains and river valleys near Lake Garda are where the renowned Valpolicella, Amarone, and Bardolino reds are produced.

It is believed that Veneto is one of the oldest wine-producing regions in the world, dating back to the bronze age. Its main port, Venice, has long served as a point of entry for new varietals, and departure for its products. Italy's very first school for oenology was founded in Conegliano in 1885, and today Europe's most important wine fair, VinItaly - with a draw of some 200,000 people - takes place each spring in Verona.

AMARONE DELLA VALPOLICELLA DOCG

Although hailed as one of Italy's top wines today, the first bottle of Amarone wasn't produced until 1938 - making it a true youngster by European standards. Moreover, like Brunello, it wasn't sold commercially until the 1950s. Nonetheless, Amarone remains one of the most stiffly governed DOCGs. Not only are producers limited to a short list of grapes (the baseline being Corvina), but they also cannot choose their own harvesting date - instead, the Consorzio provides one for them each year!

As with all wines, terroir is critical to Amarone, but what happens after the harvest is what actually sets it apart from so many others (including those made from the same exact grapes, like basic Valpolicella). Winemakers use a unique drying process called appassimento, wherein clusters are placed on bamboo racks called arele (usually in a room or shack called a fruttaio) that permit airflow from beneath. Grapes dry for an average of 90 days (December 1 is the legal minimum to press, but most producers wait until the New Year). During this time, the fruit loses at least 30% of its mass through dehydration. The resulting juice is rich, concentrated, and higher in sugar content. Ergo, once fermentation converts the sugar to alcohol, the finished wine usually comes in at 15-16%. Amarone is then aged for a minimum of 2 years; 4 years for a Riserva.

The Amarone DOCG has three geographical sub-zones: Valpolicella Classico, Valpantena, and 'Est', (the extended zone), all with unique variations. Wine from the higher altitude Classico zone tends to be more elegant and aromatic; Valpantena wines are generally lighter and fruitier; the greater, 'extended' zone (stretching to the Soave district) tends to produce muscular wines with a higher alcohol level.

GIUSEPPE LONARDI

In a little village not far from Verona, tucked into the romantic hills of Valpolicella, you will find the estate of one of the best Amarone producers in Italia - Giuseppe Lonardi. "Bepi," as his wife likes to call him, is a fourth-generation winemaker, and he leads a beautiful, streamlined life. On average, he hand-crafts just a few hundred cases per year of each of his finest wines. Marilena smiles fondly when you ask her about her husband: "He's a workaholic. He basically sleeps with the wine." Matching his stride and making wine right beside him is Giuseppe's daughter, Silvia, who additionally runs "Corte Lonardi", the family's cozy, four-room inn. Over the years, she has gradually taken on more and more responsibility in the cellar and is now a formidable producer in her own right!

What sets Giuseppe and Silvia apart from so many others is their ongoing devotion to old-fashioned Amarone and Ripasso. Far from being sweet and cloying, their wines display endless layers of fruit, earthy tannins, and admirable acidity, and they're often designed to cellar for decades. Structure-driven, yet full of nuance and grace, even their Amarone maintains its poise even after a 100-day, appassimento drying process. Without a doubt, altitude plays a large role in Lonardi's ability to maintain this classical approach. Located in Marano, the loftiest of 8 hilltop villages comprising the region's "green heart", Lonardi's is the highest single estate in all Valpolicella Classico. In an era of warming temperatures, their cooler climate plays a huge role when it comes to controlling ripeness. Intent is the other half of that coin: rather than harvest their grapes for Amarone later in the season, Giuseppe and Silvia hand pick the best fruit for their top wine first (usually in early September), so that the port-like flavors of Amarone stay concentrated after drying, but the sugar content remains modest and sophisticated.