



Winemaker: Dario Guerra
Generation: 3rd



Ribolla Gialla Brut

WINEMAKER BIOGRAPHY

Dario Guerra is a 3rd generation producer (his father's name was Albano) who farms 10 hilltop hectares in Friuli's esteemed Colli Orientali DOC. While it's normal for producers to have 2 or 3 green harvests, Dario – rather amazingly – treats every vine as an individual, constantly sculpting them all season long!

ENOLOGIST

Dario Guerra



TASTING NOTES



VINEYARD & VINIFICATION

Vineyard Location	Friuli-Venezia Giulia
Varietals List	100% Ribolla Gialla
Soils	Clay marly
Maturation Summary	Bottled for 4 months
Alcohol	12.0 %
Acidity	5.6 g/liter
Residual Sugar	1.3 g/liter
Annual Production	10,002 bottles





REGION

FRIULI-VENEZIA GIULIA

Situated in the NE corner of Italy, Friuli-Venezia Giulia borders Veneto to the west, the Austrian Alps to the north, Slovenia to the east, and to the south has a short coastline along the Adriatic Sea. The combination of warm maritime breezes, chilly subalpine nights, and clay-based soil creates the perfect terroir for white wines in particular. Unsurprisingly, 77% of Friuli's total production is devoted to its bianchi (higher than any other Italian region). Overall, they're prized for their aromatics, big-boned acidic structure, and flinty, mineral-driven finesse. Although relatively small in terms of geography, like Piedmont this region is home to a large number of artisanal, family-run vineyards. With 4 DOCGs and 12 DOCs, Friuli ranks third amongst Italy's 20 autonomie in its percentage of DOC wine production (behind only Trentino-Alto Adige and Piedmont). The Collio and Colli Orientali del Friuli DOCs are generally held in the highest esteem, with Grave del Friuli being the most prolific.

In terms of terroir, the most important influence on Friuli's vineyards is their position between the Alps and the Adriatic. Wine styles vary depending on whether an estate enjoys a Mediterranean climate near the sea or the alpine continental climate further inland. Higher vineyards in the north/northeast may rise above the low-lying cloud banks that can linger between the hills and the coast. This allows grapes to soak in the sun and develop to their full phenolic potential without overripening; aromatics are deepened, and a wine's acidic structure becomes more pronounced. At lower altitudes closer to the coast, producers may count upon more stable, maritime weather, but this comes with less dramatic swings in diurnal temperature.

GUERRA ALBANO

When asked about his approach to winemaking, Dario Guerra just smiles and offers, "we are students of the leaves." Getting to know him, one begins to realize this is an entire way of life for him, and far from hyperbole. Working up to 15 hours a day in the field, he and his family are in a state of near-constant green harvest, sculpting individual plants all season long so that (no matter what the weather does in a particular vintage) they effectively have every exposition to choose from. "Wine is made in the vineyard, not the cellar," adds Dario, who believes what happens post-harvest should only have a 10% influence on the final result. Also for this reason, Guerra Albano uses a soft, peristaltic pump - with the added benefit of producing less astringent wines with more integrated tannins. "He's is a totally unique winemaker," marvels our Italian partner Antonio Sanguineti, "Dario is just nature and mathematics."

Like so many small estates across Europe, Guerra Albano farms their grapes organically, but remains non-certified. A key part of this equation for Dario (and countless others across France and Italy) is dry-farming. Given that his average vine age is 40 years old, it's not unusual to have roots diving 30-50 feet straight down into the hillside, resulting in complex, terroir-driven wines steeped in Friuli's telltale minerality. Consistent with his philosophy of working in tandem with nature, Dario doesn't terrace - he says he prefers to work with the natural gradient of the hill, which also helps him to avoid rocks and take full advantage of the rich ponca topsoil. As this flysch-driven layer only goes down for the first meter or so, it can be easily thinned or lost through displacement. However, "if instead you choose the right clone and disturb the land as little as possible," he says, "you create a natural cycle."