



Winemaker: Marco Fantinel  
Generation: 3rd

## TENUTA SANT'HELENA

### Venko Rosso Collio DOC

One of the top expressions of this terroir-centric estate, Tenuta Sant' Helena's "Venko" Rosso (named for the zone the vines are located in) is a wine for those who generally prefer structured, elegant reds. The color is gorgeous - ruby red with garnet tinges - while the bouquet hints at wild berries and vanilla. A splendid assemblage of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Pinot Noir, it's aged in oak for 30 months. Its body is smooth and granular, with a clean, lingering finish.

#### WINEMAKER BIOGRAPHY

Together with his siblings, Marco Fantinel took his grandfather's small winemaking legacy and converted it into an Italian institution. Today, he oversees the Fantinel and Tenuta Sant'Helena estates, with a focus on Friuli's unique terroir and native varieties.

#### ENOLOGIST

Alberto Zanello



#### TASTING NOTES

- Color** Dark ruby red
- Nose** Dark cherry and plum, red licorice, bramble and earth
- Palate** Full-bodied, with round tannins and stewed blueberry fruit
- Finish** Excellent balance and smooth long finish



#### VINEYARD & VINIFICATION

- Vineyard Location** Collio DOC, Friuli-Venezia Giulia
- Vineyard Size** 50 ha
- Varietals List** 50% Merlot  
40% Cabernet  
10% Pinot Noir
- Farming Practices** Sustainably farmed including dry-farmed, no manmade pesticides or fertilizers; grapes picked by hand
- Elevation** 100 m
- Soils** Marly of eocenic origin
- Maturation Summary** In 30 hl Allier and Slovenian oak barrels for 30 months and bottled for 6 months
- Alcohol** 13.5 %
- Acidity** 5.8 g/liter
- Residual Sugar** 3 g/liter
- Annual Production** 12,000 bottles



## TENUTA SANT'HELENA

Well-known as a restaurateur and hotelier in northern Friuli, Mario Fantinel acquired his first vineyards in the coveted Collio district in 1969. Some 8 years later, in the tiny village of Venco, he added the gorgeous Tenuta Sant'Helena to the equation. Situated some 15 km from Gorizia and perched right on the border with Slovenia, the farm's 15 to 45-year-old vines benefit from a mild climate (protected by the Julian Alps to the north), 200 meters of altitude, and proximity to the Adriatic Sea. Run by third generation producers Marco, Stefano and Mariaelena, Tenuta Sant'Helena today represents some of the Fantinel family's best, hand-picked, single estate wines.

Famous throughout Europe for its structured, mineral-driven whites, the Collio DOC in Friuli revolves around its unique soil type, called *ponca* in the local dialect. This multicolored, marly clay derives from the Eocene epoch (66 to 23 million years ago), when the earth was considerably warmer than today, and an inland sea covered the region. Shell material and high calcium carbonate levels lend Collio's wines their acidic backbone and (in the case of white varieties) enhance their intriguing tropical nose. To further concentrate these aromatics, all of Tenuta Sant'Helena's white wines see 2-3 hours of skin contact (except the Sauvignon) and the reds are made following a brief drying (or *appassimento*) process.

## 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.

### COLLIO DOC

Collio (meaning "hills") is a relatively small DOC, located on the eastern edge of Friuli-Venezia Giulia, curving around the international border with Slovenia and sharing both terroir and culture with next-door Goriška Brda. The region's storied enological history dates back to the days of ancient Rome when grape growing first began. By the mid-3rd Century, wine production was abundant and continued to flourish despite the region's constant political upheavals. Regularly invaded by both Slavic and Germanic tribes to the north, the area only became a permanent part of Italy when it was annexed in 1918, just after World War I. Already well-established as a hub of quality white wines, Collio (aka Collio Goriziano) was established as a DOC in 1968.

Comprised of rolling hills, small hamlets, and tuckaway farms, Collio accounts for little more than 5% of Friuli's total vineyards but has long produced many of its highest accolades and awards. Its gently sloping, south-facing vineyards are exposed to warm sunny days and cool nights, resulting in grapes that balance ripeness with the subzone's telltale acidity. In addition, the unique "*ponca*" soils offer layers of minerality - and sometimes even salinity - to the wines.

The Collio DOC includes 12 white and 5 red grape varieties, and allows for any given blend. For white wines, the most prominent grapes include Friulano, Malvasia Istriana, Ribolla Gialla, Chardonnay, Sauvignon, Pinot Grigio and Pinot Bianco. Red wines are often driven by Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, and Merlot. A recognized varietal may be listed on the label, provided they make up 85% of the wine.