

BONZANO VINI Tenuta della Mandoletta

The story that Monferrato is waiting to tell. Presentation of the first 4 wines from 2017 and the Bonzano Vini Project, curated by Donato Lanati. April 2018 At Tenuta della Mandoletta, brothers Enrico, Stefano and Massimo Bonzano are behind a collaborative winemaking project set up in conjunction with expert oenologist, Donato Lanati, who has carried out and supervised the work from the outset, in 2011. Together with them, Simonetta Ghia, Enrico Bonzano's wife and owner of the winegrowing company, who inspired and promoted this new business venture with her deep passion for the world of wine. The roots of this story begin in the soil of Coniolo, a municipality in Basso Casale Monferrato, a UNESCO world heritage site since 2014, and they continue to grow in these hills, where vineyards alternate with hazelnut and beech woods. An area with lime-clay soil that in its depths hides the ancient infernot, cellars dug in the same white Pietra da Cantoni stone used to build the homes and castles that tower up from the hillsides. A charming, unique landscape that serves as the setting for this new winemaking adventure, pre-viewed to the press on 6 April, with a tasting of 4 of the 7 wines from the winery, the 2017 vintage, and the winery's very first. They are: *Gajard*, lively, like this Barbera del Monferrato DOC; *Armognan*, named for the apricot tree from which this Bianco del Monferrato DOC takes its fragrance and colour; *Hosteria* Monferrato Rosso DOC, a convivial red that can be served with any course, and *Meridiana* Rosato, a pleasantly fresh, versatile wine. The range is completed with a *Metodo Classico Brut Mandoletta*; *Bruno Bonzano* Barbera del Monferrato Superiore DOCG, and *Gènevieve* Monferrato Bianco DOC, three selections that will be ready in the latter part of 2018.

LOCAL HISTORY Monferrato: tradition, courage and eco-sustainability.

Monferrato and the Tenuta della Mandoletta estate are places dear to the hearts of the Bonzano family, as they represent their roots and are the source of inspiration for their winegrowing adventure. The area's winegrowing vocation dates back to the early 19th century, when the property was bought by the Vitta family from the Jewish community of Casale Monferrato. In that period, the vineyard was the distinctive feature of the estate, together with its historic park, worked by brothers Marcellino and Giuseppe Roda, established gardeners in the Piedmont area who also worked for the Savoy family. In 1898 la Mandoletta passed to Giuseppe Raffaele, who appointed the architect Giuseppe Archinti to transform the residence completely. The vines around the house were dug up and replaced with other plants, until the Bonzano family, originally from Monferrato, arrived and fell in love with the place. From the early 2000s, they carried out important restoration work to bring back the historic gardens and later, the vineyards. Today la Mandoletta is an estate surrounded by a single block of 7 hectares of vineyards, set in the most typical landscape of Casale Monferrato: rolling hills that rise up from the nearby Po Valley, never exceeding a height of 400 metres, with a countryside that is dotted with woods, villages and farmhouses. Respect for tradition, eco-sustainability, and the courage to push on to break new boundaries are all values behind the foundation of Bonzano Vini, which aims to become a point of reference for quality wines made in the area. There is a fourth and perhaps most important value, the driving force behind the whole project: family. A generational pact that aims to bring value to Monferrato, which is often ignored in the competition with other areas of Piedmont.

Bonzano, an industrial group with an agricultural core. It was Enrico Bonzano and his wife, Simonetta Ghia who first believed in the winegrowing vocation of Tenuta della Mandoletta, to the extent that they decided to involve the whole family in this ambitious project. It could be no other way for this family, with its decidedly entrepreneurial spirit, leading producers of wooden boards for industrial use, and owners of over 2000 hectares of poplar plantations all over the world. Eco-sustainable production, aided by the Research Unit for Forestry and Wood in Casale Monferrato, Italy's most important research centre in the

industry, where the “clone I-214” was created, which is the most widely used poplar variety in the world. The farming origins of the Bonzano family, together with their love of their local area, their entrepreneurial spirit and their friendship with Donato Lanati have all helped to lay the foundations for facing this challenge: to bring radical change to the image of Monferrato as a wine region.

Donato Lanati, a project that started in the vineyard. “Wine is not a formula”. Surprisingly, this comes from someone who has made scientific research his life’s work: Donato Lanati, *deus ex machina* of this winegrowing adventure. “A great wine that is able to arouse emotion is the result of an area, but above all, of the people who live there.” He explains: “People are what makes a great terroir great: people who know how to recognise potential and bring it out to the full, competing with internationally famous wines”. Lombard by birth and Piedmontese by adoption, in 1990, Lanati founded Enosis Meraviglia, an international body that carries out studies and research into the quality of wines, as well as training university students and oenologists from all over the world. For Bonzano Vini he has coordinated the vineyards from the planting stage and also defined the territorial style of the products. “I am fascinated with Monferrato and pleased to have been living here for over 40 years, because it is an area that brings something positive every day,” explains Lanati. “Agriculture has a human dimension here, and when you travel along any country road, you will see rolling landscapes that give you a new thrilling view around every corner.” It is an area that according to Lanati has a hidden, as yet unexpressed winegrowing potential, as well as having nothing to envy of the better-known areas of Piedmont. “This area is the real value of the wine; the personality and recognisability of a wine that is identified with a specific area means we won’t be making standard products, and in these terms, Monferrato has everything it takes to be a success.” An aim to promote the area that is shared by Bonzano Vini. “To achieve great results takes research that can identify the elements of quality that nature offers, such as aroma, stable anthocyanins, polysaccharides, etc. The verbal expression of terroir is not enough to do this; we need to select areas and plots inside the same vineyard and substantiate these selections from a scientific viewpoint. This is the work that the Bonzano winery is progressing”. The path mapped out for this winery will find its own production identity over time. “The true concept of quality is only reached when aware, skilled growers are able to establish a dialogue through their wine, even at a distance - even through to the other part of the world - with consumers who are attracted by the desire to experience an area inside a glass!” he concludes, “All of these skills are in place at Bonzano and that is why I believe in this project”.

Short biography Donato Lanati graduated in agricultural sciences from the University of Turin, where he also specialised in winegrowing and oenology, as well as the university where he taught winemaking technology for 17 years. Today he is a member of the OIV (International Organisation of Vine and Wine) as an expert in the Oenological Commission. He is actively engaged in consultancy work, above all in Italy but also internationally: Georgia, Switzerland, Romania, and Kazakhstan. His major awards include the Medal for Italian Agriculture, Emeritus Ambassador for Città del Vino, Member of the Confrérie des Chevaliers du Tastevin, Knight of the Italian Republic, and he has also been presented with the Oscar del Successo and the Oscar del Vino.

WINES The Label: time, a sundial and a tree. Bonzano Vini has devised a logo to recreate a stylised version of the sundial on the front of Villa della Mandoletta, together with the branches of the family tree. The passing seasons, the sunlight that marks the passing time on the sundial, the family, and its branches are all concepts expressed in the brand image. It is a logo that plays with the contrast of black and white, with clean-cut lines that encapsulate the concept of passing time and generations.

Description of the wines: 2017 vintage Most of the wine names are in local dialect or come from a local personage, confirming the deep links between the winery and Monferrato.

Gajard - Barbera del Monferrato DOC: In Piedmontese dialect, "gajard" means vigorous and exuberant, like the personality of this deep-coloured wine. *Varietal:* barbera *Characteristics:* deep ruby red, aromas of freshly picked red fruit. Fresh on the tongue with crisp tannins. Excellently quaffable. *Serve with:* flavoursome, spicy dishes, such as roasts and game.

Armognan – Monferrato Bianco DOC: "Armognan" is Piedmontese dialect for apricot, the fruit that gives this wine its fragrance. *Varietals:* chardonnay and sauvignon *Characteristics:* bright straw yellow On the nose it expresses lovely citrus notes and characteristic hints of apricot. Fresh and pleasantly sapid in the mouth. *Serve with:* fish or white meats.

Hosteria - Monferrato Rosso DOC: a convivial wine that could have been called "hosteria" or "Incontro" or "Amicizia". In fact, throughout the 20th century, the Hosteria (tavern) was more than a social meeting place, it also offered genuine hospitality. *Varietals:* pinot nero, barbera. *Characteristics:* ruby red. Elegant, floral bouquet. Harmonious palate. A splendidly quaffable red. *Serve with:* recommended to accompany first and second courses with meat, but also to enjoy with charcuterie and cheese snacks.

La Meridiana Rosato: created from a blend of international vines, this wine features a great taste versatility. *Varietals:* pinot nero, chardonnay, sauvignon. *Characteristics:* bright, soft rosé. Fragrant nose of small red fruits with floral hints. Great in the mouth due to its freshness and to a good balance of taste and aroma. *Serve with:* appetisers through to main course fish dishes

BONZANO VINI IN BRIEF

- Protagonists: the Bonzano family: Enrico, Stefano and Massimo, together with their families and Donato Lanati, from Enosis Meraviglia.
- 7 hectares of vines in the municipality of Coniolo.
- 7 wines: Gajard - Barbera del Monferrato DOC, Armognan Bianco del Monferrato DOC, Hosteria MONFERRATO ROSSO doc and La MERIDIANA ROSATO IGT. 3 selections: Metodo Classico Brut Mandoletta, Bruno Bonzano Barbera del Monferrato Superiore DOCG and Genevieve Monferrato Bianco DOC.
- First year on sale: 2017.
- Production: fewer than 100 thousand bottles.
- Vineyards planted: 2011.