MATERVI: VINI UNDERGROUND FARA VICENTINO, VENETO

I'd bumped into Alberto several times over the past three years, and it was always such a pleasure. His wines were always performing on point, but he was also just such a fun person to be around. I knew right away he would be one of the first people we'd later contact to import to the USA.

There was this wild outdoor wine fair and late night party at Elisabetta Foradori's cantina in Trentino. It's called "Senza Filtro," and it's one of the most interesting wine events in Italy (in my opinion). The whole day is marked by a wine fair, taking place in her garden, of winemakers that make wine in amphorae. The glassware is Zalto and there are free plates of salumi and cheese from Foradori's own production and nearby friends.

In the evening, there was an incredible street food-style dinner from Giuseppe Zen, chef of Milano's celebrated Macelleria Popolare, followed by a late-night dance party led by a live alpine funk-polka-trio.

It was like 11:30 PM and a bottle of 2007 Gravner Ribolla had just been passed my way right before I first met Alberto and I still remember going crazy over a glass of his "Vesplicito" wine he poured for me.

I had been tasting a lot of natural Vespaiolo wines during that time and remember finding most of them to be a bit astringent and sharp in acidity. However,

MATERVI FARM

the one Alberto poured for me had a harmonious acidity, deep mineral undercurrents, lemongrass, fresh herbs and chile peppers on the nose; it was very expressive and showed lots of potential for cellar aging. There was also a light bitter herbal sensation in the finish that made it all the more intriguing.

I tried the “Anonimo” rosato with Alberto a year later when I met him an enoteca in Milano, and it ended up being one of my go-to Italian rosato wines even though by appearance, it's questionably a light red wine. We liked it so much, it became the first selection for our first artist collaboration label that features the work of DC-based artist Kelly Towles.

When we started coming up with ideas for Natty Wine about 5 years ago, we would drink a lot of Etna Nerello Mascalese rosato wines together, especially one's by Massimiliano Calabretta. When we tasted Alberto’s recent vintage of “Anonimo,” which is made from red grapes raised in entirely volcanic soils in that brought us back home to the beginning. It expressed lots of mineral and red fruits on the nose, it also presented an herbaceous smokiness upon exhaling, a watermelon jolly-rancher sweetness rounding out a bit of heat from the alcohol, all underlined with a sapidity that made us want to open the second sample bottle right away. A really fun wine to enjoy young, but

with bottle age, will become very rich and interesting in a few years time. As always, we will save a case in the cellar to share with friends in a few years, and certainly when Alberto finally comes to visit us!

Whenever I'm drinking MaterVI's sparkling wine, Tainot, I imagine I'm sitting outside of a *bacaro* near a Venetian canal. Aperitivo is in session wherever you land. Pair it with anything, but the wine works properly with fried calamari and grilled / fried polenta. A soft-shelled crab sandwich, hushpuppies and/or Thrashers-style potato fries will likely do just fine. Based on

previous experience, I'll also unabashedly suggest finishing the bottle alongside a bag of baked potato chips. No shame! The wine expresses complexity around every corner but a bottle always manages to disappear before food even hits the table/ bar/ blanket.

Alberto is raising vines on a hillside right outside of the San Giorgio di Perlena hamlet in his hometown: Fara Vicentino in the Vicenza province of Veneto. He inherited his first vineyard from his grandfather, which produces all the grapes that go into making Tainot. The wine is truly an expression of this tiny hillside vineyard and his family's tradition. The wine is entirely unique in this way, and could never be recreated. In the vineyard, there's a variety of fruit trees that were planted throughout the vine rows by his grandfather along with several vegetable gardens. Most of the vine row end posts are actually just ancient oak trees that his nonno organized to support the rows.

If you are standing at the road entrance to this vineyard “Farneda," you can see Breganze city and the entire Vicenza plain to the south and as you turn around, the entire view towards the north is surrounded by the protective barrier of the Altopiano di Asiago (plateau).

Fara Vicentino is part of the Breganze DOC: a historically viticultural volcanic amphitheater basin between the Brenta and Astico rivers. The weather here is very favorable to raising vines due to winds and a dip in humidity during the evenings.

Vines were present in the Breganze hills way before the Roman domination, but they weren’t recognized and documented until the Vespaiolo wines caught the attention and indulgence of the Republic of Venice.

After the second world war, an increase in the planting of *Vespaiola* vine cuttings kicked off the beginnings of what became the dominating industry of the region, and was followed the founding of the DOC in 1969. Regardless of it's historical popularity, the grape had been flying low on the international wine markets radar until a recent growth spurt of young Venetian (predominantly natural)

producers that many consider to be reshaping and rediscovering the potential of the grape. When hearing Breganze or *Vespaiola*, even the Italo-oenophiles of the world would only have previously thought about the denominations pride and joy: "Torcolato." It's a sweet passito wine made with 100% dried *Vespaiola* grapes made famous by the Maculan family (whose cellar, by the way, is totally worth visiting for a tour).

On our most recent visit to Breganze, Alberto took me out to a restaurant for lunch called "La Ciacola," that features local traditional plates paired with wines from all of the

regions natural producers. Everything was so perfect yet simple: pasta with mushrooms, a regional cheese board, and a dessert of spiced shortbread biscotti and a glass of Maculan's Torcolato passito wine.

Alberto recently added a small section of *Vespaiola* plantings to his vineyard "Farneda," in aspiration of producing his own Torcolato wine, however they are a few years from production maturity.

In the meantime, there are plenty of other exciting wines from MaterVI on the horizon. For example, Alberto will be releasing his wine made with *Vespaiola* in amphorae later this year.

After lunch in Breganze, we stopped by the house of his winemaker friend, Luca Azzolin, who runs a nonprofit organization called the *Canevisti Breganze* that connects aspiring winemakers to retired farmers who don't want to sell or abandon their family heirloom vineyards. As we flipped through old photo albums of the Torcolato festival that his family hosts every year, we quickly drank through a bottle of Luca's delicious *Groppello* sparkling red wine (and of course with a block of aged cheese).

On the way back to Alberto's farm, we passed by to check out the largest grapevine I've ever seen. In the courtyard of an abandoned farmhouse, there is a massive vine that Alberto believes to be related to *Tocai Bianco*. It sprouted at the base of an oak tree over 100 years ago and grew in symbioses with the tree. Wherever the tree grew, so followed the vine. The vine spread to other trees and to the rooftop of the abandoned building. (see videos at end of IG story).

It was truly incredible to see despite the swarm of mosquitos feeding on my ankles. Alberto later plans to analyze the genetics of this vine and to possibly graft cuttings to some new rootstocks in one of his vineyards.

Alberto comes from a family of modern farmers, but has a well-rounded obsession with traditional techniques. After completing his university degrees in agricultural and oenological studies in Trentino and Udine, he worked for multiple large format winemakers in Italy. It wasn't until realizing the depth and importance of his own regions traditions, that he decided to return home and take on the often daunting task of starting your own business as a young person in Italy. Although backed by years of professional agricultural and academic cred, the first thing he did was consulted with and learned from the village elders and farmers. Some that even knew his nonno and how he worked.

Alberto and I were leaving one of his rented vineyards to head towards Vicenza city to meet with Simone of Indomiti Vini for dinner, when we bumped into a neighboring farmer and friend, Flaminio. He started to explain his work and turned into a full tour of all of his gardens and his fruit tree grafting experiments. Although the signore only spoke in a local dialect that I could barely understand, his energy, farm projects, and seriousness about his work reminded me a lot of the way Alberto presents all the project updates on his farm. We parted with some of Flavinio's honey and lemons in hand.

MATERVI: VINI UNDERGROUND

Total cultivated area: 7.5 hectares

Orchard area: 2.5 hectares

Other crops: Potatoes, Soy

Annual Production: 9,000 Bottles

Oenologist or cellar manager: Alberto Rigon

Agronomist or agricultural manager: Alberto Rigon

Fixed workers:

Seasonal workers:

Type of employment contract used for permanent workers: "Collaboratore Familiare"

Type of employment contract used for seasonal workers: "Operaio agricolo a tempo determinato"

Recourse to temporary work: No

Supervised Labor Agreement Contract: Agreed

Agreed *signifies both parties have agreed to signing the document and is currently under review by both parties.* ***Signed*** *represents a signed contract that permits efficient and complete transparency if any questions are raised at any time about onsite part-time and seasonal labor, compensation and treatment of laborers hired through contracted cooperatives, as well from any offsite properties that the winemaker may purchase grapes from.*

MATERVI: VINI UNDERGROUND - "Tainot" 2018
Sparkling White Wine

Vinification

Pre-press processing:
Automatic Destemmer

Pressing mode: Pneumatic Press (very gentle pressing).

Maceration: No maceration: direct press.

Yeasts: Spontaneous fermentation

Vinificators: Steel until spring.

Sparkling Method: *Rifermentato:*
Frozen must of Pinot Bianco added in spring then added to bottles to referment.

Sulphur dioxide and/or ascorbic acid: Small addition of sulfur just before bottling.

Stabilization: Cold

Filtering: NO

Clarification: NO

Refinement in the bottle: 2 months

Grape/wine yield (%): 60%

Bottle type: Burgundy

Cap in: Crown Cap

Analysis

Acidity: 5 g/L

PH: 3.42

ABV: 11.67%

Reducing Sugar: <1 g/L

Sugar free extract: 16.37 g/L

Dry Extract (Total Solids):
16.37 g/L

Total SO2: 13 mg/L

Volatile Acidity: 0.55 g/L

MATERVI: VINI UNDERGROUND - "Vesplicito" 2019
White Wine

Production

Bottles produced: 2700

Orchard Name(s): Reato -
(a rented property).

Orchard Surface: 0.5 ha

Soil: Volcanic embedded with limestone

Exposure of rows: East to West

Altitude: 300 meters

Varieties: Vespaiola

Rootstock: Kober5BB

Vine Training: Doppio Capovolto (cappuccina) (Double Guyot)

Average age of vines: 40 years.

Plant density: 3000 per ha

Yield per Vine: 1.8 kg

Production per ha (kg/ha): 5500

Treatments: Organic treatments (copper, sulfur, biostimulants, mycorrhizal fungi)

Fertilizers: mature bovine manure, every 2 years

Harvest start date: September 20th, 2019

Harvest mode: Manual in 15 kg boxes

Certifications: In conversion to receive organic certification.

MATERVI: VINI UNDERGROUND - "Vesplicito" 2019
White Wine

Vinification

Pre-press processing:
Automatic Destemmer

Pressing mode: Pneumatic Press

Vinificators: Steel

Maceration: 4 days

Yeasts: Spontaneous fermentation

Sulphur dioxide and/or ascorbic acid: Small dosage of sulfur just before bottling.

Stabilization: Cold

Filtering: NO

Clarification: NO

Steel refinement:

Refinement in barrel: 3 months in oak

Refinement in the bottle: 2 Months

Grape/wine yield (%): 60%

Bottle type: Burgundy

Cap in: Nomacorc Green

Analysis

Acidity: 4.99 g/L

PH: 3.35

ABV: 12.05%

Reducing Sugar: 0.18 **g/L**

Sugar free extract: 17.4 g/L

Dry Extract (Total Solids): 19.62 g/L

Total SO2: 46 mg/L

Volatile Acidity: 0.48 g/L

MATERVI: VINI UNDERGROUND - "Anonimo" 2019
Rosato Wine

Production

Bottles produced: 2000

Vineyard Name(s): "Pavan" -
(a rented property).

Vineyard Surface: 1 hectare

Soil: Volcanic embedded with limestone

Exposure of rows: East and West

Altitude: 350 meters

Varieties: 30 Groppello,
10 Pinot Vanderville 60 merlot

Rootstock: Kober5BB

Vine Training: Spurred Cordon

Average age of vines: 40 years

Plant density: 3000 per ha

Yield per Vine: 1.8 kilos

Production per ha (kg/ha): 5000

Treatments: Organic treatments
(copper, sulfur, biostimulants,
mycorrhizal fungi)

Fertilizers: mature bovine manure,
every 2 years

Harvest start date: September 5th, 2019

Harvest mode: Manual in 15 kg boxes

Certifications: In conversion to receive
organic certification.

MATERVI: VINI UNDERGROUND -"Anonimo" 2019
Sparkling White Wine

Vinification

Pre-press processing: Automatic Destemmer

Pressing mode: Pneumatic Press

Vinificators: Steel

Maceration: 5 days in cement cisterns

Yeasts: Spontaneous fermentation

Sulphur dioxide and/or ascorbic acid: Yes

Stabilization: Cold

Filtering: No

Clarification: No

Steel refinement: 8 months

Refinement in the bottle: 2 months

Grape/wine yield (%): 60%

Bottle type: Burgundy

Cap in: Nomacorc (GREEN?)

Analysis

Acidity: 4.89 g/L

PH: 3.39

ABV: 13.02%

Reducing Sugar: 0.30 g/L

Sugar free extract: 17.4 g/L

Dry Extract (Total Solids): 21.12 g/Ls

Total SO2: 40 mg/L

Volatile Acidity: 0.58 g/L