

TUTTO

BARBACARLO

Oltrepò Pavese, Lombardia



Commendatore Lino Maga's family has been making wine since 1886. Their vineyards cling to a very steep slope surrounded by forest in the hills outside Broni, Oltrepò Pavese. Some 300 metres above sea level, the four hectares of vines, on average 50 years old, are planted over tufo and exposed southwest, basking all day in light. It is a site worth fighting for and Lino spent 23 years doing just that, waging a legal battle against the authorities to ensure this monopole his family had tended for so long was recognised as their own.

Vineyard work is decidedly old school, the Maga's work by hand, avoiding the use of chemicals and come harvest time make a rigorous selection of grapes. The wines are made the same way they always have been here. They are wild fermented in ancient casks with no temperature control, racked with the turn of the moon and bottled with nothing added in the spring. Unusually, the wines finish fermentation here, resulting in bottles that differ markedly from year to year, something Lino rejoices in, wondering why others bother to put the vintage on the label when the wines always taste the same.

To taste these wines is to be transported to another time. Sometimes rustic, often beautiful and with an honesty, transparency and charm that is difficult to find.

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MONTEBUONO
2009

Montebuono, like the classic Barbacarlo blend has some Croatina, Uva Rara and Ughetta, but there is also a little Barbera in the mix. The vineyards sit next to each other and while the vines here are also up to around 100 years old and planted over tufo, the site is a little less steep than Barbacarlo. This is a slightly richer, more full expression of Montebuono, with an abundance of dark fruits still very much at the fore.