

Fiche: VIGNAI DA DULINE, FRIULI, ITALY

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At a glance:

- Lorenzo Mocchiutti & Federica Magrini
- Family activity started 1920
- 1st 'official' vintage 1999
- 10ha vines in 2 terroirs: Grave del Friuli & Colli Orientali del Friuli
- 20ha woods at Ronco Pitotti
- Vegan-compatible

USPs:

- Farming “biodynamic- impulse, Fukuoka- inspiration”; organic certified
- Alfalfa based cover cropping, aka *mucca verde*
- Mostly old vine, old biotype, loose cluster
- Taint-free cork program since 2017s

Motto:

“La Poesia - Il Sogno - La Rivoluzione - L'Amore”: “Poetry - Dreams - Revolution – Love”

Introduction:

One of our favourite wineries of all...

Each year come releases of various regions of repute, and wines with wondrous scores. Combined with annual fairs and tastings, it sometimes feels like there is not a lot of time left for wineries outwith the merry-go-round of the market. Duline is one such winery.

In recent years, I have guessed several times when given Malvasia Chioma Integrale® blind that it was Raveneau 1C. Ditto with the ‘new’ Sauvignon Blanc (with the beautiful bamboo label that mirrors the stand of bamboo on the edge of the vines,) except that this time I guessed it was ‘unoaked Haut-Brion Blanc’. The wine was so good, starry and complex yet light on its feet, that it became apparent almost no-one in the world could have made it. And so what could it be? Nothing but the best, just a different take on it. The Pinot Noir comes across as an Arlaud, or maybe a Mugnier, deep, sensual, with fruit but also soul, and voice. It’s like pillow talk, conversation rooted in love, at low volume but full resonance. And so on.*

Rather like the former (pre-2022) Dry River of Martinborough, or the Courtois clan in Sologne, there is an emphasis on ‘growing things’ here, preferably lots of them. In this case, heritage small berry / loose-cluster biotypes of local and French grape varieties, plus biodiverse cover crop and vineyard life in general. This growing of things results in a lot of different wines in the cellar to bottle, of extremely high calibre and consistency. 5000 to 6000 bottles is a big run here, whilst a third of the range comes in just 500 to 600 bottles a year, so not a lot of wine to go around. For many years, one Mayfair club used to pour the whole UK allocation of Pinot Grigio as WBTG.

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This is one reason why they may not (yet) be a household name. The other reason is that there is a subtlety and thoughtfulness to the wines, to Lorenzo & Federica (or might that be the other way around?) that they are not going to be 99 pointers in a blind tasting of far too many wines. As is so very often the case!

And yet to sit down and drink, again like Dry River of old, they are the equal of any of their peers locally, nationally, sometimes beyond. They are the kind of wines that you want to keep on drinking, when more famous names start to tire the palate, and this is their genius. They are wines for wine lovers, not for label drinkers. After bottling, at 5 years, at 10 years, they always have something to give, which develops nicely over time. David Harvey, April 2023

*For the other wines in the line up, ask any of us which we prefer. We will all have a different answer, I hope: it's how it should be.

Wines include:

-Ronco Pitotti Pinot Grigio

1.54ha of 1958 vv & 1984 vines, made in 'large' 12hl tronconic oak vat (aka tini)

-Duline Friulano

The oldest Duline vines, 0.88ha of 1920 tvv & 1936 vv of green and yellow biotypes at Duline, from 'large' 12hl tronconic oak vat (aka tini), & seasoned small 250L casks.

-Ronco Pitotti Chardonnay

0.85ha in two parcels of 1979/1984 vines, mostly from seasoned 500l demi-muid casks.

-Morus Alba® - 'the white mulberry'

Malvasia istriana vv & sauvignon blanc proprietary blend, sourced from Duline & Ronco Pitotti. Raised in seasoned 500L demi-muid casks.

-Malvasia Istriana Chioma Integrale®

0.88ha of 1960 vv & 2005 vines at La Duline, made from 'large' & seasoned small casks. Label from an idea by Lorenzo, realised by Luca Gremese. 1st made 2014

-Ronco Pitotti Sauvignon Blanc

1.04ha of 1979 vines of 'sauvignon storico Friulano' biotype. Bamboo label by Federica & Stefano Pallavisi. ~600btl, released so far only in 2016 & 2019.

-Giallodi Ronco Pitotti

0.08ha yellow skinned friulano-giallo biotype, from seasoned demi-muid casks. ~500 **MAGS ONLY**

-Duline Schioppettino

AKA *ribolla nera*. 0.64ha 1977, 1987 & 2005 schioppettino vines; 10 months in seasoned small casks

-Ronco Pitotti Pinot Noir

1.03ha of 1930/40 vv plus 1980 vines. 18 months in seasoned small casks, ~600btl; 1st made 2009.

-Morus Nigra® - 'the black mulberry'

1.71ha of 1996 & 2005 refosco dal peduncolo rosso vines blended from both sites; (0.83ha at La Duline, 0.88ha at Pitotti,) Small % of stems included since 2017 vintage. 18 months in mostly-seasoned small 225l casks (~20-30% new)

-Ronco Pitotti Il Merlot 'Valori'

0.32ha of 1999 rare 'merlot-rouge' taken from 1920 TVV, the old red-stemmed loose-cluster biotype, at Pitotti, raised in small seasoned casks. **MAGS ONLY**, ~500 made

Agriculture:

'Biodynamic impulse and Fukuoka inspiration.'

Organic certified by CEVIQ since 2019; by Ica from 1997-2018.

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Defining practices:

In the mind: no consultants.

In the field: old vines; no trimming of the shoots - Chioma Integrale®; no tillage; sod-seeding Fukuoka style; dry-farmed; neither fertilizer nor compost/manure added.

In the cellar: All wines refined in seasoned oak casks of various sizes; very small % of new wood; ambient yeast; malo-lactic completely done; sulfites only at bottling.

In analysis: alcohol by volume (ABV) range of 12.5% to 13.5% - rarely above

Vineyards:

La Duline: 4ha family vines in Grave del Friuli, back to 1920 planted vines on the limestone high plains, with their wooden house, draught horses and beehives alongside.

Ronco Pitotti: a 6 ha semi-amphitheatre cru near Manzano in the Colli Orientali del Friuli, 'practising-organic' since 1979. Flysch marl and silex terroir. Surrounded by 20ha of woods.

Key white grape varieties: Malvasia Istriana; Pinot Grigio; Friulano; Sauvignon 'Storico Friulano'; Chardonnay

Key red grape varieties: Refosco dal Peduncolo Rosso; Schioppettino; Pinot Nero; Merlot 'Storico Friulano' (in French, the old Merlot Rouge loose-cluster biotype, not Merlot Noir.)

Average vine age: >50yrs

Total area of vines: 10ha

Total area under vine with white grapes: 5.8ha

Total area under vine with red grapes: 4.2ha

Average yield: 35hl/ha

Press champion:

-Slow Wine Guide, Italy. Snail / Chioccola Award since 2011 to the present.



CHIOCCIOLA

Timeline:

2023 4 mini-vertical tastings at Enoteca Turi, London; 25th harvest

2022 vertical of Morus Alba® 2005 to 2020 during Ein Prosit, Udine

2021 vertical of Morus Nigra® 2003 to 2019 at FIVI, Piacenza

2020 article by Rose Murray Brown MW in The Scotsman

2019 vertical of Pittoti Sauvignon 1991 to 2016 at Enoteca Tabarro, Parma

2018 Conde Naste Traveller article featuring Duline

2017 start of stem inclusion in Refosco Morus Nigra

2017 'E'un vino paesaggio' book about Duline by Simonetta Lorigliola (Derive Approdi), subtitled 'Practices and theories of a planetary winemaker in Friuli.'

2016 1st release of pure Sauvignon from Ronco Pitotti

2014 2ha of Duline lost in 1956, bought again

2013 1st release of Ronco Pitotti Pinot Nero

2008 1st Tre Bicchieri in Gambero Rosso for Morus Nigra® 2005

2013 Massimo Poldelmengo's land art exhibiton in Ronco Pitotti – the altar / pyramid

2013 vertical of Ronco Pitotti Pinot Nero 1992 to 2012 at Enoteca Tabarro, Parma

2005 and 2009: birth of the girls in the house at Duline

2005 1st entry in a wine guide, Veronelli

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2003 Wedding celebration at Duline
2001 Federica & Lorenzo take on Ronco Pitotti
1999 1st 'official' vintage, including Morus Alba® and Morus Nigra®
1999 undertake BD farming course; build wooden house at Duline
1997 Federica & Lorenzo take on La Duline; Duline is certified organic
1990s (early) Lorenzo starts to help grandfather Mario
1992 Ronco Pitotti is certified organic
1979 start of 'practising-organic' at Ronco Pitotti by Franco Valori
1920s Lorenzo's grandparents first plant vines at La Duline

Corks & Casks:

CORK : Since 2017, TCA tested by Aeffe of Sardinia & J.Vigas of Catalonia. The latter are also nosed by University of Udine in a research program.

CASKS: Mastro Bottaio for 500L demi-muids with 5 years stave aging, 5cm thick staves, un-toasted. Cadus for 225L casks with 2.5cm stave thickness.

Q&A:

Q: What are currently the main concerns at your estate (eg. global warming, biodiversity, water, barrels, single-use plastics, closures, the market, price inflation, etc.?)

A: We are working to improve our consciousness about these things, and make them real, not just 'trendy'

Q: Does the estate grow anything besides grapes?

A: Daughters, horses, mulberries, bees, etc.

Q: Best books or articles you have read?

A: Le sol, La Terre et Les Champs, by Claude and Lydia Bourguignon (Sang de La Terre.)
The One Straw Revolution, by Masanobu Fukuoka.

Q: Best food pairings with your wines?

A: Sea for whites, best friends for reds

Q: Aside from your own wines, what do you enjoy drinking?

A: We don't drink our wines at home nor in restaurants! We love to taste salty and rich in terroir wines from all over the world; Federica sometimes loves an Americano cocktail.

Q: Name of the winery dog/cat/alligator?

A: Too many! 7 cats, 3 geese, 27 ducks and two horses! (NB this keeps changing.)

Chioma Integrale® - a small compendium:

Aka untrimmed shoots / integral foliage. From '*E'un vino paesaggio*' by Simonetta Lorigliola.

1. Significantly increased resistance to water stress. The untrimmed plant always has deeper roots than a trimmed one, because there is a mirror effect between the aerial and underground vegetation. The more widespread root system allows greater exploration in the soil, which has benefits on nutrition & water supply. In a clipped plant, the females grow during the entire vegetative season, inducing greater need for water which can lead to water stress.

2. Greater climatic adaptation of the vine. Which translates into a continuous balance over the years. The plant regulates itself. Even with climate change. It responds in a more adequate and balanced way to the conditions of the vintage. For example, it produces longer

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shoots in years when light is low, and shorter shoots when there is plenty of heat and light: the plant regulates itself. The "sensors" of the vine are right on the vegetative apexes.

3. An increase in the quality of tannins and polyphenols in reds. In the production of an uncropped plant their quantity is greater, because the plant concentrates on the maturation of its seed, the grape seed. This allows, through long macerations, to extract after a month and a half extraordinary tannins, key elements in the conservation and refinement of the wine.

4. A *chioma integrale* vine does not need to be defoliated. In this way the old leaves are not eliminated, positioned next to the bunches, wrongly considered useless and parasitic. They are the main producers of antioxidants, which are transferred in the grape and in the wine.

5. The result of *chioma integrale* is always the production of well-ripened grapes, of physiological maturity, and well balanced. Sugar and therefore alcohol content are generally lower, which preserves the freshness of the wine. The integral crown allows to align the physiological maturity with the technological one.

By Kermit Lynch:

'...it was minus 18 degrees centigrade when I landed in Munich, and after the short hop to Venice, I couldn't take a water taxi to my hotel because the lagoon was frozen. Imagine that. There was, however, a bright side—I had Venice pretty much to myself, because hardly anyone else ventured outside. How rare is that? Venice without the mobs.

How wines are discovered can be of interest, I hope. The wines of Hubert de Montille, for example. I was tasting at Romanée Conti back in 1975 and André Noblet told me he considered de Montille the best winemaker in Burgundy. Henri Mayer? I saw his name in a little list of gold medal winners at the Mâcon wine fair. Leonard Humbrecht? In 1981 he strode largely into my hole-in-the-wall wine shop in Albany, CA, bearing samples. And Vignai da Duline? At a restaurant in Venice one painfully frozen night three years ago, two pals and I were the only clients. When the proprietor poured Duline's Pinot Grigio into my glass, I almost yelled Eureka!, or Halleluiah! I didn't, however, because that's not my style. But there I was, on a cruel night, drinking the best Pinot Grigio of my life. It was what I'd dreamed the Pinot Grigio could be during forty years of endlessly entertaining trips to the Friuli.

Vignai da Duline is my style, and three years later the magic produced by the seven hectare property is now available. Vignai da Duline is on my all-star team. I found gold from those beautiful Friuli hills—finesse, touch, and class. Delicious AND interesting.'

Article Links:

2020: www.rosemurraybrown.com/rose-uncut/articles/holistic-viticulture-in-friuli (by Rose Murray Brown MW in The Scotsman newspaper.)

2018: www.cntraveler.com/story/friuli-venezia-giulia-is-an-italy-far-removed-from-its-stereotypes

2015: uncorkeditaly.com/vignai-da-duline-spiritual-wine/

By David Harvey with Lorenzo Mocchiutti & Federica Magrini. Revised 2023.

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