# GILBERT & GAILLARD

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SPRING 2014



COVER STORY

## CHINA: A TWO-HEADED WINE DRAGON!

Winston Wong, from Sens Wine Cellar, Hong Kong

STARS AND WINE



Sandra Bullock



Mickaël Douglas

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REPORTS

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# The wine renaissance in APULIA

For decades, this large region of Southern Italy has been a source of cask wine marketed in more northerly regions. However 15 years ago, Apulia became an important focal point for quality wine in Italy and continues to be so today. This is even truer for native vines, including Nero in Troia, Bombardino in Daunia and on Murge plateau, Primitivo in the Taranto area and Negroamaro in Salento. The region also demonstrates incredible potential for the production of great red wines for ageing.

BY ROGER SESTO



A BEAUTIFUL BUNCH OF NERO DI TROIA GRAPES

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A large and diversified area with a plentiful range of denominations, Apulia has for many years been a substantial source of wine, producing 7 million hectolitres every year. Today, despite the fact that some parts have yet to move on, other areas are extremely dynamic and have experienced a quantum increase in quality. The main wine areas are mostly in the plains. In the North is San Savero, in Daunia (Fg) where Montepulciano, Trebbiano d'Abruzzo and Bombino Bianco are widespread. Moving South towards Bari, after a series of less significant 'Doc' wines, is one of the most dynamic regional denominations, Castel del Monte. It is remarkable above all for its red varieties, spearheaded by Nero di Troia, a previously maligned vine variety that is now showing its full potential, and competes with a few Aglianico, Montepulciano and Bombino. Another noteworthy wine in this area is the sweet Moscato di Trani. Moving on to the Doc Locorotondo and Martina, is the historical denomination of Primitivo di Manduria. It doesn't particularly boast a strong image but is currently demonstrating unexpected organoleptic qualities, with dark ripe fruit and spices that make it a flexible wine in spite of its extremely high alcohol content. The last area is Salento with its traditional wine regions: Brindisi, Salice Salentino, Alezio Squinzano, Matino and many others. These revolve mostly around Negroamaro and Malvasia Nera of Brindisi, in addition to minor varieties, such as Sussumanuello, that have been rediscovered. Here, red and rosé wines have a delicate spiced character, with pleasant hints of oriental incense and ripe fruit, layered over a fine-grain tannin texture.

# THE MOST CAPABLE WINEGROWERS OF APULIA, BY AREA

## DAUNIA

### D'Alfonso del Sordo: focusing (successfully) on a single varietal Nero di Troia

The tradition of wine making in the D'Alfonso del Sordo family dates back to the 18th century, when family members began growing vines on the family estate located in the San Severo countryside. The company has always been family-run in order to protect the wine making traditions of Puglia. In 2001, this commitment led to a research convention with the University of Foggia aimed at promoting the Troia grape. "Wines with a substantial cellaring capacity", says owner Gianfelice D'Alfonso Del Sordo, "represent the best our cellar can produce and, after a number of vintages, they provide proof of how well a company has performed over the years". When asked to choose the company's finest offering, Gianfelice D'Alfonso Del Sordo says, "The Guado San Leo, sourced from 40-year-old vines. It was created in 2001 when we decided to focus successfully on producing a single varietal Nero di Troia - pure nectar".

### D'Araprì: San Severo classic method

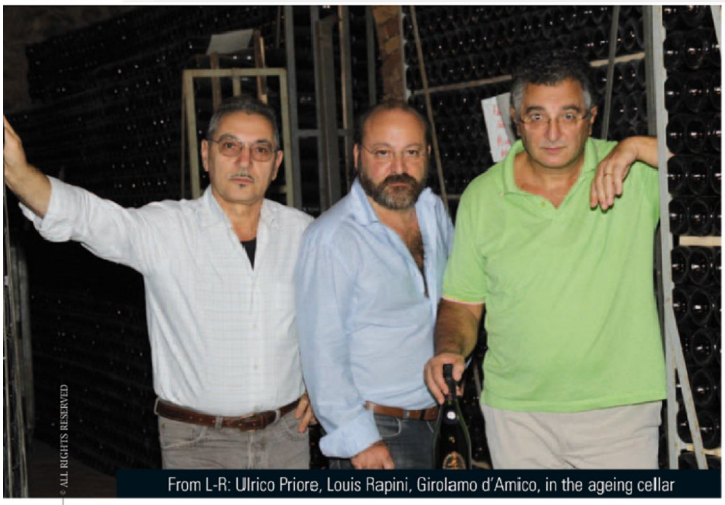
In 1979, three friends - Girolamo d'Amico, Louis Rapini and Ulrico Priore - wanted to promote the San Severo (Foggia) region by producing an innovative wine: a classic method 'spumante' made from Bombino Bianco. They started out just for fun, but now produce 80,000 bottles a year. "The wine", d'Amico stresses, "is the result of the interaction between a region, vines and man. Everything we do in the vineyard - a combination of local customs, experience and state-of-the-art techniques - aims to protect this balance". Asked about the region's history of producing lesser wines, d'Amico says, "There are thousands of wines here, but ours aims to be one that epitomises humanity and remembrance. It can generate emotions and be remembered. A wine that cannot evolve is mute. Also, by using Bombino we strengthen our connection with the region's identity". The spumante's ageability is due to, "the Maiella mountain and the Gargano promontory protecting us: there is no frost, great ventilation, a good heat range and chalky-clayish soils with silt and sand enjoying a favourable aspect. Bombino Bianco has become so acclimatised here that it ripens at the end of September even in hot, drought-stricken years. It also maintains impeccably high acidity which, together with moderate alcoholic strength, makes this the perfect vineyard for classic method spumante!"



VALERIA PITTA AMONG HER BELOVED VINEYARDS IN LUCERA

### Masseria nel Sole and the relaunch of Cacc' Mmitte

Masseria nel Sole is located in Tavoliere di Puglia (Table of Apulias) and Contrada Zaccara in Lucera (Foggia). Valeria Pitta is the cellar's owner together with her brother Gianni – architect and creator of the modern labels adorning the firm's bottles – and her father Bruno. She tells us: "My grandparents were day labourers. My father's father was a curatolo, or farmer. They lived a life of sacrifice to feed their children. Although they worked for the local landowner, they never stopped loving the land and passed their passion on to all of us, particularly my father. Even though he had another job, he paid them back by buying a farm as soon as he had the resources to do so". After graduating with a degree in law in 2006, Valeria decided to move to Milan but, in spite of her love for the Lombard city, the call of her homeland was so strong that a year later she decided to return to Lucera. "In 2008 my parents created an organic farm in Masseria del Sole. The same year my father decided to plant a vineyard and in 2011 we started producing wine. From the 2013 vintage we started using our small, but functional and modern cellar. I wanted to produce wine here in Lucera, and above all produce a Doc wine from my village, Cacc'e Mmitte. Our oenologist is the young Cristiano Chiloiro, an Apulian by birth and Romagnan by adoption. He has instilled enthusiasm in all of us and has supported us by organising our vineyard professionally". The company now owns 4.6 hectares of vineyards (grapes: Montepulciano, Nero di Troia, Falanghina, Bombino Bianco) and produces 10,000 bottles, half of them classic method spumante including one no dosage vintage made from Bombino and Falanghina. Since 2013, the red wines are certified Doc Cacc' Mmitte and a new product will soon be launched - Diabolik.O.


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From L-R: Ulrico Priore, Louis Rapini, Girolamo d'Amico, in the ageing cellar

techniques, all of which are geared to enhancing sense of place in the wines. Moderate use of barrels and an end to use of stabilisation and filtering procedures for some wines allows well-structured, highly distinctive nectars, with good fruit and tannins to be produced. So what is the secret of the longevity of the estate's Nero di Troia? "Its richness in polyphenols and acidity", explains owner Roberto Perrone Capano. The most representative wine from his cellar, he believes is, "From a volume perspective and for its quality-price ratio I would say Castel del Monte Doc Rosso Vigna del Melograno from Nero di Troia. It is the result of visually selected vines in a vineyard over thirty years old".

## THE MURGE AND BARI AREA

### Rivera: tannins are a guarantee of longevity

Riviera was founded in 1950 in Adria by the De Corato family who have played a part in promoting Castel del Monte's wine tradition for three generations. "Producing a wine with true longevity originally began as a consequence of the vine types grown in specific areas," says owner Sebastiano. "Varieties with high tannin content produce wines that need to be oak and bottle-aged before being marketed. They aren't particularly pleasant to drink in their youth, but their organoleptic features can improve significantly, like for instance Nebbiolo, Sangiovese, Aglianico and our Nero di Troia". Regarding the latter, Sebastiano says, "In the Castel del Monte area it is the most archetypal vine variety; its richness in tannins makes it suitable for producing wines for cellaring. In the past, this was challenging and blending with 'softer' varieties like Montepulciano was inevitable, in addition to lengthy cellar ageing. But as time passed, by tasting old vintages of Il Falcone (70% Nero di Troia and 30% Montepulciano), a wine the same age as the company, we realised that this was actually a quality feature. Today we are very proud of this wine, even though we tried and successfully managed to soften the aggressiveness of the tannins in its youth".

### Santa Lucia: advanced technology with a scent of history

The first trace of this estate dates back to 1628. The first topographic map of the vineyard is from 1849, whilst the cellar map is dated 1822. Santa Lucia wines – red and single-varietal, despite the local trend for blends – are made from native varieties from 15 hectares of vineyards to the West of Corato, on the hills of Murgia at 300 m above sea level. Nero di Troia, Bombino Nero, Negroamaro, Aleatico and Fiano are the varieties grown. The vines are grown organically - no chemicals are used, only sulphur and copper. Additionally, native varieties are visually selected, canopy management is rigorous, average planting density is 5,500 vines/hectare and the historic cellar uses modern

## THE TARANTO AREA

### Attanasio: old vineyards, an essential heritage

The Attanasio family has been producing Primitivo di Manduria for four generations. The first vintage was bottled in 2000 and owner Giuseppe Attanasio took exclusive care of viticulture. The intuition of his sons Luca and Alessandro enabled the family to restart making and bottling a Primitivo di Manduria. The company's vineyards fan out in the South between the Ionian Sea and Manduria and are composed of dark clayish soils and chalkier red soils. They are all 50 years old and the Primitivo is half trained as small trees and half using a cordon system. Traditional vineyard management techniques are used: use of machinery is kept to a minimum as are agrochemicals, organic fertilisation and green manure are used, and the vines are pruned by hand to protect the plant and the final product. This is a delicate phase that Luca Attanasio is passionate about: "Only whole, ripe and tasty


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From L-R: Carlo, Marco, Sebastiano De Corato with the company's vineyard in the background




grapes can allow a typical wine to be created. Primitivo puts us to the test: it is demanding and needs sun and light. If it has everything it needs, it rewards us with well-balanced, generous and soft wines, with good balance of alcohol and fruit".

## Gianfranco Fino: those small ninety-year-old trees...

The company was established in 2004 when a diminutive 1.3 ha vineyard in the Manduria countryside was purchased. Today, the vineyard spreads over 14.5 ha. From the outset, the company's mission has been to produce wine from vineyards 50-90 years old that are 'alberello' trained (in small trees) to impart personality and sense of place to the wines. "I've always tried to create immediately enjoyable wines", explains Gianfranco Fino, "but also ones that can withstand the passing of time. This is how I designed my Primitivo di Manduria Es, an extremely long-living wine. My aim was also to debunk the myth that this type of wine wasn't suitable for ageing". So what gives Es its long-lasting qualities? "Vineyard and *terroir* are interdependent. Primitivo matures early, a positive aspect in this semi-dry environment where early-ripening cultivars are ready when water stress has yet to kick in. Moreover, harvesting during the second half of August also means good temperature ranges. Primitivo tends to naturally wither on the plant, hence concentrating sugar and acidity. The use of old vines helps. In the cellar, the variety's thin skin promotes extraction of anthocyanins. Finally, the use of barrels is a prerequisite for obtaining Primitivo with longevity".




ROBERTO PERRONE CAPANO, OWNER OF SANTA LUCIA


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GIANFRANCO FINO WITH HIS WIFE SIMONA, OWNER OF THE COMPANY OF THE SAME NAME

## Vinicola Savese:
### concrete tanks and 'capasoni' jars

In 1951, the cellar was located in an underground winery with concrete tanks and wooden presses in the centre of Sava, a town in the Taranto area. Warehouses were then built and were initially used for producing cask wine followed by bottled Primitivo in 1972. In July 2012 the firm was modernised: Viticola Savese moved to a more practical cellar in the industrial area of Sava. However, this didn't mean a total break with the past - the new cellar also houses underground concrete and vitrified tanks cherished by the Pichierri family, as they were considered an essential component for producing Primitivo. Another distinctive feature is the use of 'capasone', an enamelled terracotta jar used for winemaking that has never been abandoned in the history of Sava. The technique is deemed to be the most respectful of the wine's inherent qualities: unlike wood, terracotta isn't invasive. Therefore, a 'capasonaia' was installed in the new winery. Owner Vittorio Pichierri points out, "We use winemaking techniques that have been handed down for generations, coupled with careful work in the vineyard aimed at respecting plants and varieties. Sava Dolce Naturale and Tradizione del Nonno Secco are our two leading wines".

## THE GREAT SALENTO

## Agricole Vallone:
### Graticciaia, an absolute world-beater

Agricole Vallone was established in 1934 by the Vallone family and is now managed by Vittoria and Maria Teresa. It consists of 161 ha of vineyard and 100 ha of olive trees and is one of the cellars that has contributed to the international reputation of Salento wines. The estate is divided into three farms: Flaminio estate in the Brindisi countryside, where the winery and very soon the bottling and ageing cellar are located; Iore estate in the environs of San Pancrazio Salentino; and Castel Serranova estate near Carovigno and Brindisi. Many generations of the Vallone family have combined their passion for agriculture and wine with other interests such as finance, medicine and architecture, but for over 20 years Vittoria and Maria Teresa have been devoting themselves entirely to the farm. The property's leading wine is the absolute world-beater Gratticciaia, produced from a careful selection of Negramaro grapes from old, 'alberello'-trained vineyards. First the grapes are ripened, then they are left withering on the trellis. When the withering is complete, the grapes can be used to make wine. Ageing in Allier and Nevers oak barrels lasts 12 months, creating a wine with great personality and impressive longevity.

## Apollonio: the challenge is to create wines lasting over twenty years

Even though the earliest documents date back to 1870, Monteroni was already active at the beginning of the 18th century. It is now managed by Massimiliano and Marcello Apollonio, respectively wine maker and sales manager. Marcello points out, "We are targeting the international market more than the domestic one. We sell to 35 countries, even though originally our customers were from France and Piedmont". The company's vineyards are 'alberello'-trained and produce between 20 and 70 quintals of grapes/ha. "The small tree," explains Massimiliano, "allows the grapes to ripen impeccably and slowly. Fermentations and long macerations are carried out in truncated cone-shaped oak vats. Primitivo is matured in American barrels, the other wines in French oak. After 6-12 months ageing for classic wines and 24-72 months for reserve wines, the wine is transferred to large oak barrels from Slavonia


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A TYPICAL BUNCH OF PRIMITIVO GRAPES

for a few months then bottled unfiltered. After a final 6-12 months of bottle ageing, it is marketed". The flagship label here is the long-lasting Copertino Rosso Riserva Divoto.

## Candido: vine variety and *terroir* make all the difference

The company, which is located between Guagnano and San Donaci in the heart of Salento, was established in 1929 when Francesco Candido built the first part of the San Donaci winery to process grapes produced on around 400 hectares of family-owned vineyards. The first bottles carrying the Candido brand were produced in the late 50s, once a well-equipped winery and cellar for ageing and bottling wine had been installed. Today, Alessandro and Giacomo head up the company and pay reverence to the bond established with the region over the decades. This is enhanced by organic production methods. Alessandro and Giacomo believe the longevity of their wines is due to their "choice of vine variety, the local '*terroir*' and cellar techniques". They believe the wine with the greatest longevity is their "Duca d'Aragona, produced since the early 80s as an innovative interpretation of Negroamaro, softened by Montepulciano".

## Castello Monaci: it is possible to combine quality and quantity!

On the way to Taranto, not far from Lecce and the sea, on the outskirts of Salice Salentino in Contrada Monaci, is Castello Monaci, owned by Gruppo Italiano Vini. Surrounded by vineyards and century-old olive trees, it was founded in 1480 and now boasts 200 hectares of land producing 2 million bottles every year; 60% of these are sold in Italy and 40% abroad, above all in Germany, Japan and the United States. The cellar's foremost labels include Salice Salentino Doc Riserva Aiace, produced from a classic Salento blend of 80% Negroamaro and 20% Malvasia Nera. The vineyards grow on chalky, clayey, siliceous soils that are very deep and dry. Average yield is 80 quintals of grapes/ha. Wine making is carried out in steel fermentation vats at controlled temperatures, with 2 weeks maceration and daily pumping over. Once malolactic fermentation is finished, the wine ages for 12 months in barrels of first and second use, before being stored in a larger barrel for another 12 months. Afterwards, it settles for 6 months in the bottle in an air-conditioned environment. The result is a well-structured, elegant and full-bodied nectar with complex aromas, that is warm and harmonious with a persistent finish.

## Counts Zecca: top clones in the most suitable areas

In 1580, Count Zecca moved from Salento to Naples and started intense farming. Conti Zecca is now managed by Alcibiade, Francesco, Luciano and Mario Zecca. The 320 ha of vineyards located between Leverano and Salice Salentino, are divided between Tenuta Donna Marzia, Tenuta Saraceno, Tenuta Santo Stefano and Tenuta Cantalupi. "The backbone of a wine capable of maturing over a lengthy period of time is total symbiosis between surroundings and winery. We are first and foremost vine growers", says Francesco Zecca. "The Nero, our top wine, originated from an experiment using Negroamaro and Cabernet-Sauvignon clones in different pedo-climatic areas within the 320 hectares owned by the company. Cabernet is taken from Tenuta Cantalupi, whereas Negroamaro comes from a forty-year-old vineyard around Leverano, which has old clones capable of producing grapes rich in tannins. The Nero has a strong identity and has to be considered as a long-term investment, meant for an expert audience of connoisseurs who love to discover the evolution of a wine and are ready to wait some years before uncorking a bottle".


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OWNER ALESSANDRO CANDIDO TASTING IN A BARREL CELLAR

## Leone de Castris: you bet Negroamaro can mature!

Leone de Castris was established in 1665. In 1925 it was the first cellar to bottle wines in Apulia and in 1943 the first to produce bottled rosé wine, the Five Roses. Today it focuses production on the main Doc wines from Salento, especially on the Doc Salice Salentino, which it boosted significantly in 1954 by creating the Rosso Salice. The Castris winery's leading wine is Salice Salentino Doc Rosso Riserva Donna Lisa (90% Negroamaro, 10% Malvasia Nera of Lecce).

The grapes are sourced from Puglia 'alberello'-trained vines, which are 70 years old and very densely planted (7,000 vines/ha) with extremely




low yields (50 quintals of grapes/ha). Ageing in French oak barrels lasts 18 months and is followed by at least 6 months of ageing in the bottle. "The basis of creating a wine for ageing", states owner Nicola Leone de Castris, "is the will to bring out the finest qualities of the Salice Salentino region via its foremost grape variety, Negroamaro. The variety can mature well over the course of time, like just a few other Italian varieties".

## SEVERINO GAROFANO VINEYARDS AND CELLARS (AZIENDA MONACI):

### Negroamaro and sense of place

In 2013 the Copertino company (Lecce) celebrated its 18th anniversary. It was an important milestone, symbolised by greater emphasis on the family's identity. Until then, emphasis had been placed on the name of the manor farm Li Monaci, where the company is located; now attention has shifted to the name Severino Garofano, who has taken on the lead role in all the company's advertisements. In 1995, Garofano founded the cellar, which is now managed by his sons Stefano and Renato. He is a passionate Salento storyteller, using not words to recount the story of this exciting part of Apulia, but the wines he produces with a great sense of place. The native Negroamaro grape is the primary source of inspiration for his labels and each of them has a story, with suggestions of unique, sun-filled Mediterranean locations in the glass. Leading wines from the Copertino cellar include Le Braci, a complex wine obtained from extreme withering of Negroamaro grapes that already begin to develop their potential during ageing in small wooden barrels.

### Valle dell'Asso: using vertical tastings to explain the product

Luigi Vallone's company, which is located in Galatina (Lecce), was originally established in 1820, then re-established in 1920. It focuses heavily on Negroamaro, a part of Salento's wine growing history. "I joined the company in 2003 and wanted to restore the local tradition of preserving the best part of production in order to demonstrate our skills down the years", says Ezio D'Oria, organisation manager. "As I couldn't find a wine library, I convinced the property to set aside 1,000 bottles of Piromáfo 1999 (100% Negroamaro) forming the basis of our future wine library. I also connected the climatic features of different vintages to the traits of the various wines, so as to provide an explanation for the differences and present the product. Being able to comment on the Piromáfo and demonstrate the ageing potential of Negroamaro proved highly successful". Asked whether preferring long-term products to wines with instant drinkability was a strategic choice, Ezio D'Oria says, "I don't think so. You try to reconstruct and




FROM L-R: ELIO MINOLA (WINE MAKER), OWNER LUIGI VALLONE (KNOWN AS DON GINO)AND SALES MANAGER EZIO D'ORIA

recount a product's success story only with hindsight. Also, producing commercial wines means facing a price war that isn't worth fighting". He convinced the property to set aside part of its wines by trying "to get them to understand that, once the concept had been explained to consumers, it would generate extra value for the company, in turn boosting image and financial returns". ■