



PODERE PAVOLINI
BACEDASCO ALTO

Bubble's Philosophy

by

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History and Earth

PASSWORD: VALUE

For three generations, my Terzoni family, cultivates its own vineyards, located in the hills of the Val d'Arda, in place Paolini Bacedasco Alto, in the municipality of Vernasca, hosting also the winery and the farm.

The company has been led for more than half a century by Luigi who, according to the customs of the time, has produced and marketed wines, mostly unpackaged, of the territory DOC - Colli Piacentini.

In the 80's the son Graziano has returned from studies in Alba, where he graduated high Eno-technician, and with the application of new theories and knowledge was promoted to official Winemaker.

Passion, handed down from father to son, and the spirit of innovation have merged into the single aim of exploiting the grapes grown in this area, unknown to large crowds, but always appreciated and suitable for the production of grapes of excellent quality. The vineyards cover an area of 5 hectares of hilly land, with variable slopes from 5 to 12% and heights between 200 and 250 meters above sea level. The country care has relied on the experience of Luigi who, with love and feeling, follows all steps of growth of the grapes. By these grapes Graziano produces about 30,000 bottles of wine, divided between red and white wines; classic method sparkling wines, still and sweet wines. With the desire to test and the goad of understanding, Graziano has accumulated considerable experience, gained also for collaborations with great Winemakers and curious Researchers. This expertise of knowledge is the foundation of a great character and quality of the Terzoni's wines, appreciated and recognized even beyond the provincial boundaries.

PASSWORD: TYPICALITY AND TRADITION

The soils of these Piacenza hills have pliocene origins, have great depth and are greatly fossil. The Piacentian consists almost exclusively of sand and gray blue clay. These soils are historically belonged to the Duchy of Parma (1545-1859), an area well known for the love of the good life and good food, which over the centuries has allowed to develop DOP products known and appreciated all around the world. In the long history of the Duchy, which spans more than three centuries and had wars and skirmishes, the Duchess Maria Luigia of Austria, formerly the wife of Napoleon, left a special mark. The regent is still remembered by Piacenza and Parma as a character worthy of great respect and affection, leading one of the best governments in the history of the duchy. The work of Maria Luigia has affected not only the lifestyle of the territory, which since 1800 has experienced a long period of prosperity. This enabled the people to devote themselves to appreciate good food and good wine.

Love of Parma and Parma citizens for the former duchess is such that every year meetings in his honor are organized and the tomb of Maria Luigia, in the Crypt of the Capuchins in Vienna, is the destination of pilgrimages and tributes of violets, one of the symbols of the ducal city.

The Philosophy

It is the sum of a host of action-packed days: the good days are marvellous while the bad days simply provide us with experiences to learn from.

I seek oenological success by focusing on the final result that is poured into the glass, hunting out the best solution in every situation. I take experimental paths, forging ahead beyond the result already achieved, accompanied by the doubts and the certainties of agronomy, biology and physics.

Money does not occupy the first place in my scale of values because I am determined not to be a slave to or dependent on a faith that could vanish from one moment to the next.

I adore being active, making a living and creating work, and then going back to dedicate time to my bottles. What I strive for, first and foremost, is an emotion that can be shared: it is very gratifying when I speak with the “santi bevitori” (holy drinkers) and they tell me that they are pleased and satisfied with my wine, my work.

THE HAUTE COUTURE OF THE OENOLOGIST

I want to have a vision of my products while remaining somehow on the outside, very self-critically, in order to be able to assess my own work better. An oenologist is rather like a tailor: after examining the fabric, he takes his needle and thread and creates something completely new that must be pleasing to the eye of the admirer. The magic word is ELEGANCE.

I do my utmost to create elegant wines, where one sip leads to another. So I seek high quality tannins, delicate aromas and harmony in the taste and finish. Even at the expense of power and muscularity, which a tailor would cover with his best fabrics. I have realised that in a wine an elegant “nose” goes hand in hand with an elegant mouthfeel, while a powerful nose is almost always accompanied by a less harmonious, almost excessive, mouthfeel. This exaggeration is not necessarily a negative thing, but the scenario of my ideal wine is this: two friends meet, open a bottle, sit down to chat and in half an hour the bottle is empty!

This is my goal.

MY REGION

I adore the grapes from my region: autochthonous grapes considered in the oenological world as “differently-abled”. I used to regret not having been born in a more famous oenological area, where wine is a widespread passion: in Piedmont, Franciacorta, Friuli or maybe even Champagne. But now I see things from a different perspective: I move around, I keep up to date and I share, with a selectfew, the passion always to strive to do better.

I have realised that Malvasia, Ortrugo, Fortana and Bonarda, the grapes from my region, are always going to rank second if we continue to equate them with and subject them to the same methods as Pinot, Chardonnay and Sauvignon. What I mean is that, if we limit ourselves to copying the winemaking processes of these historic wines, we cannot hope to obtain the best possible results from our local wines. Our grapes need to breathe deeply, to rest unhurriedly, to be awakened gently. Our grapes need a special kind of process appropriate to their characteristics, which brings out their best qualities. The wine Amarone, for example, only became great because in its area of origin a processing method appropriate to the grape was adopted: the drying of the grapes on wooden racks creates the conditions for obtaining a great wine from a Valpolicella.

SPARKLING WINES

Bottle-fermented sparkling wines have always been my passion because I was born in an area, the province of Piacenza, where a second fermentation in the bottle is a process with age-old origins. Ever since the Great War, all the bottles produced in the area of Piacenza (approx. 30 million) were filled with a wine that presented a natural sugar residue. With the arrival of the first warm Spring days, these bottles would begin to froth ("far la spuma"). Nowadays we would speak of a "second fermentation". This is the "ancestral method", the established method that had always been used throughout the world to obtain sparkling wine. Remuage and degorgement to remove cloudiness have only recently been applied, due to the need to market and transport the wine outside of its area of production, for consumers that are more distant in terms of space or time. In the 1960s the hilly area surrounding Piacenza – the Colli Piacentini – was the only part of Italy that produced only sparkling wines. Then in the mid-seventies, with the economic and consumer boom, those infernal pressurised vats known as autoclaves (even the name is ugly) started to spread and gradually industrialised and trivialised the method of producing sparkling wines.

The second fermentation in the bottle has always held a particular fascination for me because each bottle is a unique item, which comes from the cultural, ancestral heritage of my region, shared by very few other parts of the world! The local, naturally generous, cuisine, has always gone down well with a bottle of good wine, which with its refreshing sparkle prepares the taste buds to savour every morsel.

MY IDEA OF SPARKLING WINE

- Harvest the grapes at the right time, depending on the vineyard in question
- The late grapes, which are slow to ripen, those that are harvested in October, give the best results.
- Three fermentations: the first, which produces the alcohol; malolactic fermentation (always!) which ennobles the taste; the second fermentation in the bottle which produces the fine bubbles.

- A low pH, close to 3, where the perfect balance of the three acids in the grape becomes fundamental for guaranteeing harmony.
 - No bitter notes
 - Fine bubbles in surplage
 - Full, harmonious, clean nose with myriad nuances.
 - Service to the customer: impeccable! After so much work we can't just use any old glasses, maybe even washed in the dishwasher with rinse aid!
- Elsewhere I shall write about the correct way of drinking the wine (not tasting, but drinking).

THE WHITE AND THE RED

All the wines I produce are the fruit of passion and of a desire to improve that impels me to carry out advanced oenological research in order to draw attention to the merits of my region. I use imagination to put the rules of biology and physics into practice, working with natural methods. I shun alchemy! Old ideas practised by people who demonstrate neither care nor passion and who only seek shortcuts, hoping to scale mountains. A few hours more or a variation of a few degrees Centigrade make the difference between error and excellence.

The techniques for protecting the musts from oxygen through inert gas or hyperoxidation (the exact opposite of the first) are physical solutions that I use depending on the result I wish to obtain in the glass. When appropriate, I leave the grapes to infuse in the musts; I know that, in this way, I could obtain a more muscular, more full-bodied product but I pay careful attention to aspects like bitterness, low acidity and excess of oxidizable tannins.

If I could I would squeeze the grapes one by one between my thumb and index finger because I would obtain even more extract, a low, better buffered pH (which would allow me to carry out malolactic fermentation thanks to a better balance between the acids) and above all a longer lasting wine.

When I want to develop the thiol perfumes typical of many aromatic grapes such as our Malvasia Aromatica di Candia, I have to harvest the grapes before the sun burns the aromas, and rush into the winery: make the wine within 2 hours, protect it from oxidation, and extract the juice very gently.

During the 2014 harvest I experimented with an extremely long cold pressing which seemed to give to the Piacenza version of Bonarda that particular elegance that I had never managed to find in Bonarda up until then.

Just with a bit of imagination, daring to venture down new experimental paths, and with some biological and technological knowledge, it is possible to produce wines that are very representative of the area. I shall continue in my pursuit of quality for the consumer, knowing that the more biological/physical errors there are, the further away we are from offering the very best that our region can offer. If anyone is interested in finding out more about these new techniques and these wines. ... pop in and see me at the winery and we'll have a good drink together.

Drinking a champenoise is an unique experience

Drinking a champenoise, the sip and the memory that a real champenoise method leaves, is possible only with the great vintages of the oldest companies, such as large maison, rarely with small producers.

Unlike the great wines, where the grapes well ripe define quality, the game of drinking the great wines bubbles is run by a chef. Although starting from the same grape varieties, it is not possible effectively to produce still wines in the Champagne region, like those of Burgundy; also, it is not possible to produce good champagne in Burgundy, despite many eminent attempts.

I think that Burgundy produces great wines and Champagne produces great elaborated drinks, using grapes difficult to ripen.

I mean that Champagne is the most important drink of all the world, because no other wine can inspire a taster to sip one wine glass after another, endless. We should investigate in the universe of soft drinks to have some faint comparison; but, they are not examples of "good drink".

Krug, Cristal, Bollinger and the other great maison de production have a skilful balance among their elements; this action keeps at a distance those who produce "classic method" using ideal grapes; they are surely able to produce enjoyable wines, but they can't inspire the continuous sip of the champenoise.

The distinction is not obviously so clear, it does not concern the areas, but the chefs; when they elaborate a wine, they have a easier task, because it is easier to achieve the balance between the components of the must starting from well ripe grapes.

In Champagne, given the extreme latitude for the cultivation of the vine, only early grapes could spread out, with a gradation barely acceptable; it was unthinkable to plant other varieties that would never matured before winter.

Reims was on the way that the Flemish merchants travelled to go and buy red wine in Beaune. But the Champagne wines did not have the softness of Burgundy, and their colour was more vermilion with elderberries.

In Ay, vigneron realized that their red wines were not competitive; whereas, with white wines, less common in the nineteenth century, they realized that they could produce interesting ones.

But the techniques, as modern, were poor and white wines produced with white grapes turned yellow and lost freshness early. Whereas, when they used Pinot Noir, obtained a very pale colour, becoming gray or barely pink depending on the year.

In this context, Dom Pierre Pérignon, a Benedictin monk, brought his inventive and, successfully, tried to produce a white wine from red grapes. He tried first and almost visionary a way that no one else in the world had hitherto followed.

Even before discovering that the wine of the region could become better with bubbles, Dom Pierre conceived a "recipe" for making a wine; this leads me to say that "the wine is cooked in the cellar with the ingredients of the vineyard." There is no other place in the world in which wines are elaborated in the cellar.

The Pérignon's innovations are manifold and some apply only to the spirit and tastes of that age.

He proposed the only use of Pinot Noir; he was indeed opposed to white grapes because they rapidly oxidized.

He suggested to prune the vineyard with very short branches, in order to limit production. Nowadays, with the current climate, we would get an excessive concentration of sugar. In Champagne, currently, over 13,000 kg/ha of grapes are produced.

He selected the grapes, and even the berries, but he required to avoid breakage of the grain before arriving in the wine press.

He began to separate the must according to the press force in order to press the grapes! THIS IS AN UNIQUE MAGIC: no other cellar in the world applied.

- Before pressing: vin de goutte, too delicate to be drunk alone, for lack of body

- Second and third pressing: good quality wines

- Fourth pressing: rarely acceptable

- Last pressing: uninteresting wines

I wanted to brush up on the Dom Pérignon's rules in order to remember that the grape berry is terribly heterogeneous.

If we take a berry with our index finger and thumb and we softly crush it to release one drop at a time and we collect everything in a different container, we will get completely different values in chemical analysis. With excellent grapes, the first drop had a pH = 2.70, the second 3.00, the third and the fourth 3.20 and 3.30, up to more than 4 with drops pressed in more extreme way.

If a vintage is too cold, we might guess to put away the first drop and use only the next; whereas, if the season is warm, we could operate in a manner contrary.

WHY DROPS ARE NOT IDENTICAL?

Because nature is immense, because nature is not democratic, because the big fish eats the little one; but it does not take care to put the small fish in the freezer for tomorrow.

Drinking a champagne is unique! Because only Homo sapiens has intelligence and can be at the same time able to design the atomic bomb and use all the knowledge of physics, biology and chemistry to design an immeasurably pleasant drink.

Today, thanks to Dom Pierre Perignon, we can make the chef of a great drink: he had the intuition and attention to realize first potential heterogeneity of the grape. Also, we have to thank all scholars and researchers who have written countless essays about enology in order to make easier life for winemakers.

Great 'aristocrat' vintages are born from heterogeneity: the wines are made by assembling different pressings to achieve that unique balance which is often the result of months of tests.

THE GREAT "DRINKING".

The perfect balance of a great champenoise acids stimulates the taste buds and, at the end of the first sip, there is a spontaneous desire to drink another glass. As a perfectly round circle, the end of a sensation connects seamless the next one.

A great sparkling wine should be unique!

The nose is broad with hints of citrus and tropical fruits or significantly greater floral hints: this complexity remembers cream or creme caramel. These characteristics depend mainly on grapes, soil, climate, and on how the vineyard is cared for and on the accuracy of biological fermentation.

The taste must be taut as a violin string, sharp as a knife: a "razor". That's why I fell in love with this sexy beverage! Acidity entering the mouth and continuing to the esophagus looks like silk and not sandpaper. These characteristics are due to the acid composition, constituted by very much lactic (without malic) and tartaric acids and are improved by a significant amount of proteins, attenuating and extending the acidic sensations, and making, at the same time, the microscopic bubbles of CO₂.

Taste characteristics depend mainly on the chef, who runs the wine-making and is therefore called upon to interpret the 'recipe', with his knowledge and his attention to detail.

WHY DO YOU HAVE TO SUPPORT THE PERFECTLY HEALTHY AND INTACT GRAPES INTO THE WINE PRESS?

Dom Pierre Perignon proposed a fractioning of the must which is fundamental to understand the great drunk. Polyphenol, flavours, potassium and calcium are found mainly in the skin, and they can be very good elements for still wines but they are extremely negative for the great sparkling ones. Polyphenol are bitter and are anti-foaming and neutralize most of the proteins useful for us. The aromas of the skins, where they are more abundant, are terpene origin and, like all essential oils, are anti-foaming agents. They also lead to deep olfactory notes that need a high alcohol content for getting rid. Potassium and calcium are the first source of decreased acidity; it is absolutely necessary to leave them in the skins, referring to food that you intend to prepare, because they would create only problems in musts.

Whatever we do on the berry before pressing, would lead to a random mixing of substances; whereas, in order to select the musts, as we already suggested, it is essential to have intact grapes. If possible, we should make the pressing with the thumb and forefinger and we could select every drop this way.

We have to abolish all operations to facilitate the loading of the press using pumps and augers; this is because they mix the parts of the berries.

After the pressing, which is the hub of this drink, we have the other steps of winemaking: racking, alcoholic fermentation, malolactic fermentation, aging on biological mass fermentation, filtration, assembly of the different cuvées and finally bottling.

It is necessary to make every step with caution to exalt the legendary "drunk". During racking, also called clarification, you have to remove those bitter tannins undervaluing champagne. The temperature control in fermentation is vital for good quality of flavourings.

The malolactic fermentation is necessary only if you make without significantly raise the pH and this depends on the type of grape ripeness and on pressing we have done. This step is essential to remove the malic acid, which brings more harsh acidity compared to lactic acid, which is much more silky. Also, the wines with malolactic fermentation evolve better.

Even the aging of basic wines on biological mass, made up of yeast and lactic acid bacteria, is an essential step to get a great "drinking". And it is appropriate to tell an aside to debunk a myth.

Champagne and classic method wineries have, almost always, their products indicating the number of months that the wine has spent on the lees of secondary fermentation after bottling: 24 months, 36 months, 45, 60 etcetera...

Few people know exactly what it means; it is taken for granted that the longer a wine spends on lees the better it is. But it is not that!

First, it is better to explain that the yeast after fermentation dies. And it assists a lysis, that is the cell breaks down and the cytoplasm exits. This is a noble liquid containing substances enhancing the sparkling wine: aminoacids, mannoproteins, thermostable proteins, nucleic acids and many others.

These compounds give flavour to the wine and particularly allow CO₂ to dissolve more and more in the liquid to form fine bubbles; also, they attenuate the effect of bitterness and acidity and make feelings of fullness. It must specify that the content of yeast in a bottle before disgorgement is approximately 5.6 million per ml of wine cells, which after 12/18 months of contact have already paid practically all of their contents into the wine.

So, the matter is: why to keep so many months the wine on the lees in the hope that this will become better? Wine improves if all parameters are balanced, particularly sparkling wine aroma assumes tertiary notes regardless of the presence of yeast.

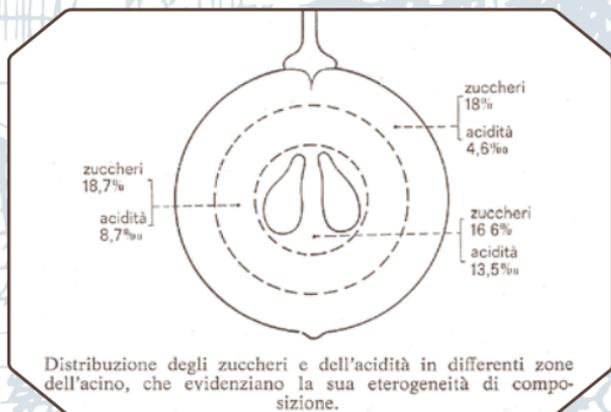
I believe that our transalpine cousins have told us the story of the months of yeast contact in order to divert our attention from what really makes the difference: the lysis of cells of all biological mass that fermented wort, including malolactic bacteria. In this case, you have a considerable amount of yeast, about 80-100 million cells per milliliter, such as those who have participated in the various steps of fermentation.

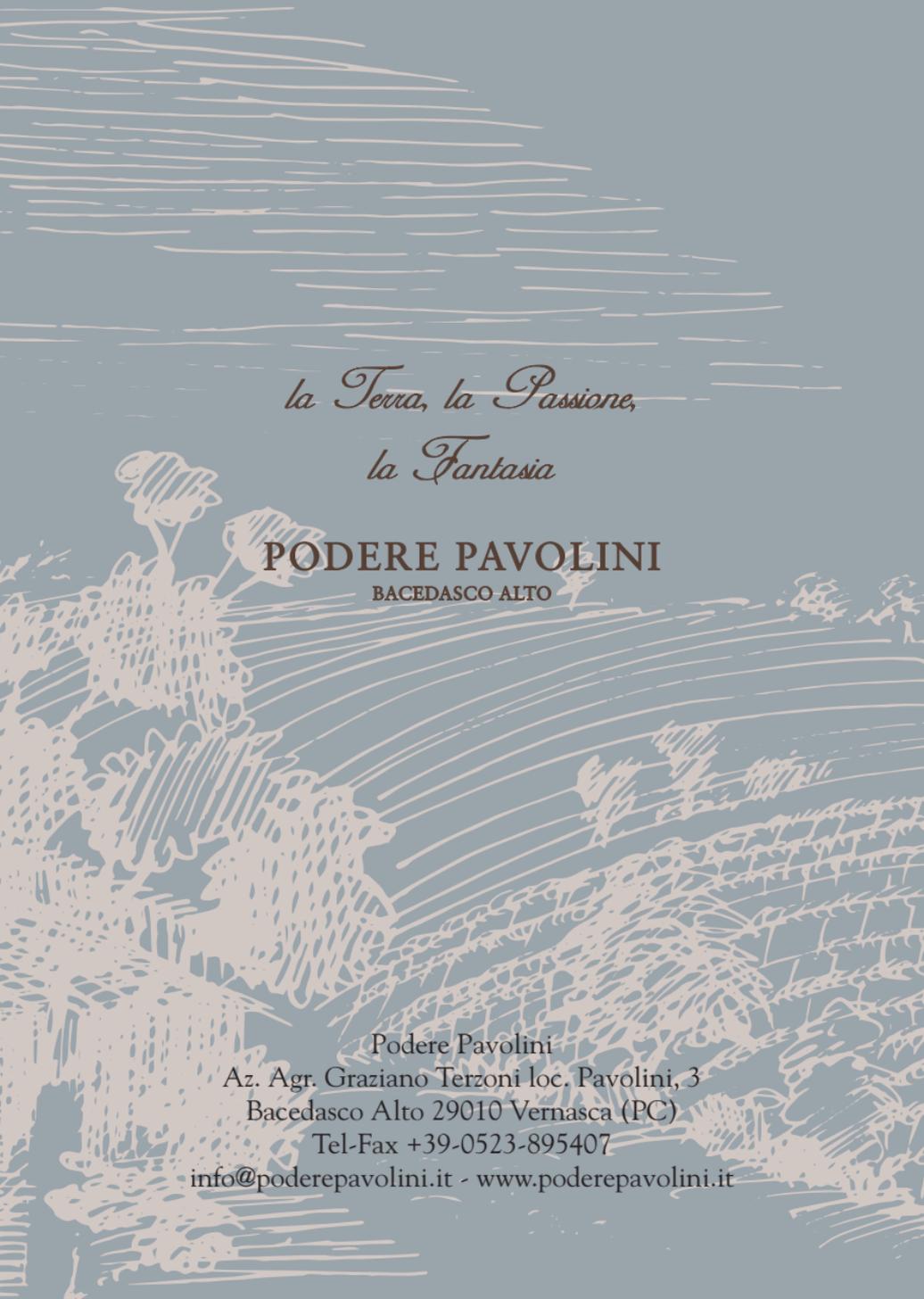
We do not necessarily have to mimic the 'recipe' of French cousins to get a great "drinking". It is not essential to use their grapes, but it is appropriate to develop our native grapes and not the earliest. It is much better to use the later varieties in our latitudes, at the fourth age, who are struggling to mature, otherwise we could not compete with Champagne.

I wrote what I know about classical method, trying to be as clear as possible; it is not appropriate, of course, detailing the numbers of the balance of what I discovered through years of work. I still wanted to make it clear to the conscious consumer what quality sparkling wine could be: "the most delicious drink in the world with slightly unripe grapes". We make wine with perfectly ripe grapes, not a sparkling wine. Why?

If you have not realized, do not worry: it took me 30 years.

G.T.





*la Terra, la Passione,
la Fantasia*

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