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### Monferace Association: the nobility of Grignolino

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When producers work in synergy driven by passion and with the common goal of seeking the purest essence in tradition, at that moment the foundations for an ambitious project are created, so from the union of a group of courageous winemakers the Monferace association was born in 2013, the ancient name of the Aleramic Monferrato.

A project that is realized in that territory identified in the geographical area delimited by the Po and Tanaro rivers, a land rich in history and culture, vineyards and natural beauty, which extends in an ideal triangle between the cities of Casale Monferrato, Alessandria and Asti.

Monferrato is characterized by an extraordinary wealth of crops and landscapes, it is a unique heritage of biodiversity to be safeguarded, but above all it has always been an area suited to the cultivation of vines with numerous varieties of native vines: Grignolino, Barbera, Nebbiolo, Freisa, Ruché, Cortese and ancient varieties that are being rediscovered such as Slarina and Baratuai. The main purpose of the association is to ennoble Grignolino, the objectives are the communication and dissemination of Monferace and the creation of an entrepreneurial network in Monferrato that allows for its relaunch.

Grignolino is a native vine of these hills with very ancient roots, it is mentioned in documents dating back to 1249 and 1337. The first is a rental deed transcribed by the monks of the Capitello di Sant'Evasio " *four bushels of filthy earth so that they could be worked and good Berbesine vine plants could be placed there* " and the second is an inventory of the Abbey of San Giusto di Susa, in which the wine "Grignolerii" is mentioned. In recent decades Grignolino has often been identified as a table wine, partly released on the bulk market, but in the past it was a royal wine much loved by the Savoy and had its moments of peak, such as at the 1953 National Wine Competition where it was awarded in the category of "superior fine reds" sharing the podium with Barolo and Barbaresco. Monferace aims to recreate this magic by sewing an elegant evening dress through strict regulations, a severe specification: first of all, Monferace must be produced from pure Grignolino grapes, the registered vineyards must be planted on calcareous-silty-clayey soils in various combinations, also with the natural presence of sandy sediments, the wine can be placed on the market only after a minimum refinement period of 40 months, of which at least 24 in wooden barrels, finally every year a commission tastes the wines blindly to evaluate their characteristics and suitability.

This challenge is made even more fascinating because Grignolino is not an easy-to-manage grape variety, it is a rebellious spirit, Veronelli defined it as " *anarchic and headstrong* ", a wine in constant contrast between almost aggressive acidity and tannin on one side and pale color and harmless appearance on the other. The name should derive from grignole, a dialect term from Asti that in ancient times indicated the grape seeds, which in this variety are more numerous than in other grape varieties and are responsible for its marked tannicity; there is also a second version, that the name is linked to the expression grigné, in Piedmontese to smile, because the expression that appears on the face of those who drink it due to tannins would resemble a smile. Thus, even the winemaking philosophy is inspired by the past: it is necessary to wait patiently for long years and a passage in barrels before this grape variety best expresses its nobility and elegance.

In the company of the President of the Monferace association, the lawyer Guido Carlo Alleva, and the oenologist Mario Ronco, we tasted ten labels from as many companies supporting the project.



Monferace Riserva 2021 - Five Fifths  
Grignolino del Monferrato Casalese Doc - Gr. 13.5%

Cinque Quinti was born in 2016 from the passion of five brothers who decided to continue the family business founded four generations ago, with a fresh and innovative touch. The harvest area is Olivola, hills at 290 m above sea level, a soil with a high percentage of limestone and a good balance between silt and clay. Fermentation in steel, elevation of 27 months in tonneau and French oak barrique, aging 9 months in bottle.

This label is the youngest of the battery tasted, despite this it presents itself in a bright but light color with an orange edge, typical of Grignolino as a result of a skin poor in anthocyanins. Nose with a fruity stamp, from plum to acidulous berry, sensations of medicinal herbs and a light spiciness open up. In

the mouth a compelling acidity stands out, on which the sapidity rests, a present tannic texture, a finish that recalls an acidulous raspberry and a bitterish accent from medicinal herbs. It is a wine that must be waited for, due to its youth it presents pungent notes of acidity and savouriness.

Monferace 2019 - Tenuta Santa Caterina  
Grignolino d'Asti Doc - Gr. 14.5%

Tenuta Santa Caterina is located in the municipality of Grazzano Badoglio, in the heart of Monferrato in the province of Asti. Registered as an agricultural estate in 1737, it is since the 2000s that the property has been brought back to life by Guido Carlo Alleva, when he decides to resume the family tradition of viticulture. Tenuta Santa Caterina, is restored in all its parts with the skilled mastery of local artisans and with respect for the past, a special mention for the Infernotto, a typical Piedmontese cellar dug into the tuff up to 17 meters deep, an authentic jewel of underground architecture and recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2014.

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The vineyard is located at 300 m above sea level on marly, calcareous-clayey soil, the grapes come from 50-year-old vineyards. Vinification in steel, maturation in tonneau for 30 months and rests another 30 in the bottle. At sight a dark heart with an orange note. A red fruit that time has transformed into cherry in alcohol predominates, officinal herbs alternate with aromatic herbs with a trail of incense, a well-managed note of vanilla, black tea and green pepper. On the palate it releases its exuberance, an enveloping and well-managed tannin, supported by acidity and flavor, with the hint of cherry that accompanies the drink and a clean finish.



Monferace 2019 - Alemat  
Grignolino del Monferrato Casalese Doc - Gr. 14%

Aleamat was born in the heart and mind of Savio Dominici in the late 80s, and then became a reality in 2012. The name comes from a double play on words, ALEMAT includes the initials of his sons Alessandro and Matteo, but also A l'è mat! in the Piedmontese dialect means "he's crazy". The company is located in Ponzano Monferrato, therefore in the westernmost part, it is organically run, supports agriculture free from pesticides and chemical contamination, preferring respect for the environment to any action that destabilizes its balance. The label of the bottle features butterflies fluttering near a glass, almost as if to recall this concept.

The vine grows on clayey-silty soil with a high limestone content at an altitude of 350 m. Fermentation in steel vats at a controlled temperature, the wine remains in contact with the skins for a further period of post-fermentation maceration of 20 days, during which the color is fixed and stabilized. Maturation follows in small oak barrels for 24 months, followed by refinement in the bottle for at least another 20 months.

Transparent ruby with orange nuances. Initially a hint of sweet berries, cherry and raspberry, followed by darker perceptions of laurel, plum and geranium, a balsamic note emerges together with a light spiciness. In the mouth a more evident tannin with an acidity that cleanses, vigorous the savory component, final note of medicinal herb with returns of laurel and geranium. Even with this tannic presence the finish is clean.

Monferace 2019 - Liedholm  
Grignolino del Monferrato Casalese Doc - Gr. 14,5%

Nils Liedholm, a beloved character nicknamed the Baron for his elegance, purchased the Villa Boemia estate in Cuccaro Monferrato in 1973, but the winemaking activity began in 1977. The Liedholm company was managed until 2015 by Nils' son, Carlo Liedholm, who recently sold the company to an Italian industrial group active in the vertical transport sector. The estate occupies the most south-eastern part within the Monferace association, in the municipality of Lu Monferrato.

The vineyard is located in the lowest hilly area of the group at 210 m above sea level, the soil respects the standards imposed by the specification but has the characteristic of having a high percentage of sand. The fermentation is carried out at a controlled temperature with submerged cap, followed by a stay in wood for 30 months.



The visual aspect is typical of Grignolino. The nose is more delicate with floral notes, geranium and violet, a soft spiciness of white pepper, tobacco leaves and a crunchy cherry. On the palate, freshness and flavor prevail, followed by tannicity with a pseudo-caloric return to soften and balance the sip, an elegant and almondy finish.



Monferace 2019 - Sulin  
Grignolino del Monferrato Casalese Doc - Gr. 14%

The Sulin company is also located in the municipality of Grazzano Badoglio, in the heart of Monferrato. In the dialect Sulin means sunny and the family vineyards can rightfully be called so, because they are all located in the South. The winery has been operating in the wine sector since 1919, currently managed by two brothers, Mauro and Fabio Fracchia, always ready to look ahead. In 1997 the decision was made to uproot all the old vines and replant them according to modern criteria, in 2020 45 clones were planted from a selection of 600,000 plants.

The vineyard rests on a calcareous clay soil at an altitude of about 350 meters. Maceration at 26 degrees for 15/20 days, subsequent refinement in tonneau for at least 24 months and another 16 of refinement in bottle.

When evaluating the chromatic aspect you now enter a déjà vu. On the nose the cherry note is always present with its sweetness, marked floral expressed in a dog rose, aromatic herbs, thyme and balsamic puffs. In the mouth a fluid and long acidity, a tannic fabric present and never invasive, the sapidity that accompanies the sip and a finish that recalls the green walnut.

Bricco del Bosco Vigne Vecchie Riserva 2019 - Accornero  
Grignolino del Monferrato Casalese Doc - Gr. 14.5%

A centuries-old winery born from the peasant experience of the late 1800s, owners and winemakers for four generations, the Accornero family continues with the same passion and commitment that inspired their great-grandfather Bartolomeo to produce high-quality wines. Ca' Cima is located in the municipality of Vignale Monferrato, with a vineyard area of 25 hectares.

Vineyards from 1961 planted on calcareous marl soils, light in color, poor in organic substances and minerals, but rich in calcium carbonates, silt, clay and rock in depth.



Maceration in contact with the skins for at least 40 days, aging 30 months in oak tonneau and 24 months in bottle.

Transparent ruby red tending towards orange. A variegated nose tending towards the dark of undergrowth, almost Mediterranean scrub, fumes of black cherry, withered flowers, spicy black pepper and licorice. On tasting, freshness emerges, silky tannins and a light caloric note that helps balance. Long persistence, the savory push accompanies the drink and a final mouth with a hint of licorice.



Monferace Indelebile 2020 - Cascina Faletta  
Grignolino del Monferrato Casalese Doc - Gr. 14.5%

The company, located in the municipality of Casale Monferrato, is based in a historic farmhouse from 1881, as attested by a ceramic plaque on the entrance portal. A young company founded in 2013 and managed with passion by Elena Novarino and Giovanni Rosso, who continue the deeds of their grandparents, since 2023 the transition to organic management has been made. A document attests that already in 1957 Faletta was awarded 500 thousand lire because it was considered an excellent winery.

Vineyard from 1936 on clayey loam soil, where the strong clay component allows to obtain good yields even in particularly dry years. Fermentation at controlled temperature in 32hl steel tanks, aging for 36 months in French oak tonneau and subsequent refinement for one year in the bottle.

The color follows that characteristic fil rouge of the grape variety. The first scent that draws attention is orange peel, followed by crunchy cherry, raspberry, small hints of undergrowth, a beautiful floral with a mentholated trail. Lively freshness, accompanied by an important flavor restrained by the velvety tannic texture, long and mineral finish.

Golden Arbian Monferace 2017 – Paolo Angelini  
Grignolino del Monferrato Casalese Doc - Gr. 14%

The Società Agricola Angelini Paolo has a history of four generations of winemakers, today the management is entrusted to the twins Mauro and Franco who look to the future with roots that sink into 100 years of history and experience. Among the companies it is the one located in the northernmost part, in Ozzano Monferrato, 42 hectares planted with vineyards and distributed on terrains that vary from the most calcareous to the most clayey. The recently renovated cellar, together with the production techniques aimed at enhancing the typicality of each individual vine, allows to have a range of wines very varied and closely linked to the territory.



Grignolino is grown on tuffaceous and marly limestone soil, the vinification takes place with spontaneous fermentation in stainless steel tanks at a controlled temperature, aging in 5hl French oak tonneau for 36 months and then in the bottle for 12 months before being released for sale.

Among the wines tasted, it is the only one that differs in color, an intense garnet red. The nose opens with a sulfurous note, continues with a spicy note of cloves, undergrowth and dark sensations, blackcurrant. On the drink, more subdued tones with a less pungent flavor, the acidity balanced by the caloric note, a bowed trail and a perception of chestnut in the finish.



Monferace 2018 - Tenuta la Tenaglia  
Grignolino del Monferrato Casalese Doc - Gr. 14.5%

Tenuta Tenaglia, a historic winery in Monferrato, is located at the foot of the Sacro Monte di Crea, surrounded by a suggestive amphitheater described by vineyards of seventeenth-century origin. Founded in the seventeenth century by the Governor of Moncalvo Giorgio Tenaglia, a famous captain of fortune and enterprising patron. Today Tenuta Tenaglia is managed by the Italian-German Ehrmann family, the owner Sabine together with her children and her team, take care with great attention and passion of the production and distribution of their wines in Italy and abroad.

The vineyard is located on the highest productive hill area of Monferace, at an altitude of about 450 m above sea level and the soil is clayey marl. Vinification in steel, 24 months of aging in French oak tonneau, another 24 months of refinement in bottle.

An elegant wine but with less defined tones, wild herbs, plum and spices, where the floral is more evident to the detriment of the fruity part, but this is the result of a more subtle vintage especially if compared to the previous one. On the taste level we find cleanliness and an almost spicy flavor, very saline, subtle tannin and a dark and pleasantly bitter finish.

Monferace 2018 - Fratelli Natta  
Grignolino del Monferrato Casalese Doc - Gr. 14.5%

Fratelli Natta is a family-run winery in Grazzano Badoglio, in the heart of Monferrato. The cultivated area extends for about 30 hectares, divided into small vineyard plots, selected for their favorable exposure and the particular characteristics of the soil. A winery that uses technology to serve tradition, to enhance it and to continue it.





always keeping up with the times and innovations in the sector. Grignolino is planted on calcareous, sandy and silty soil; alcoholic fermentation carried out in steel tanks, the wine remains in contact with the fine lees for the entire period of permanence in wood equal to 24 months, refinement in bottle.

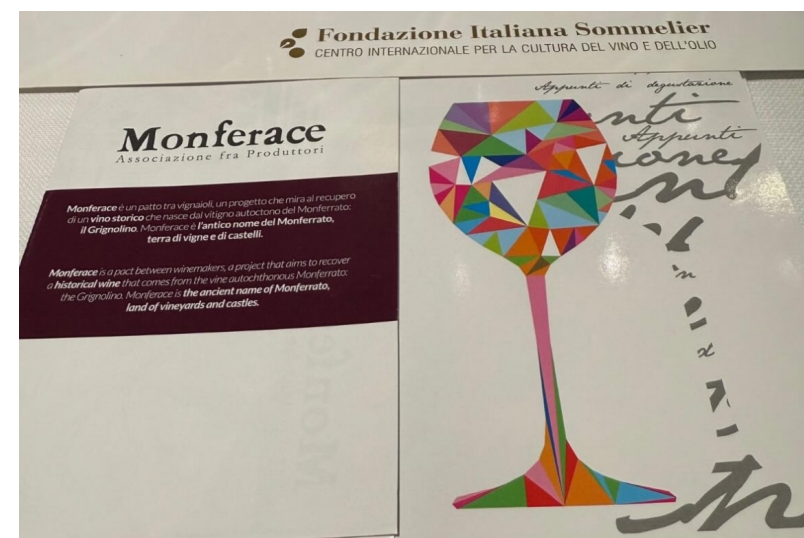


Transparent ruby red that branches out towards an orange edge. The nose opens with spicy notes and bitter herbs, mallow, a sour cherry in alcohol and dried flowers. In the mouth, predominant acidity that guarantees evolution

over time, fine tannins and a finish that recalls the undergrowth.

In this tasting we were not simply tasting wines made with pure Grignolino, but we were made participants in a project. Each estate brought its own idea and tradition to the bottle, even comparing neighboring companies we enjoyed profoundly different wines, each capricious of its own identity, but without ever straying from the peculiar characteristics of the vine. A double aspect united the drink: the beautiful olfactory and gustatory cleanliness; and the gastronomic capacity of these wines.

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