

Ca' Rugate



Tessari*

Fulvio Beo

- * The magnificent hundredth of Fulvio Beo Tessari.
The life and miracles of a man with his feet on the ground.

To my Grandfather Fulvio
and his Land, the Rugate.



Michele Tessari



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Preface

by Amedeo and Michele Tessari



Past, Present and Future,
memories and prospects,
sweet memoirs rich in
emotions and sentiments.

We have decided to pay homage to our founder – Fulvio Beo Tessari [*Amedeo's father and Michele's grandfather*, Editor's note] – on the occasion of his hundredth birthday. And we have chosen to do this by putting together two stories that are inextricably interwoven and indissoluble: the life of Fulvio Beo – from his boyhood until the present day – and the history of the Winery, from its founding in Brognoligo to the new premises in Montecchia di Crosara.

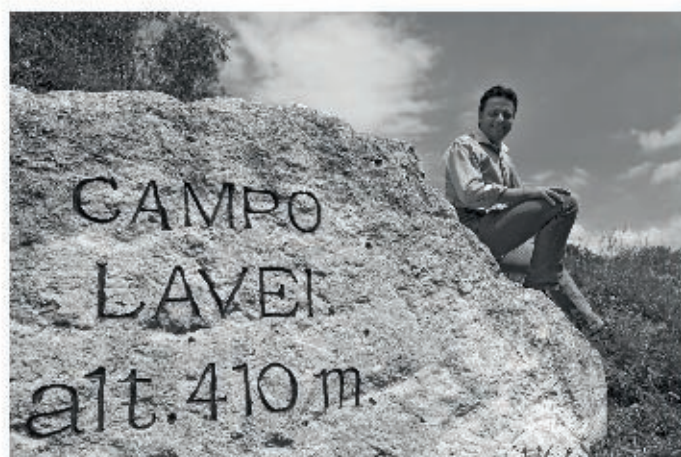
The decision to dedicate a publication to the founder of the Business and take the opportunity to relate our history came about spontaneously and was immediately agreed upon by the whole family. We wanted to gather memories of a lifetime, an existence that has traversed different eras, in which cultures and customs have changed radically, to try to link them with the present which is projecting us inevitably out into the world, expanding our prospects and forcing us to reason on all sides with far-reaching vision.

The focus is changing and the outlook is now planetary, but the basic values, the deep-bedded, invariable ones, are still in the background to characterise the story of the men and the businesses, essential and unavoidable features. The narration of the Tessari family story and in particular Fulvio Beo's summarises all of these aspects very well. Trying to avoid unnecessary rhetoric, we may sometimes have let a light, but moving, note of nostalgia creep in, an ingredient with great capacity for emotivity, often neglected. We are writing for the present, drawing new guidelines for the future, but never forgetting the lessons of the past, such a precious treasure chest of skills and experience.



Page opposite: the entrance to Campo Lavei, one of our property's historic vineyards.

Right: at Campo Lavei we have engraved the altitude on the rock – this is our highest vineyard.



Two paths have been followed in choosing to represent these themes, and the reader can easily see how closely they are interconnected. On the one hand the story unfolds, beginning from lucid memories of the protagonist, of a life full of joys and hardships, war and love, hard work and the achievement of business aims. On the other, there is a study of the evolution of the wine production economy of Soave and Valpolicella, both as a general observation of the profound transformation of society, and in specific terms, the choices made progressively by Ca' Rugate in the context of the changes that occurred.

This double approach begins with the tales of Fulvio Beo, characterised by an unexpected vivacity for someone who is looking back so many decades, with a constant vein of optimism and *joie de vivre* which sometimes overflows into gentle humour. Pages of memories which are never banal, never out-dated, never self-congratulatory, always very human and always characterised by faith and hope towards the future. This positive outlook is born from the awareness that by working, often very hard, you can overcome the difficulties, as long as you operate conscientiously and aim towards producing quality products. And thanks to work, you can obtain happiness for yourself and for your family.

Family for Fulvio Beo, as these memoirs highlight, means his love for his wife and children, feelings which urge him to do his best, to set himself goals which are constantly directed towards the well-being of his nearest and dearest.

The second part of the book examines the choices that this geographical area has experienced in terms of production, both in the more general aspects associated with the changeover from mixed farming to specialised vine-growing, and in the specific aspects linked to the choice of grape varieties and the methods of working the vineyards; from the difficult days in which the blight of downy mildew forced them to reconsider which vine variety to use, to more recent times in which Soave has successfully won over international markets.

In this context the story of the productive and qualitative evolution of Ca' Rugate has a place, with its passage from the early stage of selling only bulk wine, to the first labels, and so on to the present day agronomic and oenological structure in constant evolution.

The book concludes with a reflection which puts a spotlight on the productive philosophy of the business and lays the foundations for the evolution of the next few years. Here it becomes clear that Ca' Rugate intends to continue and reinforce that spirit of innovation which has distinguished this company, preventing it from resting on its laurels and feeling complacent of its considerable achievements.

It is essential for us always to bear in mind that this is an agricultural business, that the fruit of the vineyards is the reason for its existence and that it will always be necessary to start from the land in order to achieve new successes.



July 8th

*

The first Battle
of the Isonzo ended
a day ago, taking with
it thousands of men.
War is ugly. But that
new-born baby is so
“beo”, so beautiful.

1915





Artilleryman calibre... 158



The years of War and a daring escape outline the combative character of Fulvio Beo, our patriarch.

“Temporarily unfit for service but, on necessity, artilleryman.”

It is the harshening of the conflict in World War II that really turns the tables, and forces Fulvio Tessari to leave in 1940, when his year-group, born in 1917, is called up for military service.

He is an Alpine soldier at heart, but not really fit for mountain life. He is therefore sent to Cuneo to take up service as a healthcare assistant in Villa Desmé. He stays in the wards for just over two years. He then changes “skin” and uniform, when he is required to join the War effort as artilleryman, assigned to the 7th Artillery Regiment. He works in hospital, alongside nuns who humanely tend the wounded. “Little” Fulvio only fully encounters the war when he is sent from the hospital – the civilian one in Alessandria, to which he is assigned in 1942 – to France, dressed in a grey-green uniform.

It is there that he becomes a prisoner, once the Allies have become enemies. And there, on that 8th September 1943, with the fragrance of grape harvests in the air, he is captured by Germans – former allies, now fierce enemies. «I knew fine what my fate would be: deportation to some concentration camp in Germany.»

Fulvio makes up his mind: if they don’t kill him on the spot he will be deported, or end up in a labour camp, knowing he will be in for certain death. «Faced with these alternatives, what could I opt for? I’d rather die in attempted escape from here, than end up in Germany. The only thing I felt was that my life was at an end, I was as good as dead. I had nothing to lose, so I decided I would be scared of nothing. There was too much at stake: I’d take risks to get home, not to stay put and die.»

Summer 1922. Group photo of the family.
Fulvio Bco is the child on the lower right,
in the second row.



Summer 1922. Here Fulvio Beo is the second on the lower left, his expression disturbed by the sunlight.





It is the harshening of the conflict in World War II that forces Fulvio Tessari to leave in 1940.



He is not the only one who feels this way, and soon he is sharing his plans with some of his comrades: for a couple of nights they keep watch on the guards' routine, memorising the rounds and timing. «It took three of us. Me, a comrade from Trebaseleghe [a small town in Veneto, Editor's note] five years older than me and a sergeant major from Tuscany. But at the crucial moment, he didn't feel up to it. He was a married man, and father of a new baby. He gave me a letter and begged me to get it to his wife. There was just one thing written on it: 'I'm all right.' I never heard anything of him afterwards.»

Under cover of darkness, Fulvio and his comrade-in-arms (and in misfortune) use the steps of the guards on watch to calculate the moment for their escape: they have less than a quarter of an hour's leeway, and that quarter of an hour is what may save their skins. At the set moment they scamper like hares: they reach the fence, climb over and they're out.

However, the camp stands on a hill: their target is a wood, where they will find shelter in the undergrowth of the trees during the daytime and then set off under cover of darkness. That wood seems so far off, that night: moreover, between them and the safety of the bushes there is a steep ravine and then a rushing stream further on. The fear that hits them is so great that it turns into extraordinary courage, or desperate recklessness. They slide down the slope, knocking into things, tumbling down to the bank of the stream, but they are alive.

The accursed camp is still in sight, so they only stop to catch the breath they need for the last spurt: what awaits them is the

Page opposite: It is 1940, Fulvio Beo is leaving for the War.

Below: Fulvio Beo (last on the right) in Cuneo in '43 with his comrades in arms.





Page opposite: barbed wire for Fulvio Beo is the emblem of imprisonment, but also of the release of escape.

Right: 1943, an emblematic year for Fulvio Beo: he is captured in France by the former allies, the Germans, now ferocious enemies.



fording of a loud and unruly watercourse. A dive: so they'll be hidden by the water, Fulvio even loses his shoes in the thrust. Fatigue, deprivation and fear penetrate the hearts and the bodies of these two lads: but they're being watched over by a good star that night and before long they reach the safety of the woods. They are exhausted, but that little bit of freedom they are tasting is incebriating. They are hungry: in the woods and nearby fields, wild grapes are growing, which become their breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Luckily their pockets are not empty: the Germans paid well, in Italian *lire*. In a starving France such money can go far. They start walking and at the first house they come to, Fulvio – who has put bindings round his feet in place of his shoes – knocks without hesitation: he buys a pair of shoes to replace the ones that were swept away in his dive for freedom. Worn, but a real pair of shoes nevertheless. And then... food appears.

In this way the two begin their journey: certain of their destination – home – much less so, how to get there. Italy's there, beyond the mountains. A real undertaking if you don't know what direction to take: even more ambitious if you're thinking of moving by night, but that's all there is to it. They define their strategy, both agree: sleep by day and march by night, though this may mean walking whole nights then finding you're back where you started, you've just gone round in a circle. With the strength of desperation, however, they reach the ridge of the mountain at last on the first of October.

«There was a barracks on the border and after twenty days march we reached it with our hearts in our mouths... we were exhausted but full of expectation, because we were going to join our comrades, the friends I had left home with.»

It doesn't work out like that, because when they arrive in the dead of night, the barracks is deserted, abandoned after the armistice by the escaping troops. «It was terribly cold there.» Fulvio remembers. «We collected anything that would burn and warmed ourselves, with furniture, papers and ornaments going up in flames in one of the rooms of the barracks, while snow was falling outside.»

Thus the two fugitives have found shelter, but they're well aware that this can't be a really safe hideout. What to do? Where to go? Fulvio remembers the nuns he worked with in Villa Desm , in Cunco. That's the place to go! It's hard to convince his companion, however: he's five years older and after a month on the march that makes a difference.

Fulvio realises straight away: his friend's worn out, he's got to drag him along. «At the end of the war, for years he would ask me where I'd found the strength to take him with me to safety.»

On and on they walk, and at last Fulvio's obstinacy is rewarded. Exhausted, they cross the threshold of the hospital together. In a shriek of joy the voice of a nun calls out, «Mother, Mother, the little one's here!» as she recognises Fulvio. «They greeted me as if it was the arrival of Goodness knows who!»



The years pass, and
neither hears anything
of the other until 1994.



The war is still going on with a vengeance: there are still wounded or sick soldiers to nurse. «They tried to convince us to stay,» Fulvio relates. «They were ready for anything. They assured us, and I'm sure it's true, that they would have got us a military licence. That was the only way we could have stayed there in complete safety.»

Fulvio Beo refers to this using the conditional, and we can imagine why: to act exclusively on his own initiative has been a constant feature all his life. Here, too, he has no doubt about what to do: «I'm really sorry,» he tells them, «but I'm heading home.» Not even the tears of those pious women can change his mind: his heart is touched, true, «but in the end I convinced them.» His comrade, on the other hand, decides to stay.

The years pass, and neither hears anything of the other until 1994: Fulvio's grandson, Michele, having listened over and over to the his grandfather's war adventures, undertakes a search for the soldier he'd heard so much about.

And he finds him: half a century later, that soldier acquires a name and surname, Angelo Pattaro. He and Fulvio meet up again with an intensity of emotion that leads to copious tears. The memories rush back, including the letter entrusted to Fulvio by the sergeant major who dropped out of the escape: Fulvio had sent it and indeed received a phone call from the soldier's wife, then nothing more.

Page opposite: Fulvio Bco at the hospital in Cuneo, in 1941.

Below: Fulvio Bco and Angelo, the two fellow escapees, together at last: this is 1994 – 51 years after they split up – at lunch in Trebaseleghe (Angelo's town).



Below: the deed of matrimony of
Fulvio Bco's parents, Amedeo and Adele.
It was April 26th 1913.

Page opposite: the enrolment form for
Fulvio Bco, alias Tessari Fulvio.





But let's get back to Cuneo and our story, the longing for home which is the only real driving force in Fulvio's young heart.

But let's get back to Cuneo and our story, the longing for home which is the only real driving force in Fulvio's young heart. How should he enact such a risky plan? «I telephoned home and told them all that had happened. The plan was decided like that, on the phone: they would send my aunt, Countess Eugenia Filippi. In her luggage for the trip to Cuneo she would bring civilian clothes for me.»

With these clothes on, everything becomes a lot simpler for Fulvio, and he takes the chance to visit his brother Luigi, who has survived the Russian front and is in hospital in Pietra Ligure [in Liguria, Editor's note]. By his brother's sickbed he reveals his plans: he would set off with his Aunt Eugenia by train, and if during the journey he ran into a German patrol, he wouldn't hesitate to jump from the moving train.

«My brother and my aunt made fun of me: they reckoned, after my escape from prison, I could be afraid of nothing. Even the doctor tending my brother burst out laughing: given my height of one meter fifty-eight, he thought I might pass for a young boy despite my 28 years.»

Fulvio's aunt has to give in – there's no contest with his determination – so they both climb aboard the train. Much later, Luigi, too, would board the train and come home, but as an invalid. Fulvio and his aunt reach Verona together without any real frights. Then Fulvio catches a tram. When his eyes fall on the sign for Costalunga, he becomes aware of one thing only: «I had stopped being scared.»

Cesari Fulvio

Montefiore

del Distretto di Verona, 45, 1937

NUMERO	DESCRIZIONE	DATA
1	Soldato di buon dato 1915. Istruttore di Maresca quasi incombente a servizio in un'unità di artiglieria in un campo di artiglieria in delimitata costituzione (Aut. 14/13) dal 1937 al 1938. Ha lavorato in un campo di lavoro.	14 luglio 38
2	Due mesi di servizio in un campo di lavoro.	14 luglio 38
3	Due mesi di servizio in un campo di lavoro.	14 luglio 38
4	Due mesi di servizio in un campo di lavoro.	14 luglio 38
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49	Due mesi di servizio in un campo di lavoro.	14 luglio 38
50	Due mesi di servizio in un campo di lavoro.	14 luglio 38



When his eyes fall
on the sign for
Costalunga, he
becomes aware of one
thing only: «I had
stopped being scared.»

Submerged in its own vineyards,
Ca' Rugate's cradle pops up: this is the
house where Fulvio Beo lived between
'16 and '55, where his father died, where
two of his children were born, where the
first winery was built.







That's the one for me!



The life of Fulvio Beo continues, through the words of Rina: she's been his bride all along, the mother of his children, the companion of a long life.

How sweet is the air of home after you've suffered imprisonment, walked for days living in hardship, felt fear and crossed mountains. It's so good to be free!

There are two girls on the steps of the church of Santo Stefano Protomartire, that sunny afternoon of October, in Brognoligo. This is the afternoon when Fulvio Beo Tessari at last reaches home. On the way, however, something happens to alter his priorities. Home can wait, there's something more important: she's dark and has fabulous legs! All Fulvio's attention is concentrated on her. He doesn't know who that girl is, but that doesn't matter: «That's the one for me!».

It only takes a few hours to learn something about her: he finds out that he knows one of the sisters of that splendour named Rina, and he learns that she's the cousin of an old girlfriend of his. Rina is 20: «For 68 years we've been stealing each other's sheets on the bed, as well as staying fond of each other. Often I surprise myself even now, asking him how he managed to lose his head for me like that, over a pair of legs, probably skinny ones too, and seen from a distance.» She still wonders at the thought.

Beo pulls an irresistible grin: that day, in front of the church, he stops dead and stares until Rina and her sister move on. Then he just has to watch where they go to find out where they live. «I watched her come down the church steps, then she headed down the street and turned in at a doorway. Only then did I set off again on my homeward journey.»



«To love her and be
loved by her, still as
beautiful as ever is the
greatest satisfaction of
my whole life.»



In his heart there is just one vital issue: find out who that girl is, if she's got a boyfriend, what she's like, where she lives. Imagine the face of his sister Elda, receiving this flow of questions, when she's just hugged her brother who's been away for years, with a war on! Elda thinks that perhaps this is quite normal and answers what she knows, and adds the most relevant detail: though there was one in the past, at the moment Rina is without a boyfriend.

At this point Fulvio begins his strategy. He follows every step of that brunette, every movement, and a fortnight later stops her on her way home from her daily chore, feeding chickens along with her cousins. Fulvio, self-assured, stops in front of the group: «I have to talk to that lassie there,» he declares assertively. The cousins naturally stand aside. And so the story begins.

«I didn't even know him,» she says. «I had no idea who she was,» he replies. Yet Rina, if not immediately, says yes. «She was serious for sure, I could hardly get her to kiss me the first time, after a few months,» Beo laughs, «she was almost too serious!»

Serious to the point of thinking over that meeting for a long time: strange how it always seemed to happen that the men who took an interest in her were farmers whose land and homesteads were far away. This was partly the reason why she always ended up saying no to them all, in spite of their courting.

And now this "Beo" turns up, with his house out at the Rugate, that crumpled piece of black soil and tuff, miles away

Page opposite: Rina with her sisters on her wedding day, the 19 April 1947: Elena Left, Clara in the centre.

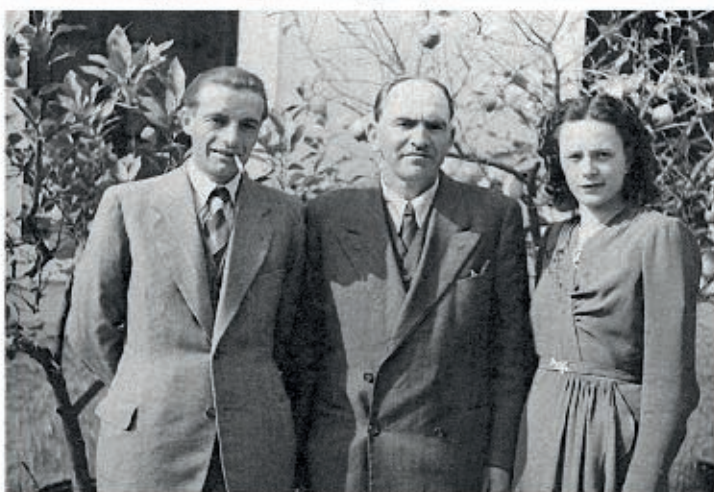
Below: Fulvio Beo and Rina in '46, just engaged.



Other pictures from the wedding album of Fulvio Beo and Rina.

On this page, top left: the bride between witnesses Giuseppe Dal Soglio and the count Teodoro Alberti Cernison (respectively on her right and on her left); below left: the bride and groom with Arturo Tessari, Fulvio Beo's uncle.

Page opposite, top: the bride with her cousins, Celestina Piccoli and Vasco Buniotto; below: the happy couple. The war has been left far behind.





from the town. «Maybe I should just say no,» she thinks.
«Can I put up with living there on the hill?»

Her thoughts become a torment that lead to arguments with
“Beo”: first they get together, then they split up, and for a few
months they stay apart.

But one afternoon Fulvio’s glance chances to meet Rina’s,
and they both melt, like the ice-creams they’re holding, and end
up hand in hand.

Yet again he is the one who prevails: «that’s the one for
me!» he repeats, «and so she was.» The orange blossom flowers in
Brognoligo on April 19th 1947. «To love her and be loved by her,
still as beautiful as ever,» he says, stealing a glance at her, «is the
greatest satisfaction of my whole life.»





Fulvio at Rugate



Let us go back a step.
The passion for vines
and for agriculture comes
to Fulvio as a child:
tools for working the soil
are his childhood toys at
Rugate farm.

Now, if there is a wife, there must be a house too, and a family will soon follow. But what can be done at the Rugate?

As a child, that lad defined as “beo”, which means beautiful, had one dream alone, and that was to work the land. His mother, Adele Filippi, had worn herself out and wasted her breath: she was alone, having lost her husband, Amedeo, when Fulvio was three, on the day the First World War ended and it became a date of national holiday.

Amedeo’s brother, Giovanni, had taken them in and acted as a father to Fulvio, who was not at all inclined to study: he dreamt of the countryside; that was what he really loved.

His mother’s dream for him, on the other hand, is a safe job as a Post Office clerk: not at the mercy of the seasons and the whims of the weather. Mother and son reach a compromise, by which he must at least obtain his primary school certificate, the minimum scholastic qualification for the right to a secure job. Fulvio attends the little school in Brognoligo up to the fourth grade, then mother Adele will have no more arguments: her Fulvio is to take his final year in the city, in Verona.

«I had finished the fourth grade in the village school with good marks. Nevertheless,» Fulvio relates, «my mother made me take lessons through the whole summer. It was a real bore, but at least the local schoolmaster gave me them free.»

His début in Verona is not easy: the difference between the two schools is like night and day. «In the fifth year in Verona I lasted about a month, then they moved me back to the fourth.»



On these pages: tools on display at the Wine Museum in Ca' Rugate.

Left, top: a bee smoker to drive out the bees while the honey is collected; below: wooden scales, nineteen twenties.

Page opposite: wine-press from the beginning of the 20th C.



This backward shift does not make mother Adele go back on her word: you need that piece of paper. So Fulvio has to repeat the fourth grade in Verona and then take advantage of his progress while attending the filth in his village. He thus obtains the craved certificate, which means for his mother the guarantee of future serenity, while for Fulvio it means he has achieved the right to a future life in the countryside, in those very fields which his father had worked, on the high hill of Fittà where he had gone to live after his marriage to Adcle. They would move down to the Rugate a little later on.

And it is in the Rugate that Fulvio, or rather, Beo, grows up. Here, while the adults rest, he goes out fishing with his brother in the valleys and in the brook a few paces from the house immersed in the natural surroundings. «There were so many shrimps in those streams! That was just one of our pass-times: we would scramble into animals' dens, climb trees...» Beo would play, but right from an early age he got the knack with agricultural tools: spades, picks, hammers, and what fun spreading sulphur on the vines! The years pass, Fulvio grows up and at last gains the right to work. «It was a great childhood, without trouble: I used to enjoy going about the fields and rivers, working and fishing.» At least, until he started going down to Brognoligo, «to take a look at the girls.» He undoubtedly had something special about him, or maybe two things: there are two wheels to a bicycle. In those days those two wheels meant freedom, and they also meant transgression. «I used to get to Terrossa by bike... that was where the girls were.» Rina confirms his story: «Here, the girls didn't go out – there, things were more lively...»



Right from an early age he got
the knack with agricultural
tools: spades, picks, hammers,
and what fun spreading
sulphur on the vines!









*

From his earliest taste of the country with his uncle, to the vineyards, to the property that grows thanks to the wine's increasing popularity. Everything in Fulvio Beo's life is for his wine, his company, his land.

What I produce I want to sell myself

And so, to Rugate: when Fulvio takes Rina's hand and leads her up there, there is so much to see. They harvest cherries, plums, pears, peaches and almonds, even peas behind the house. Fulvio is in charge of gathering the fruit twice a week, which his uncle then takes to market: on Tuesday to Soave, on Saturday to Monteforte.

Then there are the silk worms. Whereas there are hardly any grapes, just about half a vineyard, all *garganega* and *turbiana* (varieties of Soave *trebbiano*), except for two rows of red, added on at the end: these have been Beo's great passion, ever since he was a youngster.

«We sold wine grapes,» Fulvio explains, «they were sold by weight but first they had to be prepared. Once picked they were assigned to the hands of the women for careful selection: after that it was all placed in big baskets and taken to the market. Some folk came to collect it directly in the courtyard of Rugate. What was left over was crushed: but it wasn't much. That was how things worked for years.»

Over the years, however, the vineyards grow, so much so that the two, Beo and his uncle, have a really substantial amount of grapes to work. In 1950 the Tessari family, who have already been blessed with the birth of Luigina a year after their marriage, are preparing to celebrate the arrival of Amedeo, their second child. «So we began to crush all the grapes we had. We bought new concrete vats and large barrels. The first winery started like that, up at the Rugate.» It's a lot to manage, too much for uncle Gianni: «We ended up taking it to the social winery, partly because I really believed in a winery shared by everyone.»



We sold wine grapes.
Once picked they were
assigned to the hands
of the women for
careful selection.



But after a while something begins to simmer in the mind of Fulvio, and suddenly one day he surprises everyone saying: «What I produce I want to sell myself!»

They all tell him he's mad, but that doesn't bother him in the least. He explains that he harvests the grapes, takes it to the communal winery but after that he doesn't know any more about it, and that really troubles him. And thus, from that time on, he is to run the business on his own. Uncle Gianni, «who didn't have faith in it,» continues to take his grapes to the communal winery.

But what had happened, what had changed? The same Fulvio had come to meetings over the years and incited everyone to stay with the winery. «We must stay in the winery, because the world is progressing!» was his motto. The same Fulvio who held that belonging to the winery meant being independent, not tied to the traders. Belonging, so that the wine was worked by the winery, not creating further work for the farmers themselves. He was convinced of it and had always campaigned for all the grapes to be taken to the winery.

The director at the time, Fossato, is angry. «He came here, furious and incredulous, waving under my nose the propaganda that I had spread. I told him it didn't bother me. I had married and had two children, and I'd changed my point of view. How could I bring up a family if there were seasons in which the contributors to the social winery were not paid a cent?» Beo crushes, and folk turn up in the courtyard who want to make grappa with his pomace.

Page opposite: Amedeo at 2 years old, in '52.

Right, from the top: Fulvio Beo and Rina at home, in '78, with brother and sister-in-law Luigi and Vittoria; in '75 at Asiago; in the garden, at home, in 1985.

He is learning, because «all of a sudden there are things you want to do but you don't know how, so I went to those with experience and got taught, they explained things.» At Rugate there are barrels to deal with 20,000 kg of produce, but soon Beo finds himself with 50,000 kg, since he is also buying grapes.

But he is also one of the first to buy machines. In 1955 he moves house and vineyard down from Rugate to Mezzavilla: this is the turning point, because at this point he decides his wine is good, it's worth something. He begins to take it further afield: first he rides on horseback, then by bicycle, then he borrows a station wagon from his friend Luigino. This is the team: Fulvio Beo and the samples of his nameless wine. «But it was Soave, and it has always been Soave. All I know is that when I let people taste it, they drank it with enthusiasm and then they came to Brognoligo to get more.»

Time passes, Amedeo is growing up: his father already pictures him by his side, whereas the son calls him crazy. Amedeo sees his father work day and night and decides that this life is not for him: he has his own passion, football, and to make something of that you have to be dedicated, go training in the evenings, go to the matches. Football was what really got on Beo's nerves.

«Then, growing up,» Fulvio remembers, «he discovered the difference between just crushing, and actually taking the wine around for tasting... to Varesco, to Milan. I borrowed a lorry with a driver and I set off... and Amedeo saw the difference, he saw how people returned for more, he saw the fruit of all my sacrifices.





Page opposite: the first barrels, dating from the end of the 19th C, displayed in the Wine Museum.

So he realised what this meant... when he became a young man – when he wanted to get married.» It was Amedeo himself who had the idea, after a few years, to extend the property and buy the land of the Pergola to build the new vineyard.

But let's go back to via Mezzavilla: in the midst of all this turmoil, they are beginning to earn money, «But what really counted was the satisfaction of seeing people set out from Vicenza with their demijohns to get their wine from us. Every Saturday the courtyard filled up with folk, lots of them travelled up to a hundred kilometres: maybe they had found work in Lombardy, but the wine they drank was mine and so they still came all the way to Brognoligo to procure it.»

Fulvio, meanwhile, pursues the practice of representing his own produce: at least once a week he sets out on a trip. He takes one flagon for each hostelry, stopping at every village. «Keep it there,» he would say to the astonished barmen, «try it. I don't want payment: if you're happy with it you can come for a demijohn from time to time.» He said this to the barmen, but also to many householders, leaving a demijohn here and there, «This is my wine; if you like it, it's available!» and then he waited. They came from all around, every Saturday, «and they emptied my 25 hectolitre vat.» After a while he put a kind of depot along the road: 30-40 demijohns, at his brother-in-law's, who also earned something for his trouble.

But what is so special about this Soave? «It didn't become red like so many other wines in the area. I was invited to a lunch

and the host poured from a demijohn: for him it was an excellent wine, but he asked me to taste it. For me it left no flavour in the mouth, it seemed false. The meal continued peacefully and after a couple of hours the host noticed that the wine had turned red in that short time. My wine, on the other hand, stayed clear and healthy. If people came back,» says Fulvio with conviction, «it was because they were satisfied. Mind you, their satisfaction was nothing compared to mine!» If you ask Beo the secret of that Soave, he won't hesitate for an instant: «The grapes, you need good grapes, the best *garganega*... though occasionally I added *turbiana* to increase the alcohol content.»

Good wine at the right price: this is Fulvio's motto; he takes more than the others but he's seen that people don't mind paying ten cents more per litre. Those first clients care about the wine being good. Then the word gets about...

«That was my gratification, that crushing of the grapes... and now I can see the winery I built up. We reached a thousand quintals, we had wine everywhere. Everybody in Brognoligo produced must, but I'm the only one who transformed that fatigued into a winery,» Fulvio swells with pride.

The name Tessari began to spread from mouth to mouth: unfortunately in the Montefortiano area, Tessari is one of the most common names. We are told that one of Beo's clients, unable to come for his usual supply, had asked his brother to come in his place. He sent him to Monteforte, telling him to look for Tessari. This the man did, asking the local people.



Again in the Wine Museum of Ca' Rugate.
Below: carbonator for the production of
sparkling wines (identifiable by the nozzles)
and bottle blinder (the cord kept the corks
under pressure).

Page opposite: the *pica*, strings for
hanging up the bunches to dry.





He harvests the grapes,
takes it to the communal
winery but after that he doesn't
know any more about it,
and that really troubles him.





Glimpses of the winery: wood and steel for the refining and evolution of the wines.

He was given directions and found himself at a winery, right enough. He went in, asked if this was Tessari's, they said yes. To be certain, he asked for Fulvio, and was informed that he was out. So that seemed fine, and he set off to his brother's with the wine. Not long after, the latter turned up at our Fulvio's, declaring that evidently his fame was envied by someone else, and told him the story. He had understood what had happened straight away, simply by tasting the wine: it couldn't be Beo's.

And this begs the question, how do you make a good wine? «It would be better if we crushed the grapes with our feet,» replies Fulvio decisively. He explains, «In my day, it was harvested three times, to gather the right grapes at the right moment.» His day was when bisulphites were used liberally, because it avoided the wine changing colour.

For Fulvio life is a crescendo. He even makes a substantial investment: he buys "the" 1100 (Fiat), which meant he could take the whole family out (in 1963 it had increased with the birth of Gianni) and above all his samples were further afield than ever. «Many a Sunday I would fill the car and tour about! I left the wine here and there: when I saw the same faces pop in at the winery I knew I had earned new clients.»

Meanwhile the property is growing, seven and a half fields in a single transaction, and the winery is also growing under the portico of via Mezzavilla: the biggest barrels are brought here. Then the winery is completely filled by new concrete ones for 2,500 kg each. Later, a further five barrels containing a hundred

quintals each are placed in the courtyard under a canopy. Then another two, this time stainless steel makes its appearance. «The grapes were still crushed by treading, at Rugate,» Fulvio explains, «then the must was brought here. Someone brought a corking machine at some point, and later a continuous press.

House, vineyard and winery: that was Fulvio Beo's whole life up to just over three years ago. He would take the now-legendary red Ficsta, go up to Rugate, jump onto a tractor with plastic canisters, hose in hand, and water the vineyards. What frights he gave "la Rina": first «an upset with the tractor down there. Could have killed myself!» he declares, laughing. He didn't have a scratch, in spite of ending up underneath the tractor. The same thing happened again, but he had the presence of mind to jump off.

Fifteen years ago he waved goodbye to Rugate from an ambulance. He had come bringing breakfast for his sons who were harvesting. Distracted, he got back into the car and instead of putting it in gear he let off the hand-break and the car careered downhill with the engine off. «I was at home and heard the ambulance. It was only later that I found out that he was the one aboard,» says Rina. And that wasn't the end: «One day Fulvio didn't turn up at the usual time. I began to worry and I set out for Rugate on foot, stopping at practically every house to ask if anyone had seen him. Nothing doing, and the more I walked the worse I felt. And where do you think he was? Sitting in the car in the sunshine, asleep. I don't know how many frights he's given me! He was getting on by then, too – he was quite old.»





It was Amedeo himself who had the idea, after a few years, to extend the property and buy the land of the Pergola to build the new vinery.



In Ca' Rugate, the grape harvest is always done by hand – the bunches deserve care and respect.





A school that lasts a century



Fulvio Beo's work has
always been for his children.
And that of his children,
for the grandchildren.
Ca' Rugate is above all this:
a real family.

«I've worked really hard and now I feel like a cat: sofa-armchair, armchair-sofa. But to tell the truth, I'm never actually still.»
His is a school that lasts a century, with many stages, many changeovers, many different "ages": but then, as Beo says, «That's what seasons are like – they're hardly likely to be all the same.»

«What have I learned? A serious approach. Work is the main thing, without it you have nothing in the world. But you must have patience to sustain it, to understand it. Everyone worked in those days, one on one thing, one on another. I worked to expand, for the family, not for myself. I always had enough for myself and I was sure I would always have enough. I worked for the others, for the young people around me. That's something that comes from deep inside, spontaneously: it's in your soul.
When I started to talk about my winery, my friends said they would risk starvation but they would still take their grapes to the communal winery. They said they would never work at night, but expected the winery workers to put in the fatigue. 'I won't get anything for my grapes, it doesn't matter. I'll die poor,' they said, 'but I don't want to struggle.'

«These were folk of my own age, prepared to work all day but when they got home in the evening, they wanted their rest. Whereas I tried to earn something: I always told myself, if you work the whole year, why shouldn't you taste the satisfaction that it's just yours alone, though it's cost you an effort? It didn't seem such a struggle to me, I was thinking about my family, and I learned as I went along. Ah yes, it all comes from up here,»
(pointing to his head).



«The greatest satisfaction
in my life has been to see
my son and my grandson
following in my footsteps.»

Opening page, page 48: from 1915 to 2012, four generations of Tessari. From the left: Michele, Fulvio Beo, and the two Amedeos – grandfather and grandson.

Page opposite: Michele in the winery, enacting a rite: breaking the seal of the barrique of Brognoligo Vin Santo after 7 years of refinement.

Right, four generations of Tessaris during the harvest.

«The greatest satisfaction in my life has been to see my son and my grandson following in my footsteps. I don't have the strength now, but I used to spend my days between the fields and the winery until fairly recent years: it's such a gratification to see what it's become, what I started up. They've been clever in expanding that project, that started with my going solo and then continued with them beside me, Amedeo and his son Michele. I had my skills, they had their technical know-how. You need to move forward, because the world continues to change: and the new winery is another great satisfaction. They've never admitted it to me, but inside they know I was right. Not many people have had the gratification that I have. Now they're on a grand scale, they're even more satisfied that they're going practically all over the world. That wine is being taken everywhere nowadays. They've been astute, and my nephew Michele is one who reasons, he knows his job: he may be modern but he's a good lad. He comes to see me and talks about nothing but wine, but I can't tell him anything because he's surpassed me: 30-50 years ago it made sense, not now.»

The new winery... built by the sons on foundations laid by their father, «Meaning me. My sons? They've been cleverer than me. Because I started and they've increased everything faster than I did. I struggled for years to achieve those trifles... to win over the market... which wasn't really a market, because I went around with samples on my bike. I did that with a purpose, and those struggles have given me the greatest satisfaction... if it hadn't been for me... going against the trend... persisting in spite of being called a madman...»



Beo the positive one, Beo always answers questions straight off, seeing the good side. When you ask him what he thought when he found himself on a label, on the label of a prized bottle named 'Fulvio Beo' [see p 54, Editor's note], he bursts out laughing: «That was crazy: one of Michele's inventions... I was well known enough as it was, without the label! I don't know how often Michele has come to fetch me from home because there were people who wanted to meet me. And all the photos...»

He laughs with real mirth thinking of all the little cameras taking snaps when a busload of Chinese visitors came to the winery, not to mention the local buses that tried to come up as far as Rugate and then gave up before the hill, leaving the passengers to continue on foot or by car. When Fulvio laughs you can see why he was given that nick-name, Beo, long ago.

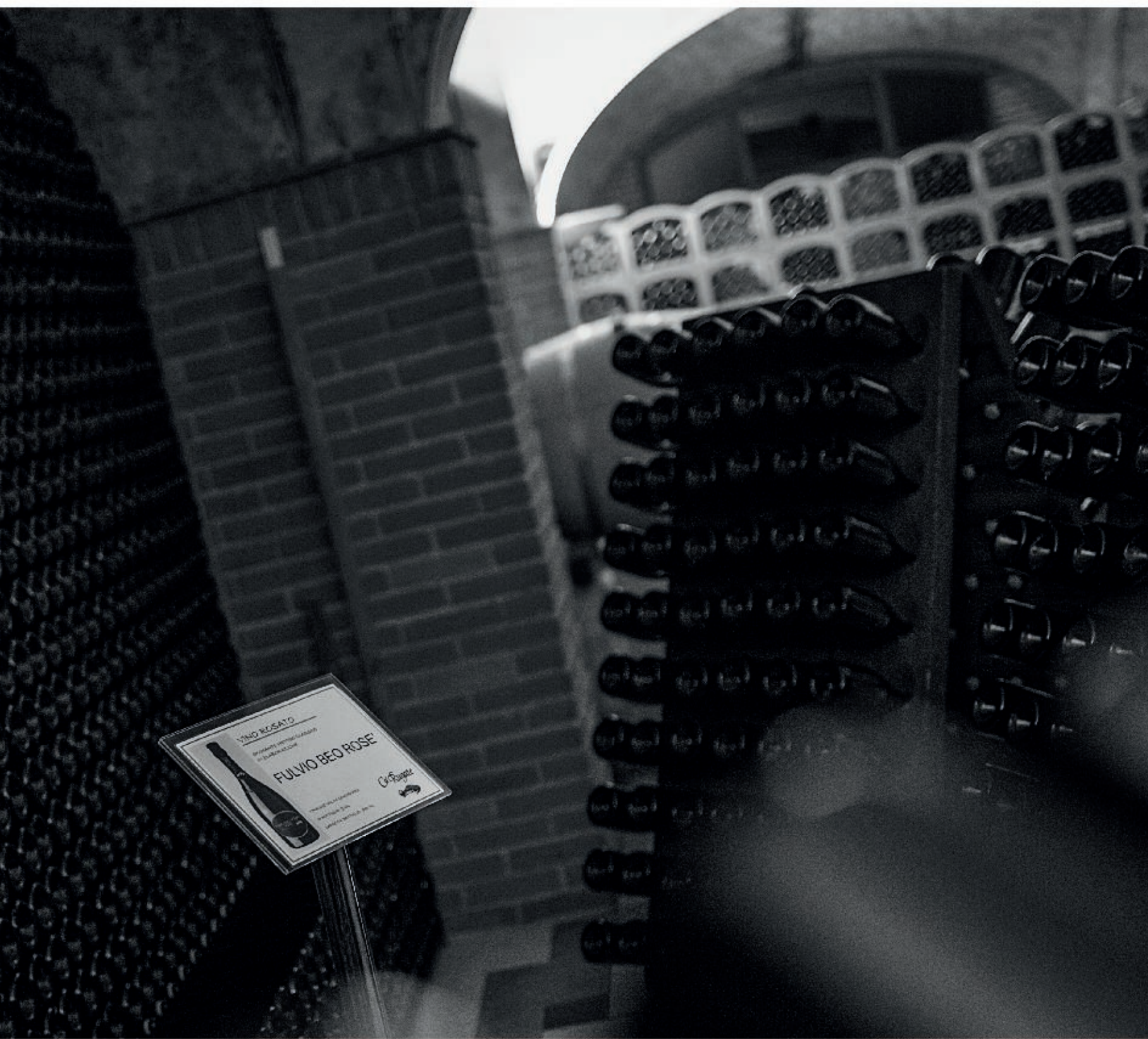


Our barrique cellar, dedicated to the evolution of the most important wines.



«I don't have the strength now,
but I used to spend my days
between the fields and the winery
until fairly recent years.»





Looking back on 100 years...



Fulvio Beo's hundredth birthday: time for a reckoning. With a last unexpected twist.

Regrets?

«There are always some, like not getting a step higher, for instance. But going higher, other things might have happened.»

Joys?

«The most beautiful thing that I did was to marry Rina. That was the starting point. How did we manage to stay together all this time? She was so good. I am patient but she was better than me. I don't think she ever said no to me, she never opposed me. She gave me her support. It happened that I overdid things: maybe she wasn't happy about it, but she never blocked my path, she left me a free hand.»

"La Rina"

When the courtyard wasn't invaded by clients, she didn't object at all to Fulvio going off to play boules. And yet "*la Rina*" had two small children and wouldn't have minded having a helping hand, or seeing dad playing with his kids. «Marriages today go on the rocks,» Fulvio condemns, «because the important things are missing, the patience to put up with things you don't really like. It used to be that people were tolerant, made sacrifices, nowadays they don't bother. You can go round and round the problem, in the end it's sacrifice that's the kernel. Yet I'm content: I worked, I struggled, but I've also had lots of gratification. Mine's been a long life, and lots of things might have happened to me. But I've enjoyed it: I've struggled a lot, I've had plenty of satisfaction and I've always been well. And the greatest pleasure I've had was to spend life with her, *la Rina*.»



Left: two giants in confrontation: Fulvio Beo with a balthazar (12 litres) of our Amarone.

Page opposite: Fulvio Beo in the vineyard, in a portrait of 2014: the last before becoming a centenarian.

Today?

«Today everything is different. Some people don't get married but they're married all the same. It's better today – what comes after is always better. Maybe there were no terrorists in those years, but people struggled; now, less. Now there's a more peaceful life, or so it seems. But today everyone's hurrying too much, they've got too many things to do. Take wine, for instance: it was more delicate then, you didn't know anything, you tried things out. Nowadays it's all explained in books: nobody learns because it's all ready, all written. In those days you would take a glass, fill it with wine, leave it exposed and then see the result: it stayed white or it turned red, so you could dose the bisulphite. Now everything goes smoothly. Youngsters of today wouldn't put up with what we did. The fathers crushed for hours on end, but with the next generation it often all came to an end because the younger ones wanted to be free in the evening. My generation – well, the ones like me – turned their minds to making money, not to going out on the tiles in the evening. Before getting married, maybe, but afterwards, no.»

Fulvio Beo, the patriarch. With a twist to the tale.

Maybe that's all there is to his secret: he watches the world with that wide-eyed, lively look, that positive, sly smile, that hard head which, all things considered, has never failed him. He's always listened to his own advice, Beo, establishing the balance between passion and reason, and he's always been right: escaping, even when it meant risking the only thing he wanted to save – his life; listening to his heart which whispered that “*la Rina*” was the other half that would make him whole; transforming the business with a “stroke of madness”. Despite everything and everyone. And now, from his towering 100 years, he can enjoy the fruits of that patient and steadfast work by which the fragrance of the vineyards of Rugate seduces thousands of people, travelling the oceans in bottles, and flying across the skies of the world. The vineyards, the grapes, the wine: what a business. Not bad for a teetotaler! This is the twist in the tale, perfectly in keeping with Beo's style: «I couldn't stand the smell of wine, and during imprisonment they were always giving it to us because there wasn't much to eat. They gave us bowl after bowl of wine, but I rejected it. My comrades told me to take it anyway, and give it to them in exchange for other food. Then Angelo [*the famous comrade of escape from prison, see p 19, Editor's note*] convinced me to try a drop of wine: he assured me I'd feel less hungry. So a little at a time I began to drink it... and it was really good, that white wine from the Côte d'Azur. My relations with wine began and finished there, apart from a drop of Recioto once in a while.»

«And thus my story is well and truly finished,» says Fulvio Beo.



«Mine's been a long life,
and lots of things might
have happened to me.
But I've enjoyed it.»



5 centuries of Tessari



We have gone back 500 years.
From 1540 to 2012, the Tessari
stock are born and grow up,
long-living, through the centuries.
For 13 generations.

First of 4 children,
Born in c. 1540

Domenico



Second of 2 children,
Born in c. 1579

Lorenzo

Marries Bortola



First of 4 children,
Born on 19/12/1614

Bernardo

Marries Giulia



Fifth of 10 children,
Born on 29/3/1657

Lorenzo

Marries Lucia on 21/8/1684
And in second marriage Sabina in 1693
Dies 26/12/1700

Third of 4 children,
Born on 10/11/1696

Stefano

Marries Giacoma on 18/6/1725
Dies 28/4/1766

Third of 8 children,
Born on 8/10/1730

Domenico

Marries Maddalena il 18/2/1762
And in second marriage Lucia on 12/2/1777
Dies 16/8/1787

Second of 9 children,
Born on 10/8/1765

Lorenzo

Marries Angela on 1/2/1793
Dies between 1847 and 20/7/1849

Third of 5 children,
Born on 16/11/1801

Marco

Marries Carolina on 11/11/1833
Dies 23/9/1878

Tenth of 14 children,
Born on 23/9/1849

Luigi Giovanni Decimo

Marries Angela Luigia on 24/11/1880
Dies 22/7/1908

Fourth of 9 children,
Born on 8/11/1887

Amedeo Silvio

Marries Adele on 26/4/1913
Dies 4/11/1918

Second of 3 children,
born on 8/7/1915

* Fulvio Beo *

Marries Rina on 19/4/1947

Second of 3 children,
Born on 29/9/1950

Amedeo

Marries Carla on 25/5/1974

First of 2 children,
Born on 22/6/1975

Michele Fulvio

Marries Samanta on 11/6/2011

First child,
Born on 24/8/2012

Amedeo

From

father to son





is my land

This land

*

Both men and vines
have roots. When they're
in the same soil they
meet, they speak, they
live and grow together.



Soave, our soil



The history of our
vine-growing land
progresses at the
same pace as the
Ca' Rugate's history.
And of our family.

At the outset of the short century, the landscape of Soave is not so very different from today. Of course wine-growing has not yet become the cultivation that devours all the other forms of farming activities, but from the plains it has gradually expanded onto the hills that surround Soave, Monteforte and Brognoligo, leaving less and less space for the cultivation of cherries and of mulberry trees, which had meant a great deal for that zone dedicated to keeping silk worms. The plain is densely planted with vines, whereas along the slopes towards Castelcivino or Fittà the vines are planted irregularly, alternating between the areas with more suitable soil and those with a simpler working pattern, often with rows interrupted by vegetable patches, symbols of the kind of agriculture which is first and foremost a source of daily sustenance, far removed from the specialisation of today.

The varieties cultivated are the same as ever: *garganega* and *trebbiano* for the whites, *corvina*, *corvinone*, *rondinella* and *molinara* for the reds. Cabernet, merlot and chardonnay are exotic names of grapes that are completely unfamiliar here, while there are innumerable lesser varieties destined to oblivion, especially in Valpolicella, where *rosignola*, *pelara*, *dindarella*, *forsellina*... – grapes that have now practically gone out of existence – at the beginning of the nineteenth century are still cultivated, one for the colour it gives, another for its saltiness, another because it's true that it doesn't have much flavour but it's strong and always produces plenty of grapes.

Besides the subdivision of wines on the basis of colour, the first quality classifications start to appear depending on zone of



FITTÀ, 8 JULY 1915

- Amedeo:* «How are you, Adele?»
Adele: «Fine, tired but fine.
And the little one? How is he?»
Amedeo: «Little chap, he's sleeping.
What are we going to call him?»
Adele: «He'll be Fulvio... Fulvio Beo.»



production, so we find ordinary, medium or fine grapes according to whether they are from the plain, the foot of the hills or the slopes themselves. The appearance of the blight downy mildew and the frosts of the first years of the century caused a reduction of the vine-growing area, although the composition of the Soave wine remained unaltered; the percentages were, curiously, inverted compared with today's ones, with two parts *trebbiano* to one of *garganega*.

The years between the two wars were harmed by the consequences of the blight *phylloxera* which, as in the rest of Europe, was so destructive that it imposed the complete rearranging of the vine-growing landscape of the area, in such a way that the natural resistance of root aphids originating from America could be exploited, allowing the re-domination of land which had been taken out of cultivation, first because of the war and then disease. In actual fact, *phylloxera* had already appeared before the Great War, but the conflict had drawn the attention of the farmers away from these problems. The yearly report for 1929-1931 of the Experimental Centre for Grape-growing and Oenology in Conegliano Veneto not only recommends re-establishment of vineyards in the Soave region, but specifies which species to plant, identifying *garganega* and *trebbiano* of Soave as the best varieties to use in this area. The percentages to use, however, were just about inverted within about thirty years, and the blend, corresponding to that of today, tends towards a relative proportion of *garganega* to *trebbiano* of 80-20%. As we get closer to the area of Monteforte and Brognoligo, moreover, the *garganega* takes on an even more dominant role, to the point of

Page opposite: young *corvina* vines at Campo Lavei.

Below: rows of *corvinone* and *rondinella*, again at Campo Lavei.





LE RUGATE, JANUARY 1947

Fulvio Beo: «Mamma, I want to get married.»

Adele: «Who to, Fulvio?»

Fulvio Beo: «To Rina, that girl you saw on Sunday
who lives in Brognoligo.»

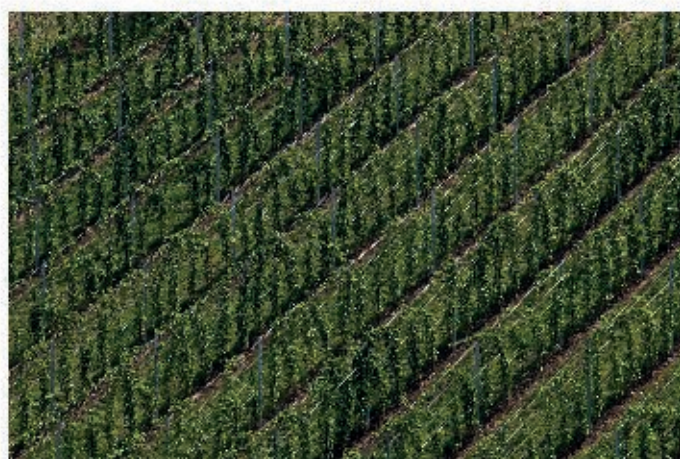
Adele: «Is she a good girl?»

Fulvio Beo: «Yes, *mamma*, she's the right one.»



Page opposite: the vineyard of Campo Lavei.

Right: vine-planted garden at Tremenalto, one of the newest and most evocative in the Company's possession.



being vinified almost pure. In the small-farmers' wineries we find vinification that involves a few days maceration with the skins for the white wine, even sometimes with the stalks, whereas more modern structures, especially communal wineries, start to adopt shorter and lighter maceration, while vinification without maceration is still rare.

The inter-war era is an even more significant period for the Verona region: grape-growing is turning out to be a moneyspinner and vineyards begin to take up fields that were formerly used for grain growing, with *garganega* as the most common variety and *trebbiano* of Soave losing ground in favour of the more productive *trebbiano* of Tuscany. The subsoil work is still done manually, while animals are only used to transport grapes and wine. If the gradual modernisation of wineries leads to more reliable and uniform production, in parallel we also notice a loss of personality in the wines, which in economic terms amounts to an almost equivalent value being associated with the wines from the plains and those of the slopes. This results in a rapid development of the vineyard surface area in the plains where it is much easier and cheaper to cultivate. The great success of the Verona region's white wine induces the western valleys to supplant their Valpolicella varieties with those of Soave, given the popularity this wine enjoys across the Atlantic.

The nineteen-eighties are the years for re-launching Italian ocnology, the years of the methanol scandal; producers took this as the starting point to hold their heads up again, abandoning the idea of the "wine-drink" and pursuing the type of product which

speaks of places and traditions, that can face the pitfalls of time and be the pride of the people. There were many thrusting forces, not always in the right direction.

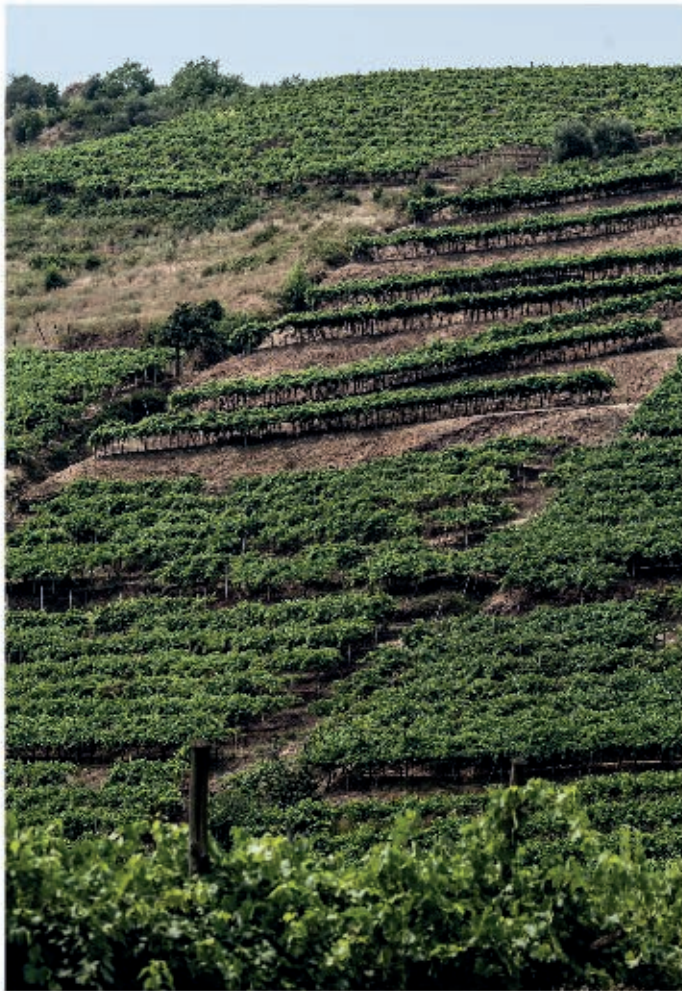
In the vine-growing sector it is becoming evident, as much in Valpolicella as in the Soave area, that the growing method used up to now, the traditional *pergola*, is not really suitable for producing quality; rows would be better, or at least more contained *pergola*, unilateral and not too wide. At the same time producers suffer from a sort of inferiority complex, feeling that the historical varieties are not of a high enough calibre to compete in the world, and thus it was believed that in Soave, chardonnay, and in Valpolicella, cabernet and merlot, will not only be the *panacea*, they will actually be the only path to success. In the wineries technology becomes increasingly refined and aimed, the choice of yeasts and fermentation temperature, the duration of maceration, are all activities which are no longer repeated in the same way from year to year, but constantly questioned, often with the help of "consultants" that had never been involved before – experts in grape-growing or wine-making, who come to the winery to make suggestions, to teach that good wine must rest in the barrique, the small barrel which had hardly ever been seen in Veneto before that time.

This is therefore a period of great ferment, with absurd inflation of the prices of vineyards, within a few years some wines become icons of Italian ocnology, sought after by wine-lovers all over the world. Soave, even when its price has risen considerably, is still an easily accessible wine, whereas it is in the



BROGNOLIGO, AUTUMN 1985

- Amedeo:* «*Papà*, we must develop our business, we should bottle the wine.»
- Giovanni:* «Yes, *papà*, lots of our friends are doing it, and they sell their wine dearer than we do.»
- Fulvio:* «Are you sure?»
- Amedeo*
- e Giovanni:* «Yes, *papà*.»
- Fulvio:* «Well then, let's boule.»



nearby Valpolicella that this path seems to be endless: Amarone, a wine which at the end of the eighties was produced in moderate quantities at perfectly reasonable prices, within a few years becomes one of the most successful wines world-wide, resulting in exponential increases both in the production and the selling price which, though it brings wealth to an area which has never had much, nevertheless induces the expansion of production in zones which are not ideally suited to achieving quality.

Production increases tenfold in a brief period, the Verona region's landscape becomes dense with vineyards and in the outlying areas – such as Val Tramigna or Val di Mezzane – varieties of *corvina*, *corvinone* and *roudinella* regain the vineyards that had been given over to Soave in the preceding decades.

In the last decade of Twentieth century, although there has been a continuous development of the area given over to Amarone and Valpolicella, particularly in the Ripasso version, we have at last seen a redimensioning of the cost of vineyards: the rocketing prices of the previous decade are now stabilising around figures which are still high but nonetheless manageable for companies hoping to extend their vine planted estates. Many of the firms working in the nearby regions – such as Soave, Custoza, Bardolino or Lugana – fall back onto the Eldorado of the Verona area, creating an exponential increase in the number of labels available for sale, with prices ranging from a handful of euros to over 100, certainly contributing to the development of the area but at the same time giving rise to a certain confusion in a market which is ever more overcrowded.

Page opposite: old vineyards in Tremenaito climb up the slope.

Below, clockwise: the perfect shape for a rondinella leaf; rows in the vineyard at Sorraigo; bunch of corvina.





BROGNOLIGO, SPRING 1999

Fulvio Beo: «Well? Is there really nothing else to be done?»

Amedeo: «No, *papà*, we've got to move to Montecchia.»

Fulvio Beo: «Very well, then, as long as things are done properly.»

Amedeo: «Don't worry, *papà*: Michele has a very clear idea.»



Page opposite: the soil rich in skeletons at Terda.

Right: top, Amedeo during the harvest at Campo Lavei; below, Amedeo at Tremenalto.

But what has changed, meanwhile, in the vineyards? Not much, to tell the truth: the *pergola* remains the most common form of support, although with canopies that are less extensive and production gauged towards fruit offering richness but also tension and elegance. Thus we see the rediscovery and recognition of the value of all those vineyards in the high slopes of the hills, which were abandoned in the post WWII era due to the difficulty of working them and the lower return; now they seem to be the strong point of all the most ambitious producers, some businesses going back to working the land even at altitudes over 400 metres.

Alongside the conviction that power cannot be an end in itself, but rather a means to express the character of Amarone, there is maturing at last an awareness in the minds of the wine producers of Soave and Valpolicella that the environment in which these productions come into being is a precious resource, and must be protected; that the vineyards and surrounding lands – the steepest banks and slopes – must be managed with prudence; that the excessive use of chemicals in the countryside must be abandoned in favour of less invasive protection methods – from integrated pest management to sexual confusion, from the dictates of biological agriculture to those of biodynamics. These choices in the vineyard are echoed in the winery, where attention is increasingly focused on health issues and on the origins of the wines, with the abandoning of paths that are safe but do not enhance value, in favour of accepting that hard work leads to great results, even though investment risks may be higher. All this, aimed towards achieving a wine that is pleasant, rich in character and healthy.





Garganega from the vineyard to the glass



History and characteristics of our most renowned white berry crop, and how it is transformed within the range of our Soaves.

The grape variety *garganega* is the most important white berry vine crop in the provinces of Verona and Vicenza, to a lesser extent in that of Padua, and dominates the hills of the Soave and Gambarella areas. The first mention of *garganega* dates from the XIII century in the agronomic treatise *Opus ruralium commodorum* of the Bolognese, Pietro de' Crescenzi, who described its principal characteristics. Undoubtedly some of its features bring this vine close to the family of *trebbiano* and in particular Tuscan *trebbiano*, but this identity is rejected nowadays, although there remains a common derivation from the white grapevines defused by the Etruscans, which also include *trebbiano* of Soave.

Garganega does not have a particularly aromatic quality, but has a patrimony of simple fruity and floral fragrances that become more complex after a period of maturing in the bottle, and open up to aromatic herbs and hints of minerals.

The organoleptic characteristics of the wine depend not only on the sugar content and acidity of the grapes, but also on the presence of secondary metabolites, especially aromas and phenolic compounds, in infinitesimal quantities but nonetheless important in the characterisation of Soave.

The quantity of these precursors of aroma depends naturally on growing and environmental factors: as far as terpene aromas are concerned, it has been observed that a significant temperature variation between day and night causes an increment in their quantity – hence the reason that vineyards in hilly areas have a higher aromatic profile, more profound and complex.

Below, various phases of working garganega.





The overall quality of Soave is also positively influenced by secondary aromas which develop during fermentation.





Soave is straw yellow in colour with greenish tints, fresh in fragrance, fine, delicately hinting of exotic fruit, citrus fruit, but also sweet wildflowers like camomile and elderflower.



The overall quality of Soave is also positively influenced by secondary aromas which develop during fermentation, since particularly the ethyl esters and acetates have a positive effect on perception of fruity and floral fragrance.

Generally, Soave is straw yellow in colour with greenish tints, fresh in fragrance, fine, delicately hinting of exotic fruit, citrus fruit, but also sweet wildflowers like camomile and elderflower. It is pleasant to the taste, with good acidity, persistent, with saltiness and hints of almonds. When it reaches significant quality levels, it is best enjoyed after a few years' maturing in the bottle, enriching the mineral nuances and unusual traces of green tea. If this is the overall picture of the *garganega* whites, let us now have a look at the characteristics of the Ca' Rugate labels.

San Michele is our most immediate and fresh Soave, underlined first of all by the colour: bright straw yellow with glistening greenish reflections. Low temperature fermentation makes it particularly rich in aromas of white flowers and brief maturation only in steel casks guarantees immediate and vibrant drinkability.

Monte Fiorentino is characterised by an intense straw yellow and by Mediterranean fruit aromas in which citrus fruits stand out. The mouth has a good saltiness, which harmonises with the considerable taste structure and the incisive acidity. It should be remembered that although this derives from grapes in a vineyard with excellent south orientation, the decisive slope (from 10 to 30%) and the fairly high position (from 180 to 200 metres amsl) mean that the grapes ripen very late, with harvest well into October, sometimes even after mid-month.

Below: our labels with garganega as protagonist.

Monte Alto reveals a rather golden colour, associated with the delicate phase in wood, and grapes gathered slightly over-ripe. The fragrances, broad and complex, combine recollections of rather mature white fruit with hints of flowers. The belated harvest contributes to creating a particularly enveloping flavour, warm and soft, though well sustained by a fresh vein of acidity.

With regard to our last label, **Studio**, produced in very limited quantities with a predominant proportion of *trebbiano* of Soave, it must be pointed out how the *garganega* contributes to enhancing this important blend with aromas especially rich in

herbs, and with a fresh touch of acidity which build up a rare complexity in the mouth.

In conclusion, it must not be forgotten that the perfect success of the wine-making process is only possible with totally healthy grapes: this is our first objective, which we pursue not only in the cultivation phase in the vineyard and during the very delicate moment of the harvest, but also in the selection of grapes prior to pressing. The good health of the grapes – besides guaranteeing high and pleasing quality in the wine – allows us to use much smaller doses of sulphur dioxide, ensuring the best possible health features for our range of Soaves.





The dream and the reality



The history of the wines of Ca' Rugate is the history of the company, the main milestones in a dream that has become solid reality.

When you are dealing with the history of a farming business, it is almost impossible to establish the precise date in which a family added the marketing aspect to the normal productive activity. Often this choice is the consequence of a small step at a time, of inheritance and subdivision, pieces of land left to one son and perhaps the sales activity left to another, with decisive gaps in time caused by wars or by the premature demise of the heirs.

The Tessari family has just such a history, which began towards the middle of the Sixteen hundreds on the slopes to the north of Soave, at Fittà, where they owned lands and had built a house in which they lived for two centuries. Here, generation after generation, the family's work was purely agricultural, with grape-growing as simply one of the activities pursued in order to make a livelihood. If we want to fix a precise date, however, for the start of their commercial activity, we must wait until 1916, in the middle of the First World War, when Amedeo Tessari, the fourth son of Luigi Giovanni Decimo who had transferred the family to Rugate, took a lease on a hostelry at Presina, in the Bassa region close to the Adige, along with his wife Adele. This was how the marketing of the wine produced by the family began.

Until the middle of the Fifties the family would continue to work the vineyards of Castelcerino, but from then on all their activity refers to the vines of Rugate, a group of cottages to the west of Brognoligo centre, standing on black soil that on first sight seems volcanic. The epidemic of Spanish flu' between 1918 and 1920 claims among its victims Amedeo himself, and a few years later his widow and children obtain a good 7 fields from the



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division of his goods, amounting to 2 hectares of land. This is the setting in which Fulvio Beo Tessari is born and grows up; after marrying Rina and after the birth of their children Luigina, Amedeo and Giovanni, he obtains the vineyards of Monte Fiorentine, the most important purchase in view of the launching of the new company, that of “Tessari Fulvio”, which at the start of the Seventies gives up delivering its crops of grapes to the communal winery and starts up the activity that will later become Ca’ Rugate.

In spring 1986 Amedeo and his brother Giovanni convince their father Fulvio that it is time to change stride, and stop selling by the demijohn – which was a feature of most of the Italian wine business in the post-wwii era – and to concentrate their efforts both in the direction of bottling their wine and in the pursuit of enhancement of quality, which would give the Business more publicity and income. This leads to the birth of Ca’ Rugate, a name which is intended not only to be auspicious, but also a symbol of love for the land which has seen their birth and sustained the whole family for almost a century: Rugate.

Only two years go past – or rather two harvests – and here is the first bottle of **Soave Classico Superiore Monte Fiorentine**, one of the first wines from a single grape variety to be bottled in the Soave region, a white – obtained only from *garganega* and matured in steel – which right from the beginning takes up the challenge of the passing of time, outlined by fragrances that are never over-mature, on the contrary, sometimes even characterised by a vegetal presence, with a dry and nervous palate which

Page opposite: aerial view of the vineyard at Tenda, known as Pietraia, before the vines have been planted.

Below: at Cavsggioni, terraces like theatre scenery, plane after plane.





Page opposite: aerial view of the Pietraia after the building, August 2014.

becomes more salty and harmonious over time. Meanwhile the vineyards have more than doubled and the original 2 hectares have become 16, all situated on the hilly land where *garganega* is an almost unchallenged sovereign.

The Italian methanol scandal [*in 1986*, Editor's note] is a few years behind us and the world of Italian wine is literally in ferment, markets are opening throughout the globe, it seems compulsory for the great Italian whites to be refined in barrique. Thus with the harvest in 1991 **Monte Alto** is born, a white produced again from *garganega* alone; partly for necessity and partly as a challenge, this wine reaches maturity in those small French barrels. Since then, while the Monte Fiorentino is produced from year to year with small adjustments, its brother in the wood undergoes more evident and frequent changes. It is necessary to understand how the wine is behaving inside the cask, to seize the right point of maturity of the grapes, take account of the size, integrity and origin of the barrels themselves. The successes are numerous, to begin with, **Soave Classico Superiore Monte Alto 1996**, the first wine from the Ca' Rugate house to be awarded Three glasses by the wine guide *Italian Wines* by Gambero Rosso.

The story of Ca' Rugate, as will be evident from many choices made during the next three decades, is always torn between the will to experiment and the desire to stay faithfully bound to traditions, or rather it must be said that these two aspects progress hand in hand, drawing us towards the reinterpretation of tradition, the rereading of a habitual and long-established action through knowledge of modernity. In this

context we must mention the **Bucciato** experience, a wine which for some years completed the range of whites proposed by the company, returning to the time-worn custom of partial maceration on the skins, an old recipe in the height of wine-making in the eastern territory of the Soave denomination.

At an equal rate, the conviction takes hold that the Soave region alone is not enough to capture the world's stage: a wine and a territory are needed, at this rate, to conquer international attention. It is almost an obvious choice, the nearby territory of **Valpolicella**, which in its eastern part overlaps with that of Soave. The outcome is initially a simple vintage Valpolicella; then, naturally, the whole range is developed, once again with a critical awareness that induces the Company not just to exploit a denomination which is enjoying global success, but to safeguard its traditions and its real character, utilising vine varieties and *terroir* to the best possible advantage.

Already in the first half of the Nineties the Company can no longer operate efficiently in the old structure in Brognoligo, but the desire not to detach themselves from the land of their birth makes every operation complicated. After various confrontations and evaluations, in 1999 the Tessari family decide to build a new winery in the nearby town, Montecchia di Crosara, and this structure, built in a few months and well inserted into the agricultural fabric, is equipped with suitable spaces for all the working procedures, from the offices to the bottling plant, the areas for drying the grapes and refining the wine in wooden casks, with a generous part expressly dedicated to visitors, one of the





The story of Ca' Rugate is always torn between the will to experiment and the desire to stay faithfully bound to traditions.



strong points of Ca' Rugate which it has always believed in. Inside this area is displayed the outcome of years of research, a museum of farming culture [see pp 32-33, 41-43, Editor's note], rich in historical relics placed in a setting that recalls the houses of the countryside of the past; it is frequently visited by schoolchildren on outings, who thus come into contact with a world that no longer exists.

The harvests of 2000 and 2001 bring about the début of **Valpolicella Superiore Campo Lavei** and **Amarone**, with immediate success. The judiciously farsighted choice of a reliable technical staff who do not limit their involvement to an imposed set of rules – as too often occurs – but take part along with the Company in its progress in seeking out unexpressed potential in the territory, allows Ca' Rugate to impose a profile for Valpolicella and Amarone, from the very first production, which differentiates it from the prevailing style, dispensing with the dominant sensation of dried grapes in favour of fresher wines with a juicy and agile touch, a stylistic quality which will become more widespread over the years within the Classical area as well.

By the middle of the millennium's first decade the Company has acquired considerable stability, thanks to its extensive vineyards, dynamic national distribution and range of products which, besides their intrinsic value, express the personality of the respective types. But in the mind of Michele Tessari – by now the fulcrum of all the company's activity – there are still some points which require input, starting with a further improvement in the quality of the most simple products, **Soave San Michele** and **Valpolicella Rio Albo**, then focusing on a production that has

been active for many years, the Classic Method sparkling wine, which needs to be made more convincing, and lastly the varied world of sweet wines, already well represented by **Recioto di Soave La Perlara** and by **Recioto della Valpolicella L'Eremita**.

It goes without saying that the improvement of vintage wines is the outcome of all the experimenting developed in the ambit of the most ambitious wines, so that in the course of a few harvests, in an apparently natural way, these wines gain consideration in all sectors, from the media to the market, emerging not only as good but also, to apply terms which are rather over-used but appropriate, typical and territorial.

In this atmosphere of renewal in search of new challenges, the first result is indeed a sweet wine, from semi-dried, exclusively *garganega* grapes, long refined in small barrels and never topped up so that it matures like a Vin Santo, liquor wine. This is indeed what it is, although not acknowledged by the law: the antique Vin Santo of Brognoligo was, in fact, produced on an artisan scale in all the houses of grape-growers in earlier centuries. The **Conte Durlo**, offspring of the harvest of 2001 but marketed only in 2008, is a wine of very limited production but nevertheless much talked about, due to the extraordinary value of what it represents and what it is: an absolute concentrate of *garganega*, sun, time and culture, only produced if the harvest is good enough and only after a really long period of refinement. While further experiments are taking place in the winery, another new line appears among the dry wines, resulting from local tradition and modern knowledge, called **Studio**. This is a rereading of



Page opposite: crates at Campo Laveit
we take good care of the harvested grapes
during transport, too.

the past, when over a century ago Soave was produced with a prevalence of *trebbiano* over *garganega*. The blend of the two grapes, partially refined in oak casks, is launched with a bang, becoming immediately one of the most interesting wines in Italy, capable of transmitting the volcanic character of Soave with the elegance and fragrance that the world desires.

In 2012 Giovanni, brother of Amedeo, decides to pursue a different career and Michele takes the helm of the business to a greater degree, crowning his many years on the front line running the production and marketing strategies: vineyards spreading out over seventy hectares within the Soave, Valpolicella and Lessini Durello denominations, a large, functional winery and a production of over half a million bottles which are largely sent abroad. All this is managed with the generous collaboration of his father Amedeo and invaluable aid, in the administrative field, from his sister Laura.

Collaboration with a modern distribution network has guaranteed that the Tessari Company is now a consolidated presence throughout the whole of Italy, while Michele and his closest collaborators have brought Ca' Rugate to all the corners of the Earth, on the strength of indisputable quality and strong adherence to its territory. In parallel, the specialised press has given increasingly frequent awards to our wines, with a predilection for **Soave Monte Fiorentine**, the first wine in the history of the Company, which was successful in relaunching an idea of a Soave that is old and new at the same time, a wine obtained with the use of oak casks but able to mature with class

and personality for decades, highlighting the emphatic mineral quality, sulphurous and from hydrocarbons, with which high quality *garganega* enhances the product after long refinement in the bottle.

For many years Classic Method sparkling wines have been produced by the winery, at first hardly given notice, but now it has found a satisfactory share of the market and requires not only an increase in output, but also a “jewel” to keep up with the highest profile wines of the Company. Thus **Amedeo** is born, using a recurring name in the family; this sparkling wine from *duvella* grapes with a small quota of *garganega* makes an impact in its first *début*, in 2012 with the vintage 2008. The desire to glean yet again from the resources of a rich territory like Soave penetrates the expertise of the family, which rejects the limitation of following the example of other Italian sparkling wines, craving comparison with the best international examples. Amedeo, as the label explains, is a homage by Michele Tessari to his father Amedeo and to his own new-born son, his father's namesake. It is a wine moulded on being essential and tense, expression of integrity and luminosity, a witness to how well this land can give lasting and refined dry white wines, sinuous dessert wines and, as of today, also sparkling wines which are bold and dry.

The rest of the story still has to be played out. Probably in the future it will be little Amedeo who will bring a wind of change, just as his father Michele did in 2002 thanks to a father – Amedeo – who had the lucidity and intelligence to give a free hand to a son whose ideas were clear and far-reaching.



The rest of the story still has to be played out. Probably in the future it will be little Amedeo who will bring a wind of change, just as his father Michele did in 2002.





Ca' Rugate today. And tomorrow



The voice of Michele Tessari: Ca' Rugate today, Ca' Rugate tomorrow, the choices made by the company, respect for the land and wines of great quality.

My idea of a farming company is closely bound to the vineyard. I don't believe in placing in sterile contrast the "small producers" and the "wine industrialists" based on numbers of bottles produced. I think the difference lies more between "merchants" and "winegrower", bearing in mind, therefore, the way in which the grapes or the wines are bought. Consequently I truly believe that companies can exist even on a very large scale, producing millions of bottles a year, without having to be considered "commercial" just because of their size.

What is to prevent a winery that owns hundreds of hectares of land from directly cultivating it and obtaining good grapes, thus justifying in every way the definition of "agricultural business"? Of course, when vast numbers of bottles are being put on the market, there are organisational problems relating to the company and to the market which have to be tackled through specific knowhow in the different departments of the business. But there is no use thinking that a small winery, today, can survive out of touch with time, just making its own wines and waiting trustfully for someone to come and ask for them.

This was partly what happened in the nineteen nineties, when the consumers of many countries – the United States in the front line – discovered the quality of Italian wines born in the vineyard and started a process of research for excellent small producers. But it was in those very years that I began to see that it was possible to reach very high quality levels even on the scale of a company which targeted an increasingly international market, requiring recognisable labels, available in far greater quantities.



«My idea of a farming company is closely bound to the vineyard.»



The regular weave pattern in the vineyard rows at Treminalto.





«When I fully took on the administrative side of the Company, I decided to accelerate the process of acquisition of exceptionally suitable vineyards.»

From the year 2002 – when I fully took on the administrative side of the Company – I decided to accelerate the process of acquisition of exceptionally suitable vineyards, for very high quality wine production, so that Ca' Rugate could increase its output of such bottles and enable the name (rather than the brand) of our winery to become well-known, appreciated, sought and then “found” by the lovers of quality wine.

This consideration for the international markets did not, however, cause me to forget about the Italian consumers. On the contrary, I must say I was determined to organise the sale of my wines so that they always corresponded punctually to the requests of the local vintners and restaurants. I am convinced that this was the right choice, for three reasons in particular. The first is linked to the economic crisis, which causes consumers to look for quality bottles with reasonable prices, and this is certainly a feature of our Soaves. The second is the increasing interest which has at last developed for wines produced in their own territory, which express the grapes they derive from in a simple and direct way, speaking about the area in which they are born. The third is that, in my opinion, to be credible in the world, you first have to be appreciated in your own home: if the many tourists who visit the Veneto do not find my bottles here, why should they want to buy them when they go home? For that very reason – the conviction I have about the potential of our local grapes – I am convinced of having made a wise decision in rejecting shortcuts which at one time seemed advantageous and which today create elements of considerable confusion among consumers. I have therefore never opted to plant international

grape varieties in my vineyards (whether white or red) that seemed sure to capture the market when the client was apparently asking determinedly for wines that were simply “good”, without any other characterisation associated with the type of grapes used. I am fully aware that the success of international style wines, fruit of several grape varieties blended with great technical ability in the winery, was at first a response to the demand for wines that were clean, well made, pleasant and highly drinkable. This requirement was born from industrial-type operations – culminating in the methanol scandal of 1986 – adopted by too many disinterested companies that actually produced bottles (and flacons) of low quality wine, with no personality and very mediocre pleasantness, basically suited to supplying a little alcohol and calories to the human organism; this had been the trend in past centuries when the demands of the farming community were very different from today's.

It should not be forgotten, after all, that up to the nineteen seventies and eighties, even the small producers were not altogether without flaws from the quality point of view, especially on account of the lack of technical knowhow which was often the cause of wines with certain defects – such as undesired residues of sugars or volatile acidity out of control. It was perfectly understandable, therefore, if consumers wanted better made, clean wines, even though this might mean the lack of a precise typicalness linked both to the grape variety and to the place of cultivation. Faced with this situation I realised clearly that it was necessary for me to do what my grandfather Fulvio and my father Amedeo had already started to do at Ca' Rugate, aiming towards

Aerial view of the property of over 30 hectares in Valpolicella.





«I want my vineyards
to be tended in the most
natural possible way.»



the creation of a winery that focuses more and more on the maximum quality possible, but always characteristic of the local soil's production. Italy has in fact an enormous wealth of grape types from which good wines can be obtained, certainly hundreds of varieties. I must be equally frank in affirming that within this vast range only a few dozen have a history, an *areale* [the geographical area in which a species is widespread] and a terroir, which allows them to stand out at an international level.

Regarding the white wines, *garganega* has certainly shown that it is suited to creating very drinkable wines right from the first year of production, and is capable of improving for a long period in the bottle, placing it at the top of Italian ampelographic quality. For this reason I have invested and intend to invest further in vineyards of *garganega*, only where the position has demonstrated through the centuries that it can yield great quality grapes. The same operation is in my plans for the red wines: only Valpolicella (so the classic grapes of this area: *corvina*, *corvinone* and *rovinella*) and only vineyards ascertained to have suitable soils. As far as the vineyards are concerned, I would like to underline two elements. First of all, that the work in a vineyard is, and will continue to be, managed directly by myself, using skilled labour for the pruning and picking, entrusting the coordination of these activities to company employees. The operations of field finalising will be carried out by specialist cooperatives who can offer flexible terms and optimal intervention capacity. The second aspect I wish to highlight is the more specialist one, that of the agronomic choices relating to all main aspects, from fertilising to trimming the rows, and the use of insecticides.

Page opposite: interplay of slopes in the Tremenalto vineyard.

This page, top: aerial view of the headquarters at Montacchia di Crosara, where Ca' Rugate moved to in 1999, almost at the dawn of the new millennium.

Below: from the vineyard of Campo Lavei you can see the remains of the castle of Illasi (X century).





Left, top: bunches of *corvina*;
below: *trebbiano* of Soave.

Page opposite: our *corvina* after one year.



Given that I want my vineyards to be tended in the most natural possible way, so that I can even taste the grapes at the moment of harvesting, I call in the services of first rate consultants; they operate on the basis of my indications, adopting the most suitable and timely technical choices with the aim of continually obtaining healthy grapes for easy and immediate vinification, not requiring any later corrective action on the must. I do believe that in the winery you can and should proceed in an absolutely classical way, on the basis of knowhow received from your predecessors, since nature itself transforms the must into wine in an “automatic” process. The inverted commas are put in because this term does not mean, in my opinion, that there is nothing else to do in the winery, as I occasionally hear said. On the contrary, to make faultless wines rich in personality I believe you need to give continuous attention and targeted action, starting with the use of technology. On the other hand, I am convinced that you must never take action which goes against the nature of the real essence of the grapes you have gathered, different in every harvest. I am absolutely in favour of the use, especially as far as Soave is concerned, of controlled temperature fermentation vats, a truly revolutionary technical tool, which today allows us to obtain fragrant and sharply defined wines, fresh and not oxidised – something which was often not the case fifty years ago. No alchemy, therefore, and no blending with extraneous varieties, no additives of synthetic chemical substances.

On the other hand, yes to high-profile technical intervention which, on the basis of this set of priorities, guarantees the maximum result in the bottle.



«Given that I want my vineyards to be tended in the most natural possible way, I call in the services of first rate consultants.»



100 years, 20 milestones

1915-2015

1915 1918

** *

1916

1947 1950

** *

1948

1955

*

1963

*

1915

On the 8 July, Fulvio Luigi is born, nicknamed "Beo", son of Amedeo and Adele.

1916

Amedeo and his wife take the lease on a hostelry in Presina: this is the beginning of the sale of their home-produced wine.

1918

On 4 November, Amedeo dies, struck down by the epidemic of Spanish flu.

1947

Fulvio Beo, having returned unharmed from War, on 19 April marries his adored Rina.

1948

It is on 26 March that Rina gives birth to Luigina, first-born of the Tessari family.

1950

On 29 September it's the turn of the second-born: Amedeo is born.

1955

All the activity is transferred to Brognoligo.

1963

On 28 September the last of the 3 children of Fulvio Beo and Rina is born: Giovanni.

The Seventies

"Tessari Fulvio" stops taking its grapes to the local communal winery and starts to produce wine itself.

1975

In the Tessari household we are onto the third generation: on 22 June Michele is born, son of Amedeo and Carla.

1986

"Tessari Fulvio" makes way for the more modern Ca' Rugate: this is a significant change in stride, towards high quality produce and a new company identity.

1988

The first bottles of Soave Classico Superiore Monte Fiorentino, one of the first wines from a single grape variety in the whole Soave region, pure *garganega* white.



In a hundred years a great many things have happened: some will make a permanent mark on the destiny of Fulvio Beo, his family and his Company.



1991

In Ca' Rugate the barrique appears. Result: Monte Alto white, pure *garganega* once again.

1996

Soave Classico Superiore Monte Alto is awarded the first of its *Three Glasses* by *Gambero Rosso's Italian Wines*.

1999

The new company HQ is at Montecchia di Crosara, more suitable for a company in expansion like Ca' Rugate: winery, offices and Museum in a single structure.

2000 e 2001

With the new millennium, new wines are launched: Valpolicella Superiore Campo Lavei and Amarone are born. The harvest of 2001, a very respectable yield, gives life to another innovation: the Corte Durlo, Vin Santo (liqueur wine) refined for 7 years, only ready therefore in 2008: in the following years it would only be proposed with very good harvests, always after very long refinement.

2002

Amedeo hands over the reins to Michele, a mark of his enlightened wisdom in the delicate changeover from one generation to the next in the company.

2012

With the vintage 2008, Amedeo is born: a jewel among sparkling wines, from *durella* grapes and a small part of *garganega*. It is a homage to his father Amedeo by Michele, as well as a welcoming greeting to his own new-born son: Amedeo, of course.

2015

Vineyards for about seventy hectares between Soave, Valpolicella and Lessini Durello; production of over half a million bottles; quality acknowledged and well-known on an international level. This is Ca' Rugate today, a hundred years since the birth of Fulvio Beo.

From an idea of
Michele Tessari

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