

Inside the glass the wine makes dense patterns of arcs that slowly dissolve. The first sip is held in the mouth, where it lingers and swirls, spreading the enrapturing flavours. After the second or third sip, judgments are uttered, comparisons, memories of past years of “fabulous” wines that will never be repeated.

QUI UTUNTUR VINO VETERE  
SAPIENTES PUTO  
(Plautus)

*I hold to be wise those  
who make use of aged wine*

MASSIMILIANO BERTOLAZZI

*Vino Santo of Brognoligo*  
*in Valle d'Alpone*



Vino Santo of Brognoligo in Valle d'Alpone

Massimiliano Bertolazzi

CA' RUGATE  
VITICOLTORI  
IN SOAVE E VALPOLICELLA

[www.carugate.it](http://www.carugate.it)

2008

*To my wife Luciana*

MASSIMILIANO BERTOLAZZI

*Vino Santo of Brognoligo*  
*in Valle d'Alpone*

2008

*Vino santo, dessert wine par excellence, dates back to the earliest times of wine production by the ancient Romans or even earlier.*

*From Pliny to Columella, Domitius Ulpius, Flavius Magnus Aurelius Senator known as Cassiodorus, the Bolognese Pier de'Crescenzi, Andrea Bacci, the marquis Scipione Maffei, Da Persico, the Verona innkeeper Valentino Alberti, Giuseppe Beretta (a member of the Accademia di Agricoltura, who lived in Verona during the first half of the 19th century), down to Carlo Belviglieri: there has been a continuous flow of praise for this wine.*

*It is surprising that the official recognition of the DOCG has not yet come about for this wine, born centuries ago in the Valle d'Alpone and still produced today in a limited area of the same region with the specific method that is so different from the much more acclaimed "holy wines" from Tuscany or Trentino, etc. We fully expect to celebrate this DOCG milestone being reached someday soon, but in the meantime we would like to dedicate these brief historical notes to those who continue to produce Vin Santo following tradition.*

## INDEX

<b>Brognoligo: land and winegrowing</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>The cradle of Vino Santo</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Testimonies from the XVI to the XIX century</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>The price of Vin Santo</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>How Vino Santo of Brognoligo is obtained</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<b>Technical data</b> .....	<b>30</b>
<b>The grapes for Vino Santo</b> .....	<b>31</b>
Garganega .....	31
Trebbiano .....	32
Early measurement of wine .....	32
<b>Tasting Vino Santo</b> .....	<b>33</b>
“The priest’s wine” .....	34
<b>Appendix</b> .....	<b>35</b>
A particular rental contract in Brognoligo .....	36
Sites of great charm in Val d’Alpone .....	37
Monteforte .....	37
Brognoligo .....	41
Costalunga .....	44
Roncà .....	51
Terrossa .....	53
Administrative alternation in some Val d’Alpone towns .....	54
<b>Glossary</b> .....	<b>57</b>
<b>The company Ca’ Rugate</b> .....	<b>60</b>
<b>Vin Santo Corte Durlo: technical data</b> .....	<b>61</b>

## Brognoligo: land and winegrowing

The valley Val d'Alpone is the easternmost of the valleys in the province of Verona and separates the Lessini mountains in Verona from those of Vicenza. Along the watercourse from which it takes its name, which in past centuries was called, and had the characteristics of, a river, there is a succession of evocative panoramas, from the peak of Purga di Bolca to the church of Castello di S. Giovanni Ilarione, from Bastia di Montecchia di Crosara to the little church of S. Antonio Abate di Monforte d'Alpone. Sloping down towards the plain, the view opens out over the fields of San Bonifacio, Arcole and Albaredo, where the Alpone flows into the major river, the Adige.

The exceptional features of the valley were pointed out by master Torello Sarayna in a description of the territory of Verona, written in the first half of the 16th century. This is how the historian from Verona saw the valley – which he called “of Montecchia” – fertile for fodder crops, wines and oil, surrounded by hills clad with olive trees, all truly delightful and pleasant, and over the valley plain the river Alpone flows, serving the mills that grind the grain, irrigating the fields and rendering them more fruitful.

Mid-way up the valley of the Alpone are the towns of Brognoligo and Costalunga, which used to be a single independent entity until the beginning of the 1800s, when they were annexed to Monteforte. Their territory, bordering on Montecchia, Monteforte and Soave, is almost entirely sited on the right bank of the Alpone, where the land is predominantly hilly and used to be wooded or sterile, whereas now it is covered with splendid vineyards, dotted with fruit trees, especially cherry trees; on the left side of the Alpone, flat, fertile land stretches to the foot of the hills; it used to be arable or kept under grass, now it, too, is mainly planted with vines.



Panorama of Brognoligo and Costalunga .

From the documents held in Verona's archives it appears that there were rows of vine (*bine*) at Brognoligo far back in the Middle Ages, in particular on the plains and foothills, supported by live trees most of which were maples (*opi, antani*).

As far as the vine varieties are concerned, in the 16thC there is mention of the so-called garganega, destined to be widely developed, while in the 1700s we find reference to the turbiana (*trebbiano*).

Agraz cadaveri sopra la ...	
Al. N. 1. 1/2 ...	12 100
Al. N. 2. 1/2 ...	12 100
Al. N. 3. 1/2 ...	12 100
Al. N. 4. 1/2 ...	12 100

The Magagnotto Archive - (24.3.1784) ... To the same Turbiana Grapes 3 containers (brenti)

The spread of winegrowing was given a boost by the citizens of Verona, who began to buy up considerable areas of land from the 1400s onwards, between Brognoligo and Costalunga; to name but a few: the Sparvieri, the Maffei, the Sommacampagna and in particular the Montanari. The agricultural assets of this last family had reached an extent of over 400 fields by the mid-1600s. The imposing villa, management hub of the company, shows the level of wealth they had accumulated, along with its many out-buildings: dovecot tower, farm buildings, cellars, dairy, farmyard, kitchen garden, etc.

The inventory, drafted on 12 May 1576<sup>1</sup> after the death of the Count Vincenzo, gives a meticulously detailed list, in Verona dialect, of the contents of the Brognoligo villa including the barrels in the cellar. There is mention, among other things, of full barrels and empty ones, a vezolo cask with the capacity of half a cart with vino schiavo, another two small vezoli for vin cotto and agresto - rustic wine (vin cotto was obtained by boiling the must to reduce by a third through evaporation, then it was put into barrels. The agresto, records of which have been lost, was the juice derived from a type of grape that never ripened fully, and it was thus used as a condiment and for medicinal purposes), three brenti of good and bad wine, various containers, barile and barloti, brente small and medium in size, a lora funnel, a measuring bucket, a mesa, etc. For transporting the grapes they had vetrali and tinaci. In the cellar there were over 100 hectolitres of wine altogether, a considerable quantity for that time.

<sup>1</sup> E. POLI, *Villa Montanari - Durlò a Brognoligo, Vago di Lavagno, 1990, pp. 74 – 75, 78 - 79.*

Returning to winegrowing, in the second half of the 1800s and the start of the 20thC this activity suffered severe damage caused by certain diseases, which decimated the production. In the summer of 1851 the fungus known as oidio, or “fog”, began to affect the territory of our valley, and in the subsequent five years completely ruined the grape harvest. The remedy was found to be dusting the infected vines with sulphur. The farmers of Brognoligo and Costalunga, traditionally diffident towards any innovation, were induced to use it following the example of the count, Antonio Portalupi (owner of the villa now in the possession of Lorenzo Tessari), who was seen personally engaged in sulphuring the vines on his property. The parish priest of Brognoligo, Don Orazio Ancetti, was also instrumental in convincing them, by explaining with enthusiasm during his Sunday “Doctrine” the need to use the product.

Troubles were not over, however, because in 1880 the appearance of peronospora, late blight, brought about a reduction to a third of the normal harvest after a few years. This new disease was weakened through repeated spraying of copper sulphate solution. At the start of the last century the area of Verona was afflicted by an even more devastating pest, phylloxera, which soon destroyed a large proportion of the vines. The struggle was long and hard, until at last it was decided to completely destroy the existing vineyards, replacing them with seedlings of American vines which are resistant to phylloxera. By grafting the Italian vines onto the American root plant, this terrible disease was defeated.

Winegrowing underwent a considerable development in the twentieth century, when the hilly ground was subjected to widespread tilling after the discovery that the tuffaceous basaltic soil they consist of is particularly suitable for vineyards.

From the nineteen seventies some winegrowers decided to devote themselves to the intensive production of high quality wines, and with this aim they laid out vineyards with a new conception. As a consequence, over the years about ten private wineries were set up, which have caused the excellence of Brognoligo wines to become known in the rest of Italy and the world.



Hills of Brognoligo. Photo Aldo Lorenzoni.

## The cradle of Vino Santo

Vino Santo is still produced in Brognoligo, though now more sporadically and in small quantities. It is made along the lines of tradition, on the scale of an exclusively family-based activity.



Brognoligo and Costalunga; in the foreground, la “Cuca”.

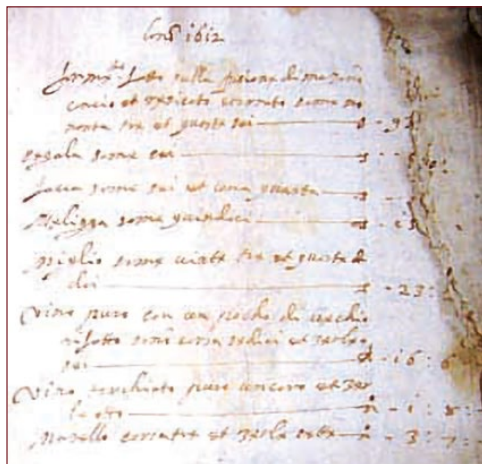
For the last 56 years the Cherry Fair has been held at the beginning of June - cherries are a typical product of the area - and since 1971 there has been a Vino Santo fair too. The winegrowing and producing businesses have unfortunately in recent times given priority to the more commercial production of Recioto. The fear that the historic wine might disappear altogether from the territory has urged us to take up this research.

We have looked in particular at the old inventories of movable assets, drafted usually on the death of the head of a family. Going through the equipment of the cellars, we have found considerable evidence to suggest that Vino Santo was produced in the mid-valley area for three centuries, in particular in Monteforte and Brognoligo.

These documents also give an insight into the instruments that were used for winemaking, the varieties of wines and in some cases their value.

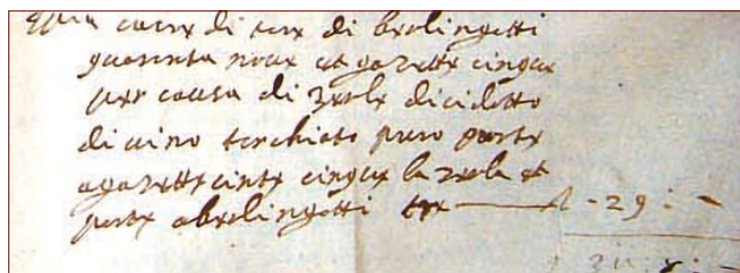
## Testimonies from the XVI to the XIX century

- In a document dated 1622, concerning the products obtained in the year in the property of the Montanari in Brognoligo, we find a mention of *pure wine with a drop of old wine remade*, and *pure torchiato wine, a cart and eight zerle*.



Pure torchiato wine, a cart and eight zerle..

In the document there is also mention of a credit of forty-nine *berlingotti*<sup>3</sup> and five *gazette*<sup>4</sup> for the sale of eighteen zerle of pure torchiato wine sold partly at 25 gazette per zerla and partly at 3 berlingotti..



It cannot be excluded that the Vicenza term “torchiato” was a synonym for *Vino Santo*, but the certainty has not been proven.

2 VERONA STATE ARCHIVE (ASVr), Montanari Archive, Busta XXXVII, no. 458.

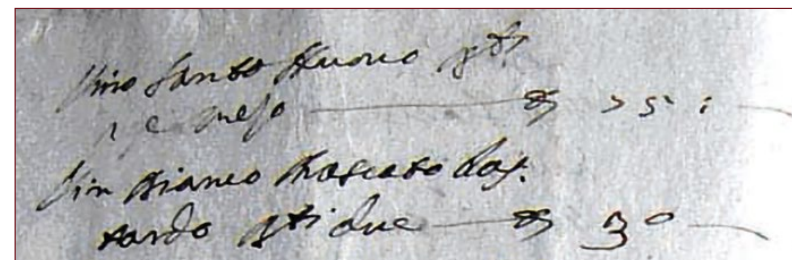
3 The Berlinga (or berlingotto) was a Milanese silver coin of the XVI–XVII centuries.

4 The Gazeta, an old Venetian coin, was the equivalent of 2 Venetian soldi. (G. BOERIO, DIZIONARIO DEL DIALETTO VENEZIANO, Venezia 1856).

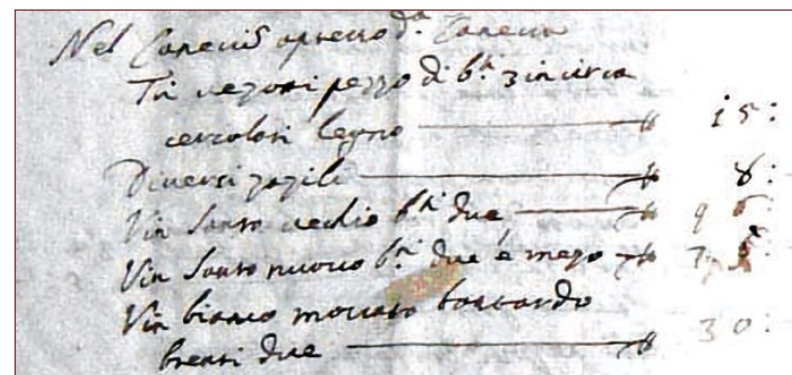
- An inventory compiled in 1705, on the death of count Benassù Montanari, gives the precise value of the instruments and tools found in the cellar of the Verona house sited in contrada di Ferraboi<sup>5</sup>.

According to this document, the Montanari could keep up to 250 hectolitres of wine. (From other inventories of the same era, we learn that 350 hectolitres were kept in the properties in Pradelle, in the lower Verona region, 300 in Negrar and a similar amount in Brognoligo).

The valuer Zuane Cao, nicknamed “torcolotto” (wine transporter), establishes a similar value to the wines comparing them to the *brento*: “straightforward” wine 48 *troni*, new vino santo 30 *troni*. This is the first sure reference to *Vino Santo* that could only be wine from Brognoligo, since there was no production either in the lower plains or in Valpolicella.



New *Vino Santo* two and a half brenti and 75 troni; mixed white wine two Brenti 30 troni.



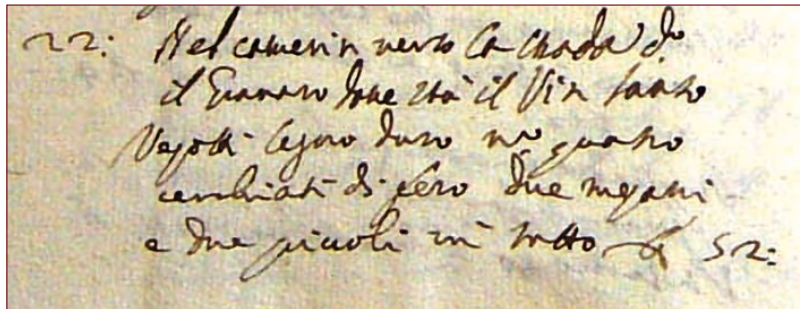
Old *Vino Santo* two brenti 96 troni, new *Vino Santo* two and a half brenti 75 troni, mixed moscato white wine two brenti 30 troni.

5 ASVR, Montanari Archive, Busta XLI.



- In 1709, in Monteforte, on the death of the nobleman Giovanni Boniotti, his sons Carlo Antonio, Diaspe and Luigi, engaged the notary Pietro Chiozzotti to draw up the list of the family's assets<sup>6</sup> with the help of some valuers, including the joiner Domenico Bogoncello. In the *tinazzara* and the large cellar there were many tools and containers for winemaking, but the various types of wine are not mentioned. Nevertheless it is worth noting that among the rooms in the landowner's house there was a small room towards the street called the granary, where there was *vin santo* in four hardwood casks banded with iron rings, two medium and two small.

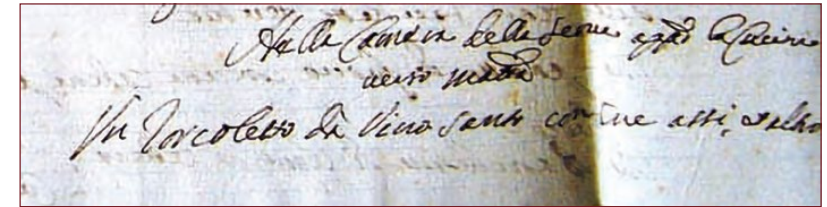
This reference to hardwood normally implies sweet chestnut (*castagnara*) or mulberry (*moraro*).



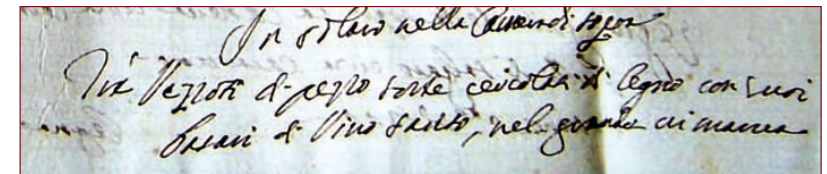
The cellar could hold up to 500 hectolitres, but it should be remembered that the Boniotti family had, between Bonifacio and Monteforte, a considerable estate of arable land.

<sup>6</sup> ASV; Ancient Archive of Notaries, Deeds of Notary Chiozzotti Pietro, Busta 3429.

- A more interesting inventory from the point of view of our research is that of the deceased Don Giobatta Berti, also from Monteforte, dated 29 June 1725, compiled on the request of the *sindici*, mayors of the community, Sebastiano Scolari, Giobatta Feltrin; Francesco Prà and the *massaro* (small farmer) Simon Burti, all nominated according to the wishes expressed by the late priest, written down by the parish priest Don Carlo Sonetti.



In what was known as the servant's room there is a small press for *vin santo* with relative equipment, while on the floor above there are 3 hooped casks of various sizes with supports, for *Vino Santo*.

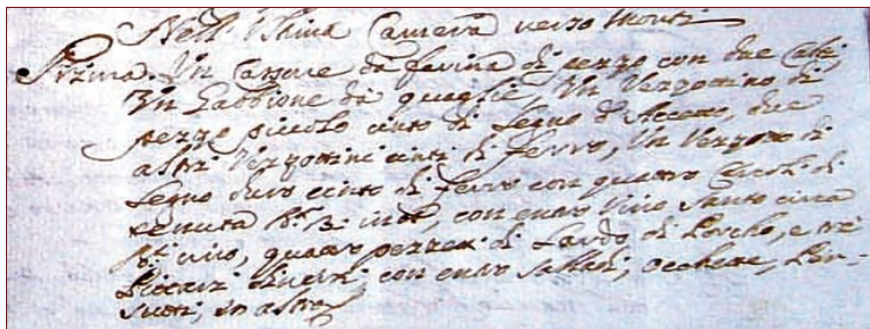


In the attic room above there are 3 hooped casks of various sizes with supports, for *Vino Santo*.

From the largest of the casks there are 3 ounces of wine missing, in the smallest one 7, the middle one is empty. In the little room above the office there are 3 hooped casks with supports, full of *Vino Santo*; from the first, near the window, 5 ounces are missing, from the others, 3 from each<sup>7</sup>.

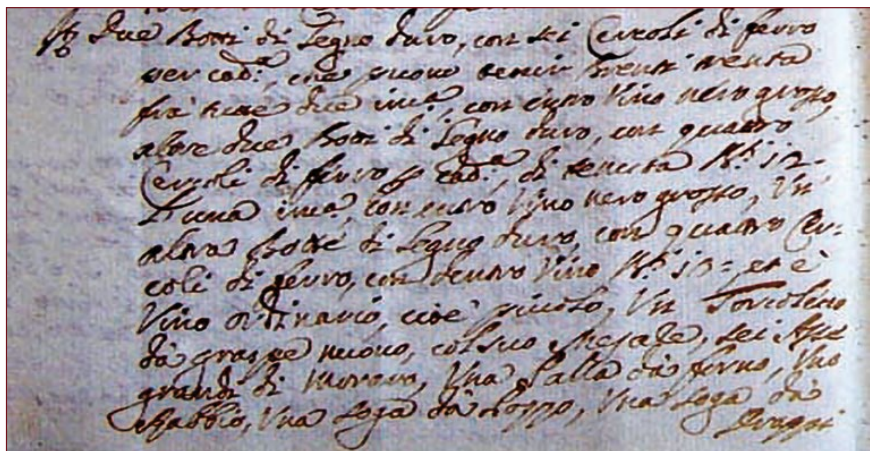
<sup>7</sup> ASV; Ancient Archive of Notaries, Deeds of Notary Faccini Gio. Francesco fu Giobatta, Busta 5472, Prot. 11.

- Now let's take a look at the inventory of the deceased parish priest Don Giuseppe Buglioni, drawn up at Costalunga on 18 February 1726<sup>8</sup>, on the instruction of his brother Santo. In the last room on the side facing the hills there are various small casks in fir-wood girdled with wood, full of vinegar, and one hardwood cask girdled with iron and with 4 restraining hoops 3 *brenti*, with vino santo inside, circa one *brenti*.



Nell'ultima Camera verso Monti con entro Vino Santo Brenti uno.

In the cellar known as the *tezzetta* there are also vats, barrels, casks and *brenti*, with a total capacity of over 80 hectolitres, of which 11 are for *vino piccolo*, weaker wine, and 9 are for ordinary wine. There is also a new press for pomace with its wooden base.



New press, *Torcoletto*, for pomace with its wooden base, *Mesale*.

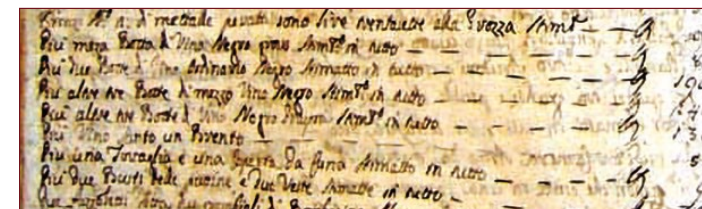
8 ASV; Ancient Archive of Notaries, Deeds of Notary Tordato Antonio, Busta 11078, Prot. 14.

One of the most interesting inventories is that of the movable assets of Lorenzo Magagnotto, drawn up on the 2 November 1730<sup>9</sup>, after his demise, on the request of his wife and his brother Francesco.

The cellar held 15 *brenti*<sup>10</sup>, 10 of strong red wine, 7 of weaker wine and a quantity of grapes for crushing. If we consider that the inventory was drafted in November, these grapes were undoubtedly being kept to dry. This is confirmed by the description of the room above the cellar, a kind of granary, where there were 8 *brenti* of grapes for making wine. The period and the place of conservation leave no doubt about the intended use of the grapes: they were certainly intended for producing *Vino Santo*.

- Another inventory of similar interest was drawn up in 1759<sup>11</sup>, in the Bishop's Palace of Monteforte d'Alpone, by the expert cooper Antonio Moloni of the contrada S. Tommaso of Verona, assisted by the joiner Bernardo Burti of Monteforte. In the cellar of the palace there were 34 barrels with 4 or 6 hoops, between 13 and 20 *brenti* each, 9 vats of 20 to 40 *brenti*, 2 large barrels of 20 *brenti* each and various containers, as well as buckets and funnels for pouring. The overall capacity comes to 533.60 hl, while the price of the barrels varies between 35 and 50 *troni*; the large barrels were worth 70 *troni* each, the wooden vats with 4 iron hoops were worth between 50 and 100 *troni*. The value of the press seems modest at 55 *troni* compared to the 10 *troni* attributed to two funnels, one new and one old.

- *Vino Santo* reappears in the deed of division stipulated in 1764 on the assets possessed at Ronca by the Garzetta family<sup>12</sup>. Items of casks, barrels and wood, estimated by Antonio Gonzato according to value but not to capacity. Included in the list are half a barrel of Strong wine (80 *troni*), 2 barrels of Ordinary Red wine (190 *troni*), 3 barrels of half Red Wine (240 *troni*), 3 barrels of Red Wine Pomace (130 *troni*) and one *brento* of *Vino Santo* estimated at 55 *troni*.



Plus *Vino Santo* one *Brento* 55 *troni*.

9 ASV; Ancient Archive of Notaries, Deeds of Notary Faccini Gio Francesco, Busta 5473, Prot. 1/18.

10 One *brento* corresponded to 68.68 litres.

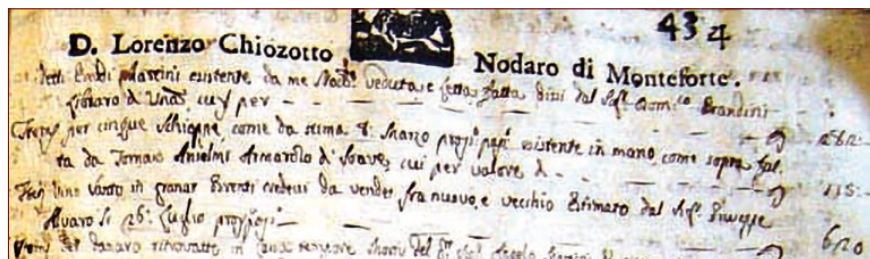
11 ASV; Ancient Archive of Notaries, Deeds of Notary Chiozzotti Lorenzo, Busta 3695, Prot. 45.

12 ASV; Ancient Archive of Notaries, Deeds of Notary Chiozzotti Lorenzo, B. 3695.

- Going back to Monteforte, the above-mentioned Lorenzo Chiozzotti, clerk of the episcopal jurisdiction, on 15 January 1765 stipulated the nuncupative will of Carlo Mozzati. He names the universal heir to be “his only and beloved son” Giuseppe, a minor at the time, and nominates as tutor for him, as well as executor of the estate, the doctor of medicine Dr. Gian Pietro Maria Venturi; the doctor, some days later, instructed the compilation of the inventory of the testator’s assets<sup>13</sup>. In the cellar there were 40hl of strong wine, 27 of weaker wine and almost 9 of sweet wine. It is worth noting that the family owned a hostelry open in the Dominican household. In the granary there was a hardwood cask with 4 iron hoops holding 6 *brenti*, full of vino santo, while in the smaller granary there were 5 *caratelli* casks of vino santo, mostly new and the rest old, in all there were 15 *brenti*, certainly a significant quantity.

- Again in Monteforte, the same notary Chiozzotti, on 12 May 1766<sup>14</sup>, drew up the inventory (or *ristretto* or *billanzo*) of the whole estate of the late Angelo Martini, son of the famous surgeon and herbalist Bartolomeo. The document was drawn up on the request of the widow Maria Marina Faccini and son-in-law Sebastiano Garbelli, also a pharmacist. Among the cellar tools evaluated by one Giuseppe Alvaro, were various types of large and small barrel (*bottoni*, *botesele*, *caratelli*), vats, containers (*brentelle*) and 5 *vezotini* of vin santo. There were also thirteen *brenti* of vin santo in the granary to be sold, both old and new, priced at 620 *troni* (i.e. 48 *troni* per *brento*).

The numerous *brenti* of vino santo designated for sale in the pharmacy suggest they were used therapeutically.



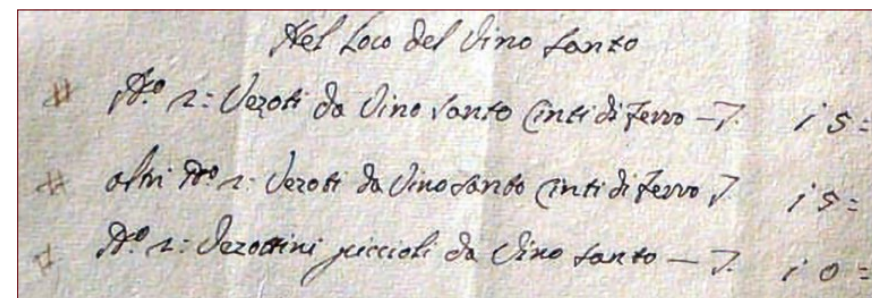
Vino Santo in the granary, 13 *Brenti*, both old and new.

<sup>13</sup> E. POLI - M. BERTOLAZZI, *The old family Mozzati d'Aprili and its last descendent Don Giuseppe, benefactor of the poor of Monteforte, Vago di Lavagno*, 2006, pp. 33 – 34.

<sup>14</sup> ASV; Ancient Archive of Notaries, Deeds of Notary Chiozzotti Lorenzo, B. 3695.

- Returning to Roncà, on the 21 May 1767, after the demise of Leonardo Cavaggioni, his assets were divided up according to the inventory among the deceased’s sons<sup>15</sup> Giuseppe, Giobatta and Don Gasparo. This detailed document, drawn up by the valuers Giobatta Strapparava from Colognola and Andrea Durlo from Roncà, informs us of the size of his estate. The family lived as a brotherhood in the piazza of Roncà, in the house now owned by the heirs of Arnaldo Villardi.

The inventory lists, among other things, all the types of barrel of the cellar which, given their number, indicate how important winegrowing was for their business. There were: 7 large vats, 9 *vezzoti*, 12 large barrels, 7 barrels, 3 vats, 1 *carradora* barrel (to be transported on a cart) with 8 iron hoops, 2 *brento* barrels, 3 *soma* barrels, 1 measuring *brento*, 2 funnels with stand, 1 *vezotto* for vinegar. There is no mention of the quality of the wine, but the presence of 11 *vezotti* and 2 *vezottini* for vino santo in the space called the Vino Santo room, bears witness to the considerable production of this precious spirit.



In the *Vino Santo* room.

- Back in Monforte where, on 4 January 1774<sup>16</sup> after the death of Don Domenico Bertolazzi, his brothers Don Antonio and Don Valentino decided to set up a fraternity or household with Anna, a relative, who was also an heir of the deceased priest. They therefore carried out an inventory of all their assets and nominated Don Antonio in charge.

The document indicated the various barrels of the cellar. All the containers were made of hardwood, including the measuring *brente* and the decanting vessel. There were 70 hectolitres of strong wine for trading, valued at 4 *troni* per *brento*, and 13.80 of weaker wine. We also find 2 *brenti* of *vino santo* made in the current year.

<sup>15</sup> Archive heirs of Arnaldo Villardi.

<sup>16</sup> ASV; Ancient Archive of Notaries, Deeds of Notary Todeschini Domenico, B. 11128.

- In Sorio, a part of the Valle d'Alpone which belongs to Vicenza but borders on Verona's land, on the 5 August 1775, among the objects returned by the parish priest Don Rocco Pittarini to Mr. Salvador Portinaro of Chiampo, there were 2 small casks (*vezzoli*) of vino santo in the granary<sup>17</sup>.

- The register of income and expenses for the church of S. Maria Fossadragone, in Monteforte, compiled after the departure of the Capuchin monks, shows several expenses for cult. Among these, in the years 1786, 1789, 1791 and 1798, are included those for "vino santo for the mass"<sup>18</sup>.

- Once again in Brognoligo, in a deed stipulated by the notary Domenico Todeschini on 15 June 1795 – as shown in the appendix – a Dr. Stefano Venturi, solicitor of the count Montanari family, obliged Mrs Francesca Creazzo, widow of Faccini, who managed all their assets in Brognoligo, to provide *yearly as an appendix or gift to the Noble Sig. Count landlord two brenti of Vino Santo, three or four years old and of excellent quality from Verona*.

- In the register of income and expenses for the building of the new parish church of Monteforte, at the beginning of the 1800s, the parish priest Don Luigi Zanoni recorded the economic aspect of the undertaking<sup>19</sup>. There is no lack of references to wine distributed to the workers involved in the great operation. We will restrict our references to expenses of 36 lire on the 19 April 1806 owed to Mr. Francesco Beggia for a demijohn of vino santo gifted to the Count Bortolo Giuliani. With this gift of vino santo the archpriest was expressing his gratitude towards the architect, who had requested no recompense for the design and site supervision of the building.

In the register of tithes from the same period – kept in the parish archive – Don Zanoni wrote that he had bought containers, *some and carghe of grapes for Vino Santo called turbiana*, for a sum of 71:5 lire. This is the only evidence we have of Vino Santo made exclusively with Trebbiana grapes.

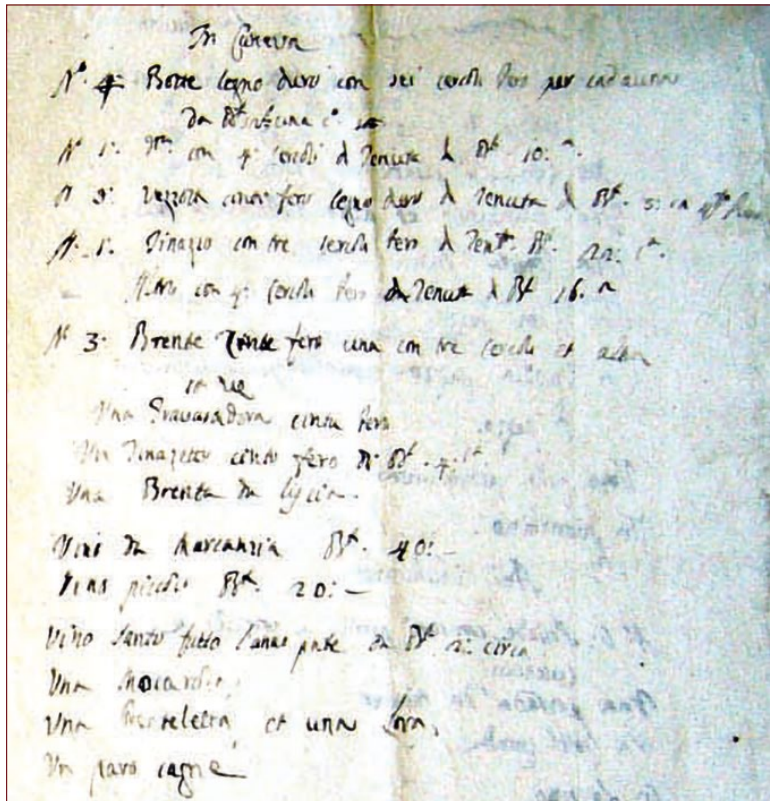
In the project drawn up in the year 1800 by the well-known engineer Luigi Trezza, for the "country house" of Dr. Stefano Venturi<sup>20</sup> in Monteforte, among the various rooms there is indicated the "granary for vin santo".

17 PARISH ARCHIVE of SORIO. Noted by prof. Luigi Zonin.

18 PARISH ARCHIVE of MONTEFORTE, Bilancio della Ven. Chiesa di S. Maria Fosso Dragon fu de' RR. PP. Capucini in Monteforte for the years 1769: 1770: 1771 ecc.

19 PARISH ARCHIVE of MONTEFORTE, "1805 INCOME AND EXPENSES FOR THE BUILDING OF THE NEW PARISH CHURCH OF MONTEFORTE".

20 Public Library of Verona, Drawings of Luigi Trezza.



Wine made in the current year of circa 2 Brenti.

We must remember that VINO SANTO would be kept, and is still kept, in the granary or in the upper rooms of the house.

- On 23 April 1806, in Monteforte, the division took place of the “common faculty” between Paolo Manfro<sup>21</sup>, his nephews (sons of his deceased brother Antonio) and the widow of the latter, Angela Preto. The document mentions the wine stored in the cellar: 5 barrels of *first wine of the barrel* estimated at 1650 lire, one barrel of *strong wine* and another of *good weaker wine*. There is also mention of Vin Santo, with the precision that it will be split in half.

Piu per valore del VINO di BOTTE 15  
a 15/30 con considerato al 15 6 5 0:  
Olore una BOTTE VINO ERANO per  
Al VINO SANTO sarà seriso per metta  
2 9 0 5 0 : 8 : 3

The Vin Santo will be split in half.

- As a result of a dispute begun in 1826<sup>22</sup> between the brothers Giobatta and Domenico Cera from Gambellara Vicentina, the latter drew up the “Note of goods” that existed on their property in the years 1824 and 1825. In the granary of the building there were, in the first year, 14 barrels of *pure wine*, 10 and a half barrels of *weaker wine*, 3 vinegar casks, a small cask of *acquavite*, *granary wine* (i.e. pressed) in casks all eight topped and hillside wine, part hung up to dry and part crushed, eighteen elements.

15. VINO PURO in vasi tra grandi e piccoli, e parte scemi, sette	7:-
16. VINO PURO vecchio in vasi scemi uno	1:-
17. VINO piccolo fra vecchio e nuovo in vasi parte anche scemi nove	9:-
18. VINO piccolo ad uso del Boavi in vasi due	2:-
19. VINO di granajo, ossia torchiato, in vazzotti tutti scemi otto	8:-
20. Uva di monte, parte appiccata, e parte follata, colli dieciotto	18:-
21. Castagne staja due	2:-
22. Ulive Minali cinquanta sette	57:-

The following year the list included: *pressed wine in eight casks not checked for quantity and grapes from the hillside (appiccata), enough to produce eight secchi of pressed (torchiato) wine*. It is possible that by *torchiato* they meant VINO SANTO.

20. Frutti in acquavite bottiglie otto	8:-
21. Belle, ossia schioppo pestiche venti	20:-
22. Farcine seicento	600:-
23. Semenze di canape quastavali quattro	4:-
24. Rosolio bottiglie piccole due	2:-
25. VINO torchiato in otto vazzotti una non silevata quantita.	
26. Uva di monte appiccata tanta quantita, che produsse otto secchi di vino torchiato.	

<sup>21</sup> ASVr; Ancient Archive of Notaries, Deeds of Notary Todeschini Domenico, B. 111230.

<sup>22</sup> Private archive of the author of this volume

## The price of Vino Santo

The high price of Vino Santo, justified by its long and complex preparation, is underlined by its comparison with the prices of other types of wine. Examining some of the inventories referred to above, we can derive reliable information. We should note that the unit of measurement, the *brento*, is about 68.68 litres.

Let's begin with the price of wine produced in the year 1705<sup>23</sup> in the business of the Counts of Montanari in Brognoligo: *clear white wine 7 troni per brento, pure unmixed wine 12 troni, half wine from 3 to 6 troni; mixed moscato is valued at 15 troni per brento*. The price of new vino santo is much higher, worth 30 *troni* per *brento*, while the old is worth as much as 48

To establish some parameters for the comparison, we should remember that the daily wage of an agricultural worker at that time would hardly reach 1 *trono* and there would require 12 to buy *one brenta for decanting, with 2 iron hoops and 1 half-turn funnel*.

During the second half of the century, wages were not subject to any increase: for example, for putting in place *the grapes for vin santo*, the pay for a woman was half a *trono*, while for a man it was one *trono*.

The above mentioned inventory of 6 June 1764, stipulated in Terrarossa di Roncà fifty years later, provides further indications of the prices of wine. Half a barrel of *strong red wine* was worth 13 *troni* per *brento*, 2 barrels of *ordinary red wine*, 8 *troni*, 3 barrels of *mixed red wine*, 7 *troni*, 3 barrels of *weak red wine*, 4 *troni*; one *brento* of Vin Santo, 55 *troni*.

This last annotation does not specify whether this was new or old wine, but it seems in any case to have increased in price by 7 *troni* compared to the 48 of the old Vin Santo mentioned in the inventory of 1705.

<sup>23</sup> ASV; Montanari Archives, B. XXXVII, no.458.

## How Vino Santo of Brognoligo<sup>24</sup> is obtained

All the testimonies gathered from the live voices of the wine producers concord that certain conditions are indispensable for the success of the wine. In the first place, the grapes must be selected, crushed and bottled all during the phases of the full moon, known in dialect as *dura* (hard).



Old garganega vineyards.

The healthy and well ripened grapes, identified beforehand and taken from the vines grown in the best hillside vineyards, were gathered before the general harvest, usually at the beginning of October, around the day of “the Madonna of the Rosary”. The elders uphold that the garganega grapes should be mixed with 20% of *trebbiano (turbiana)* but the younger producers don't agree. In order to have optimal quality grapes, the vines should be at least 30 or 40 years old and the bunches – no more than two or three per plant – should be open and with thick skins, chosen from those closest to the stem. The harvest should not be carried out in damp or rainy conditions to avoid the formation of mould. The bunches, delicately placed in baskets or crates, are then transported to the farm. Here they are tied together in long clusters, called *picai*, and hung from nails in the beams of the granary. In Brognoligo there is no tradition of placing the grapes on *arèle* (reed racks) as there is in some areas.

<sup>24</sup> This information has been provided in particular by Martino Tessari, Costanza Sordato, Albano Dal Bosco and his brothers, all from Brognoligo



Bags for straining Vin Santo.

The grapes receive light and air from the open windows which are then screened with canvas sacks in damp or raining conditions.

Between Christmas and March, when the grapes have become suitably dry, the *picaï* are taken down. After the tie strings have been removed and the mouldy grapes eliminated the process of crushing can begin, carried out in a hardwood *brento* without any additive of calcium metabisulphite. When the first must has been transferred to a low wide tub called a *travasaora*, the pomace (*graspe*) are placed in the press (*torcolo*). The pressing is forceful since the juice contained in the dried skins must be squeezed out.

Once the pomace has been removed from the press, it is covered with a tarpaulin to stop it from drying out, since it is to be used for “repassing”, which consists of adding some high quality wine, which will thus take on the colour and the flavour of Vino Santo.

The must, obtained both from the crushing and from the pressing, is measured with the old must-meter “*Babo*”, and may reach 25-30 degrees or even more. It is immediately transferred to a wooden *brenta*, placed in the porch or in the granary with the windows open. The cold from outside means a partial fermentation.

A tarpaulin held up by a cross-pole protects the must, which in the next 30-40 days becomes covered with a greenish-yellow crust, called *telarina* or *tela* or *grosta*, with a few swollen bubbles known as *bolle* of about a centimetre thick.

The *telarina* consists of yeasts and protein substances of the must itself, while the solid parts sink to become deposit on the bottom. Fermentation, a difficult struggle in these conditions, allows the precious liquid to retain a stable sweetness.

At this point decanting takes place, which is done using a hose attached to a pointed rod which is used to perforate the *telarina*, taking care not to break it, otherwise the oxidisable bigger parts would sink to the bottom, spoiling the wine and making it less clear and clean. The wine is decanted into demijohns filled almost to the brim; the cork is placed on the rim to allow breathing.

After about twenty days, and certainly before the start of fermentation which would transform all the sugar into alcohol, the wine is cleared and decanted into other demijohns or small barrels where it is left to rest for one or more years.

The bottling process takes place on Good Friday, or between August and September, during the phase of the full moon. The bottles are then taken to the granary or to the floor above the cellar of the house where they are pushed half-way into a bed of sand.

## Technical data of Vino Santo<sup>25</sup>

### Colour:

Brilliant golden yellow with highlights reaching amber.

### Nose:

Fine with hints of honey, figs and raisins, intense and characteristic.

### Taste:

Full-bodied, harmonious, velvety, round.

The lively flavour of the product is perfectly blended with the characteristic and pleasant taste of bitter almond. Considerable persistence of taste and nose.

## The grapes for Vino Santo

### Garganega

#### Characteristics:

- ❖ Possibly a vine originating from Greece, it is widespread in the classical cultivation areas (Soave, Gambellara);
- ❖ Shoots with average-expansion of tip, greenish-white, cottony, with small open leaves at the tips, greenish-white, cottony;
- ❖ Average leaf, pentagonal, five-lobed, with very pronounced serrations, dull green edge rather blistered, smooth;
- ❖ Long bunches, cylindrical, with very pronounced wings, fairly loose clusters with rachises that often split at the points;
- ❖ Average size berry with spherical shape; skin colour golden yellow, fairly easy to detach, persistent rupture point; thick skin; juicy pulp with simple taste.



The *Picai* of garganega grapes.

<sup>25</sup> Provided by the oenologist Luigino Bertolazzi.



## Trebbiano

This is a white berry vine variety in the vineyards of the province of DOC Soave. Some believe that Trebbiano di Soave has many features in common with Trebbiano di Lugano and with Verdicchio.

The bunch, the leaf and the skins of the berries are not the least like the Tuscan Trebbiano: in our Trebbiano the bunches are more minute and limited, with loose clusters, less vigorous, the skins of the berries are astonishingly delicate. It never has an excessively high yield.

Characteristics:

- ❖ Shoots with greenish-white tip with pink tinges;
- ❖ Average leaf, pentagonal and trilobite, with mid-green edge;
- ❖ Average bunch of pyramidal shape, winged and fairly compact;
- ❖ Average size berry with spherical shape, thick skin, colour greenish-yellow with widespread dots.

### Old measurement units for wine

VERONA	VICENZA
Botte = 12 brenti = 8 some = 824,1600 litres	Botte = 8 mastelli = 911,1200 litres
Soma=1/2 brenta = 6 secchie = 105,7666 litres	-
Brenta = 4 secchie = 70 litres	Mastello = 12 secchi = 113,8900 litres
Secchia = 18 inghistare = 17,627 litres	Secchio = 10 bozze = 9.49 litres
Inghistara = 4 gotti = 0,9793 litres	Bozza = 0,9490 litres
Gotto = 0,2448 litres	-

## Tasting Vin Santo

A Brognoligo drinking wine was a daily habit, both in the home and out. The winery and the hostelry are meeting places, where wine warms the hearts, makes people friendly, animates the company making people noisy and gregarious. But gathering round a bottle of Vin Santo makes the drinkers become tasters. Suddenly there is silence, a solemn air all around. The wait is filled with suspense, the gestures are almost sacral: they seem to be 'in the presence' of the wine, it is the very essence, more than any other, of the long oenological history of the area, and constitutes its heraldic crest of nobility.

It's late, after a dinner with friends, maybe Saturday evening, and the conversation turns to wine; someone decides to open his best bottle, with a challenging air. That may be how the tour of Vin Santo begins, with the generosity of the special occasion bestowing abundant measures. The group around the table has the air of a committee ready to judge a candidate. The bottle arrives: the year is asked, the colour is glimpsed from the bottle and judged. The host slowly extracts the cork, feels its consistency, smells it, then slowly pours the wine into the glasses. The aroma expands, silence descends. The ceremony has begun.

Inside the glass the wine makes dense patterns of arcs that slowly dissolve. The first sip is held in the mouth, where it lingers and swirls, spreading the enrapturing flavours. After the second or third sip, judgments are uttered, comparisons, memories of past years of "fabulous" wines that will never be repeated. The bottle is finished, another arrives...

Now the time has come to move on to somewhere else to taste other wines and compare them with the ones just sampled. There won't be winners or losers because everyone, in their own heart, will retain the conviction that the best wine is the one only he knows how to make.

There are few official occasions for opening a bottle of Vin Santo: wedding anniversaries, birthdays and other recurring festivities. If the moments for savouring this oenological rarity have diminished, there is nevertheless a custom of keeping a little glass of that wine for the sick, because according to a well-embedded popular belief it has therapeutic properties.

A few months ago a woman from Brognoligo, knowing her brother to be on the verge of death, wanted to sweeten his passage by moistening his lips with Vin Santo. Such a gesture would at one time have been full of magical significance.

### “The priest’s wine”

*Cencio Denoche*, alias Vincenzo Pernigotto, sexton and bell-ringer of the parish church of S. Stefano of Brognoligo, every morning just before six o’clock would enter the sacristy and open the central door of the monumental walnut wardrobe. First he would take out the chalice and the paten for the mass, then the sieve with wide mesh with which he would eliminate the fragments of the hosts, lastly the two light ampoules placed on a coloured glass tray. For me, a sleepy altar boy getting ready to serve the Mass, those gestures had the air of a sacred rite. In a corner stood the dark bottle of *Vino Santo*, which the knobbly but agile hands of *Cencio* lifted with the same care as he used for the chalice. The ampoule, with its gilded round stopper, was filled to the neck: it was a slow, careful gesture, which coated the fragile glass with an amber hue. I was allowed, after repeated recommendations to be careful, to pour water into the other ampoule with the silver stopper.

Some time later, with the complicity of other altar boys, I tasted the *Vin Santo* at the end of the Mass. I remember the inebriating emotion, shared by my partners in crime, of savouring the last drops left in the ampoule. I don’t know if the pleasure was more acute from that nectar itself or from the desire to do something forbidden, but I certainly went home with guilty feelings, along with pride for having succeeded in an almost sacrilegious achievement.

I did not find the courage to confess that sin to Don Domenico, the old parish priest.



New and old *Vin Santo*.

**APPENDIX**

## A particular rental contract in Brognoligo

A deed dated 15 June 1795 stipulated by the notary Todeschini Domenico<sup>26</sup> refers to an earlier text of 7.11.1793 in which Dr. Stefano Venturi of Monteforte, solicitor for count Montanari, granted up to the date of St. Martin's day of the same year the continuation of the temporary rental of property in Bognoligo to a certain signora Francesca Creazzo, widow of Giuseppe Faccini. That lady, soon afterwards, asked for her sons, Luigi and Marin, to be involved too.

Adi 15. Giugno 1795. Verona.

In vigor di Scrittura 7. gembre 1795. riportata dal Nob. <sup>1.</sup> Dr. Stefano Venturi facente a nome e qual Proc.<sup>o</sup> di S. Ecc.<sup>za</sup> il G.<sup>o</sup> Nob. <sup>1.</sup> Co. Pio Vicenzo Montanari donvella la sua Fran.<sup>ca</sup> Creazzo Ved.<sup>a</sup> del G.<sup>o</sup> <sup>1.</sup> Giuseppe Faccini con-  
tinuare della temporal locazione dello Stabile di Brognoligo fino a S. Martino dell'anno venturo 1797. Bvramando però essa S.<sup>ra</sup> Fran.<sup>ca</sup> facendo per la stessa il <sup>1.</sup> Girolamo Castellani qual Procurator per Procura 14. cor.<sup>o</sup> detti Todeschini Nob.<sup>o</sup> di prova gave anco a favore dell' <sup>1.</sup> Marin Faccini di lei figliolo l'affittanza pred.<sup>ta</sup> giacchè Le si presenta l'opportuna occasione di g<sup>li</sup> trovarsi. <sup>1.</sup> Co. il Nob. <sup>1.</sup> Conte Pio Carlo Montanari padre di esso <sup>1.</sup> Co. Pio Vicenzo e gentiluomo di camera e Sovra-  
diere di S. A. di Spagne di Spagna vesta concordemente e di comune consenso ritornata da locazione dipendente dalla suominata Scritt.<sup>a</sup> 7. gembre 1793. edichè s'intendeva terminare li 11. gembre 1794.

The count Gio. Carlo Montanari, who resided in Parma where he was *Gentleman of the Chamber and Brigadier of H.R.H Infante of Spain*, through the mediation of Venturi, agreed, two months before his death on 31 August of the same year, to prolong the rent for another 15 years for the widow and her two sons, until St. Martin's day of 1810. The tenants were assisted by Sebastiano Garbelli of Monteforte, their relative and guarantor.

<sup>26</sup> ASV; Ancient Archive of Notaries, Deeds of Notary Todeschini Domenico, B. 11129, XLII.

The document, which mentions the good and lasting relations between the Montanari and the Faccini family, establishes the payment of an annual sum of 5,100 Venetian lire, to be paid in three equal instalments of 1700 lire each: on the first of August, in January of the following year and on the first of May. As the fifth paragraph specifies, this makes it a rental contract styled *fire and flame* or *rose and thorn*, in which *in the event of storm, river burst, drought in olive grove or vineyard, or similar hardship (God forbid) the tenant shall not be given any compensation.*

3<sup>o</sup> Per il corso delli sud.<sup>ti</sup> anni quindeci somministrerà annualmente la sud.<sup>ta</sup> Paulini per appendice ossia ro-  
gaglio al Nob. <sup>1.</sup> Co. locatore due Brenti Vino Santo di tre o quattro anni di buona ed ottima qualità pos-  
to in Verona quanto a un Brento presso il Nob. <sup>1.</sup> Co. Giacomo Bellana da cui riporterà la Ricevuta fino a

<sup>27</sup> ASV; Montanari Archive, Busta XII. The Faccini, from Montecchio Maggiore (VI), had taken over on 12.11.1755 from the previous tenant, Francesco Tordato, in running the property of the count Montanari in Brognoligo. The notary Francesco Giobatta with his son Giuseppe Faccini, signed a rental contract for 15 years with the count Girolamo Rambaldi, solicitor of the count Gio Francesco Montanari residing in Parma. On the death of Giuseppe, in Brognoligo on 30 November 1790, his widow Francesca Creazzo managed the Montanari assets with her sons Marin and Luigi, the latter a notary like his grandfather.

## SITES OF GREAT CHARM IN VALLE D'ALPONE

### MONTEFORTE



The episcopal palace, the parish church and the church of S. Antonio. Photo from 1966.

#### The church of S. Antonio Abate

The little church dedicated to the hermit saint, built at the end of the 1200s, stands on a hill to the west of the town of Monteforte. It was built out of the materials obtained when the old castle, already a ruin, was demolished.

During the first half of the 1500s it underwent major reworking, giving it the appearance it has today. The portal, now walled up, the side windows and the oculus were rebuilt; on the south side the two windows were increased in size and a new door was opened, framed with egg and rope moulding.

In the architrave, decorated with a relief crucifix, there is an engraved date: MDXXXVII.

The church was the seat of the order of the Buona Morte, who had the sacristy built in the middle of the eighteenth century. In the second half of that century the main altar was raised in late-baroque style with spiral columns.

Inside the church there is a splendid crucifix, perhaps from the 1500s, sculpted in boxwood, now located in the apse of the parish church.



Church of S. Antonio Abate.

#### The episcopal palace

Ermolao Barbaro, bishop of Verona, built the palace to the design of the architect Michele da Caravaggio between 1453 and 1471. It stands on the remains of an earlier gothic building of which only a tower survives; inside the tower the chapel of the palace was created, with fresco decorations by Francesco Torbido representing the "Birth of Mary". The palace interior has a splendid cloister with double loggia, and towards the outside there is a fourteenth-century loggia, modified by Barbaro's successor.

Further architectural alterations were made by other bishops, but the original austere beauty of the building has not been lost.



Cloister of the bishop's palace. Photo by R. Pace (1970).

## The parish church

This monumental building was erected between 1805 and 1817 to the design of the Verona architect Bartolomeo Giuliani. It has a grand flight of steps leading to the pronaos with Corinthian columns.

The interior, decorated with a vast pictorial cycle by Giovanni Bevilacqua and Attilio Trentini, holds the painting “The Samaritan at the Well”, a splendid work by the 16th-century painter Girolamo dai Libri. Another canvas, masterpiece of Giovanni Caliari (1838) is the “Visitazione”. Beside the church stands the high bell-tower, built between 1894 and 1897.



“The Samaritan at the Well”, by Girolamo dai Libri (XVI C).

## BROGNOLIGO

### The old parish church

The oldest cult building in Brognoligo that we have records of was a church dedicated to Santo Stefano Protomartire, which stood to the north of the present parish church. It was documented from 1262 and presumably rebuilt between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. There is a fine Romanesque bell-tower beside it with pine-cone finials.

Part of the external structure remains, while the interior has been completely modified except for the triumphal arch where there are traces of fourteenth-century frescoes and an interesting Annunciation from the XV century.



“The Annunciation”. Fresco (XV C).

## The new parish church

Built between 1839 and 1845 by the parish priest Don Antonio Cortiana, in a more accessible position than the earlier church. The new building had become necessary due to the increase in the population, which had exceeded 500 heads.

Besides the fine main altar dating from the end of the 1600s, by the famous sculptor Giovanni Battista Ranghieri of Verona, there are two splendid canvases on the sides of the choir, which have been recently restored: the “Nativity of Jesus”, by Bartolomeo Cittadella dated 1690, and the “Flight into Egypt” by Giovanni Antonio De Pieri, a renowned eighteenth-century painter from Vicenza.

The bell-tower, 56 meters high, was commissioned by the parish priest Don Giovanni Battista Poli, and blessed on 16 October 1927 by the Bishop Ferdinando Ridolfi. Its 9 bells were cast in 1930 in the famous foundry Daciano Colbachini of Padua.



“Flight into Egypt” by Giovanni Antonio De Pieri, XVIII C (detail).

In September of 1948 the town of Brognoligo carried out a vow that had been taken collectively during the second world war. The “Grotta” is a faithful reproduction of the grotto of the miracles in Lourdes; built on a hill to the north of the parish church, designed by Beato Fra Claudio Granzotto, it is a thanksgiving for the town’s having survived the conflict.

## Villa Montanari – Durlo

Sited in Brognoligo in the contrada di Mezzavilla, the villa is known as the *Durlo Palace*, from the family who owned in the XIX century.



Villa Montanari-Durlo in Brognoligo.

It was built by the noble Verona family, the Montanari<sup>28</sup>. It is an interesting complex of buildings preceded by a broad courtyard with a well, built between the XV and XVI centuries, with later modifications.

The oldest nucleus is the tower-dovecote dating from the fifteenth century, which was then linked to the left wing towards the middle of the 1500s. The present eighteenth-century building has elegant pedimented windows.

The Montanari owned the land property and the villa for four centuries, until Benassù and Alessandro sold them to Domencio Durlo from Terrossa.

When the Durlo family became extinct on the male side, after the deaths of brothers Dr. Angelo and Francesco, the villa was passed down to the Rebesani and then to the Cappelletti, from whom the current owners purchased it.

<sup>28</sup> E. POLI, *Villa Montanari – Durlo a Brognoligo*, Vago di Lavagna, 1990.

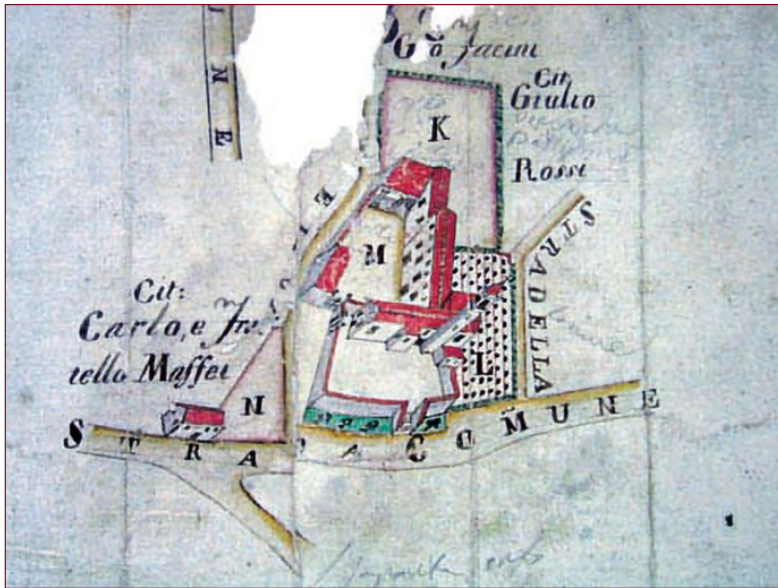
## COSTALUNGA

### The Parish Church

The building stands on the same site as the former church demolished in 1826, and was erected in neo-classical style on the initiative of the parish priest Don Bartolomeo Corà between 1826 and 1830. It was consecrated by the bishop Giuseppe Cappellari on 22 October 1835. Between 1868 and 1870 the new bell-tower was built beside the church, and in 1905 it was equipped with the present-day group of five bells, cast in the Cavadini foundry in Verona.

In 1914 the well-known Verona painter Guido Trentini painted the four evangelists on the pendentives of the dome. Some years later Nicola Sterchele di Vicenza carried out the modest-sized canvas of S. Brizio which adorns the ceiling of the nave.

The church was extended in 1934 to the design of the engineer Federico Miotti, by opening up two chapels at the sides of the presbytery, where the two canvases of the Last Supper and S. Eurosia were given a suitable position.



Archive of the parish of Costalunga – The Old Parish Church.

## Villa Brognoligo

This villa stands near the piazza of Costalunga, to the south of the main street known today as via Lazzaretto. The sixteenth-century portal bears the relief crest of the family with the initials *FB* (Francesco Brognoligo) and the year 1553.

In front of the mansion house a vast courtyard stretches, unkempt, with farm buildings, stables and other premises largely abandoned and in poor repair, which once constituted the indispensable infrastructure for the workings of the farming business.



Villa Brognoligo.

The present-day building is the result of the reconstruction carried out in the late 1700s by the noble Verona family of the Maffei, who came into possession of the estate of the Rassa who had succeeded the Brognoligo.

The devastating alterations made in around 1965 wrecked the harmonious composition of the building, which had been a significant testimony of the Veneto architecture that existed in the territory of the old combined municipality of Brognoligo and Costalunga.

Today the interior of the right hand wing, the only part that retains a vestige of its original appearance, has been considerably altered in layout and is in a state of very poor repair.

## Villa Buri

This is the country residence built for the noble family, the Buri, in the 1600s, close to the bridge over the Alpone. All records have been lost of the illustrious dynasty that built the villa, which is now known as villa Tessari after the present owners, or even as “La Cappuccina”, the name of their business.

In the Alpone valley it is one of the few traditional landowner homes that, besides being still in good condition and holding a number of period pieces in the furnishings, it is permanently occupied and retains its original role of management HQ of the farming business, which today is specialised in winegrowing and wine production.



Villa Buri.

The current building, the result of a reconstruction enacted towards the middle of the 1700s, has three floors, each pierced with four windows. The ground floor is the only one to have kept its original seventeenth-century apertures, and at its centre there is an elegant doorway with rusticated voussoirs, bearing the crest of the Buri on the keystone. The interior, considerably altered in various periods, is laid out according to the traditional Veneto villa plan that puts the main room in the centre and other rooms on each side.

## The private oratory of S. Giovanni Battista

The church, with the sacristy beside it, overlooks the road and is aligned with the boundary wall of the villa Tessari. It was built in 1725 by the Buri family. The interior has a stucco ornament to decorate the end wall. Above the altar two artworks can be seen: an eighteenth-century canvas of the “Baptism of Christ” and a coloured wooden casket of the same period containing the relics of the saint Veneranda. Inside there are also some tempera paintings on the walls carried out in 1946 by the Verona painter Alessandro Zenatello.



Oratory of S. Giovanni Battista.



### Villa Targon – Carcereri

The neo-classical villa was built in the first years of the 1800s by Francesco Targon, as the initials T F reveal, carved into the keystone of the large central window of the first floor, with the date 1822 incised into the render of the blocked-up window on the floor above. The Carcereri family, the present owner, came into possession in 1891.



Villa Targon – Carcereri.

### Villa Villardi – Frigotto – Pagani

This house was built by the Villardi family, originally from Roncà, in 1817, as can be seen from the FF VV (Fratelli Villardi – Villardi brothers) carved into the keystone of the arch over the gateway; the Latin motto OSTIUM NON HOSTIUM (this door is not for enemies), invites ill-intentioned visitors to abstain from entering.

To the left of the main house stands a little chapel, without an altar. Above the entrance door is carved the monogram I H S (Jesus saviour of men) and the crucifix, surrounded by a wreath of leaves. The date 1823 indicates the year of construction. On each side of the villa there are barchesse, service buildings of the Veneto villa, recently converted for residential use.



The entrance arch of the villa Villardi.

### Villa Tanin – Durlo – Villardi – Magagnotto

This is an example of a type of landowner's house that became widely adopted in the territories around Verona and Vicenza. We do not know its date of construction, but given its characteristics it can be assumed to date from between the late 1700s to the early 1800s.



Villa Tanin – Durlo – Villardi – Magagnotto.

## RONCÀ

### The parish church

This neo-classical style church was designed by the architect Angelo Gottardi after 1876, the year in which the parish priest Don Domenico Sandri laid the first stone<sup>29</sup>. The internal decorations are by the painter Vittorio Puppini from Schio.

### Villa Maffei – Cavaggioni – Villardi

This house was built by the noble Verona family Maffei in the seventeenth century. It passed to the Cavaggioni and later to the Villardi, the present owners. Its appearance today is the result of alterations by the Cavaggioni in the late 1700s. Only the portals of the old building remain. An ingenious stone conduit brought running water to the building. Inside there is still “the place for VINO SANTO”, where the small barrels are kept containing the precious nectar still produced by the Villardi.



Villa Maffei – Cavaggioni – Villardi.

<sup>29</sup> AA. VV. RONCÀ AND ITS TERRITORY, Vol. II p.264 no.55.

### Villa Macconi known as “La Pastoria”

With origins dating to before the XV century, this building was altered and extended in the 1700s. It belonged to the Macconi, a family of notaries, and later passed to the Villardi who still own it. The façade, with its striking asymmetry due to the various modifications, is remarkable for the rusticated portal with balcony above, from the sixteenth century.



“La Pastoria”.

## TERROSSA

### The parish church

This building was erected from 1845 onwards, to the design of the architect Luigi de Boni from Villabruna di Feltri. It was opened in September 1869. Inside there are admirable decorations by the painters Giovanni Bevilacqua, Felice Lovato and Giuseppe Modolo of Vicenza.

The little bell-tower of 1887 has a set of five bells, cast by the Cavadini in Verona.

### Villa Meneguzzi – Nati



Villa Porto-Barbaran – Meneguzzi.

The villa, built on neo-classical lines, belonged to the noble Vicenza family Porto-Barbaran, who ceded it in 1814 to the Meneguzzi, their tenants. The property now extends for 30 Verona fields (campi), which include the house, its service buildings and a magnificent walled park in which there are some rare species.

The building, recently restored by the present owners, conserves a good proportion of the original structural elements.

## Administrative alternation in some Val d'Alpone towns

In the area between the provinces of Verona and Vicenza the local authorities' jurisdiction was subject to modifications during the Napoleonic era and the successive Austrian domination, and was only able to reach the present arrangement in the second half of the century.

To give the overall picture and a deeper understanding of the documents, it would seem useful to provide a picture of the events relating to administration in this territory, which is defined roughly by the mid-valley of the Alpone to the west and the municipality of Gambellara to the east.

At the time of the fall of the Venetian Republic (1797), in this area there were more municipalities, or villages with their own local authorities, than there are today. The most important was undoubtedly Montecchia, subject to the authority of Verona, in that the city annually sent a delegate with the task of administering justice and checking the good order of the subordinate towns: Brognoligo with Costalunga, Brenton, S. Margherita and Gambellara Veronese.

Monteforte was a fief of the bishop of Verona, who nominated a delegate for it. Roncà was in the jurisdiction of the noble Venetians Grimani and Tron, who limited their action to approving the delegate elected by the municipality.

The village of Terrossa was under Roncà's authority and never became an independent municipality. In the Vicenza territory both Sorio and Gambellara were municipalities, both subject to the authority of a delegate from Montebello.

The configuration of authority in the zone in mediaeval times was overturned after the Napoleonic conquest in Italy. With the Treaty of Campoformio (17 October 1797), which marked the end of the Republic of San Marco, the Venetian land was split into two parts marked by a line from Lazise, passing south of Verona, to reach the Adige at Legnano. The western half was assigned to the Cisalpina Republic, the eastern one to Austria, which took possession on 22 January 1798.

This division was confirmed by the subsequent Treaty of Lunéville (9 February 1801), which defined the Adige as the border between the Cisalpine Republic and the Austrian Veneto.

As a consequence of the war-related events of the third coalition, which led to the ceding of the Veneto to France (Treaty of Pressburg, 26.12.1805), our region became a part of the Napoleonic Kingdom of Italy. The Verona territory took the name of the department of Adige, administrative centre Verona, while the Vicenza area was called the department of the Bacchiglione, with administrative centre Vicenza.

As of 1807 all the departments were subject to radical administrative reorganisation, based on the merging of municipalities with the aim of creating

more efficient organisms with a bigger budget. Leaving aside provisional land division between 1807 and 1808, with the definitive administrative layout of the Adige department dated 5.11.1810<sup>30</sup> and effective from the following year, the many above-listed municipalities gave way to two alone: Monteforte and Roncà.

The former was given the combined villages of Brognoligo and Costalunga; Roncà was attributed Terrossa, Brenton, Santa Margherita, Montecchia, Gambellara Veronese as well as the Vicenza villages of Sorio and Gambellara. This "intrusion" was possible because, with the decree of 22.12.1807<sup>31</sup>, the district of Lonigo, to which the two municipalities had belonged, became detached from the Bacchiglione department and united with that of Adige.

By 1813 Napoleon's star was in decline. At the start of November the army led by Eugenio Beauharnais, harassed by the Austrians, abandoned Verona. In April 1814, after the abdication of Napoleon, the armistice was signed in Italy too.

With the return of the Austrians and the creation of the Lombardy-Veneto Kingdom, the administrative units imposed by the Napoleonic authorities were reformed, and soon the district of Lonigo was returned to the province of Vicenza. This was declared in the first compartment of the Venetian provinces, emanated in 30.11.1815<sup>32</sup>, which confirmed the 1810 arrangement referred to above, in which the towns belonging to Roncà no longer include Sorio and Gambellara.



View across the valley of the Alpone .

<sup>30</sup> The published proclamation is kept in the STATE ARCHIVES OF VERONA, *Old Valuations of the Province*, busta 2145.

<sup>31</sup> The decree is mentioned in decree 27.1.1808 no.46. *Bulletin of the laws of the Kingdom of Italy*. Milan 1808, p. 85.

<sup>32</sup> *Territorial compartment of the Provinces under the Veneto Government*, Venice 1815, p. 33.

Montecchia regained its administrative autonomy with the subsequent compartment of 1818<sup>33</sup> and was attributed Brenton, taken away from Roncà. To the latter remained only Santa Margherita, since it was planned to revive the municipality of Gambellara Veronese, enlarged with the territory of Terrossa. Roncà regained Brenton in 1853<sup>34</sup>. Despite these changes, the arrangement of the administrative units in the area was unsatisfactory: the inhabitants of Terrossa wanted to return under Roncà; Gambellara Veronese, a tiny municipality with no self-esteem, lacked indispensable financial resources. The best solution, championed by the population and supported by the government authorities, which viewed favourably the concentration of the municipalities wherever possible, was to give Terrossa back to Roncà and to create a single local authority by joining to Gambellara both Sorio and Gambellara Veronese. This was provided for by the Ministry of the Interior of Vienna with a decree emanated on 23 March 1858<sup>35</sup>.

From that moment onwards the administrative arrangement of the area between the Alpone and Gambellara have not been subject to any alteration.



Small barrels of Vino Santo kept by the Villardi family of Roncà.

## GLOSSARY

<sup>33</sup> *Territorial Compartment of the Veneto Provinces approved...with sovereign resolution 8.2.1818 ...reinstated in the year 1821 ..., Venice 1821.*

<sup>34</sup> *Territorial Compartment of the Veneto Provinces activated with 1 July 1853, Venice 1853, p. 26.*

<sup>35</sup> *L. Zanoni, Gambellara. Historic Memoirs, vol. II Vicenza 1897, p. 127.*

<i>Antan</i> - maple	<i>Moraro</i> - mulberry
<i>Arèle</i> - reed racks	<i>Opi</i> – maples
<i>Arnasi</i> - types of barrel/casks	<i>Pezzo</i> - fir wood
<i>Bàsari</i> - beam or supports	<i>Pìciolo</i> - small
<i>Bastardo</i> – two or more wines mixed	<i>Regaglia</i> - gifts
<i>Billanzo</i> – balance, inventory	<i>Ristretto</i> - summary
<i>Bina</i> - row of vines in the vineyard	<i>Schieto</i> - pure, unmixed
<i>Botaro</i> - cooper	<i>Tezzetta</i> - small roofed space attached to the main house, hayloft/barn
<i>Brento</i> - wine container of a specific capacity	<i>Torchiato</i> - type of wine, possibly similar to <i>Vino Santo</i>
<i>Caneva</i> - cellar	<i>Torcolo</i> - press
<i>Carro</i> - unit of measurement for wine corresponding to the barrel	<i>Torcolotto</i> - wine transporter
<i>Castagnara</i> - sweet chestnut wood	<i>Travasaora</i> - small vat for the decanting of wine
<i>Granaro</i> - granary	<i>Turbiana</i> - trebbiano (grape)
<i>Graspe</i> - pomace, solid pulp remaining after pressing	<i>Vezolo</i> - small cask, usually with a capacity from 1 to 3 hectolitres
<i>Lora</i> - large funnel for pouring wine into barrels	<i>(Vino) agresto</i> - wine obtained from grapes that are not fully ripened
<i>Marangon</i> - joiner	<i>Vino grosso</i> - strong wine, without the addition of water
<i>Mésa</i> - vat, basin	<i>Vino schiavo</i> - fine wine derived from low-grown vines, preferably in hillside vineyards
<i>Mesale</i> - wooden support for press	<i>Vino schietto</i> - pure wine
<i>Mezovino</i> - diluted wine	

A hundred years old, four generations, a century of history of Soave Classico in Italy. In a word: Ca' Rugate.

History and the future intertwine in this winery at Montecchia di Crosara, in the province of Verona, run by the Tessari family for four generations. A long line stretching back to Amedeo, at the beginning of last century, unravelling down to the present day and the current management of Michele, through the hands of Fulvio and his son Amedeo, a line of family continuity almost without equal in this country.

Today Ca' Rugate is known throughout the world for the quality of its wines, fruit of the work and the care in tending over 100 hectares in Soave Classico, Valpolicella and Lessini Durello, where indigenous vine varieties are grown, such as Garganega, Trebbiano di Soave and Durella for the whites, Corvina, Rondinella and Corvinone for the reds.

Ca' Rugate, now with the fourth generation at the helm, produces circa 700,000 bottles, of which 50% are for the international market in 45 countries.

In Italy the wines of Ca' Rugate reach the shelves in over 95 provinces.

Since May 2017 the vineyards of Ca' Rugate are run biologically.

The Ca' Rugate Oenomuseum bears witness to the family's pride in their own history, an exhibition of over 150 instruments and equipment used by the Tessari in a century of winemaking activity.

This museum is a site of interest in the region, set in the context of a small farmer's house between the Wars, where the production process of wine is documented from the arrival of the grapes in the yard to the ageing and bottling of the wine in the cellar.

It can be visited any day of the week and is inside the winery at Montecchia di Crosara.

As of May 2019 Ca' Rugate is a Teaching Farm of the Veneto Region, with didactic itineraries for schools from kindergarten to primary levels.

## CORTE DURLO: VIN SANTO DI BROGNOLIGO

Ca' Rugate, with this *Vino* intends to keep up a century-old tradition (never abandoned by the Tessari family) that is deeply rooted in the territory - set aside only locally - and launch a proposal to delight passionate wine-tasters



**DENOMINATION:** Veneto Bianco Passito I.G.T.

**GRAPE VARIETY:** 100% Garganega.

**ZONE of PRODUCTION:** selection of grapes from the best vineyards of the Rugate hills at Brognoligo di Monteforte d'Alpone.

**SOIL:** volcanic origin rich in mineral substances.

**VINIFICATION:** after drying out for 3-4 months on racks called "picai" to improve aeration, the grapes are crushed. The first fermentation comes about in wooden vats where the direct contact of the air causes natural oxidation of the must and the formation of an indigenous surface flora, called "telarina". Subsequently the must is transferred to wooden containers where the fermentation activity is completed and the bung is closed hermetically. During the next 6 years the wine evolves and matures.

**BOTTLES PRODUCED:** circa 250.

**ORGANOLEPTIC FEATURES:** amber in colour; to the nose, notably rich alternating sensations vary from raisins to candied fruit, from tobacco to mineral hints; it is dense and balanced in the mouth, with acidity compensating the residual sugars, and gives the reward of a long and elegant finale.

**GASTRONOMIC PAIRING:** wine for meditation; pairing with food is excluded and this wine should be served in small quantities, but in large glasses

**ANALYTICAL DATA:**

Alcohol level: circa 12.5%

Total Acidity: 7.5 g/L

Residual Sugars: 240 g/L

Serve at Temperature: 12-14°C

**BOTTLE FORMAT:** 375 ml 1500 ml

Publication closed on 06 June 2008.  
Printed in the month of June 2008.

This publication is subject to copyright: it may not be reproduced either wholly or partially in any form without the written consent of the author.



