



Winemaker: Gino, Luca, and Marta Magnabosco
Generation: 2nd



Amarone della Valpolicella DOCG

Monte Tondo has made a name for themselves by producing one of the single best Italian white wines we know of: their Soave Classico. More recently, they have also begun producing world-class reds. Enter their micro-production Amarone. With just a few hundred cases made, this decadent Amarone has aromas that layer like fine pastry: dried plums, exotic spices, brambleberry and dark cacao ultimately give way to a smooth and opulent palate, driven by silky, dark fruit.

WINEMAKER BIOGRAPHY

With larger-than-life personalities, the Magnabosco clan – led by father-daughter team Gino and Marta – likes to draw you in, spoil you properly, and leave you laughing. For all their mirth, however, the elegant wines of Monte Tondo remain worthy of serious discussion. Few estates can rival their multiple tiers of Soave, each backed by its own unique cru and soil type.

ENOLOGIST

Nico Danese



TASTING NOTES

- Color** Deep ruby red
- Nose** Port-like, with dried cherry and plum, and hints of chocolate and spice
- Palate** Smooth, elegant and full-bodied
- Finish** Silky, well-knit, lingering finish



VINEYARD & VINIFICATION

- Vineyard Location** Amarone della Valpolicella DOCG, Veneto
- Vineyard Size** 15 ha
- Varietals List** 70% Corvina
30% Rondinella
- Farming Practices** Organically farmed (non certified), including dry-farmed; grapes picked by hand; certified vegan
- Elevation** 480 m
- Soils** Clay
- Maturation Summary** In combo of 2/3 Slovenian oak, 1/6 Italian cherry, and 1/6 Italian chestnut barrels for 36 months and bottled for 12 months
- Alcohol** 16.0 %
- Acidity** 5.7 g/liter
- Residual Sugar** 5.5 g/liter
- Annual Production** 3,472 bottles



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VENETO

Home to the iconic cities of Venice and Verona, Veneto is also Italy's second most prolific region in terms of wine production. Whites like Pinot Grigio and Prosecco, in particular, are made en masse in the lowlands proximate to the Adriatic. Beyond this, however, Veneto is also home to world-class estates and wines that couldn't be made anywhere else (not least of all the renowned Amarone della Valpolicella). From coastal flatlands to subalpine hills, a vast diversity of microclimates gives this wine region a unique edge. There are an impressive 28 DOCs and 14 DOCGs, with Prosecco, Pinot Grigio, Soave, and the red wines of Valpolicella all calling the Veneto home.

Beginning on the edge of Lake Garda, this NE region has 7 provinces: Belluno, Treviso, Venezia, Verona, Vicenza, Padova and Rovigo. Its northern boundary is protected from harsh weather conditions by the Dolomites, and cooler conditions in the north are well-suited to white varietals like Garganega (the main grape in Soave). In contrast, the warmer Adriatic coastal plains and river valleys near Lake Garda are where the renowned Valpolicella, Amarone, and Bardolino reds are produced.

It is believed that Veneto is one of the oldest wine-producing regions in the world, dating back to the bronze age. Its main port, Venice, has long served as a point of entry for new varietals, and departure for its products. Italy's very first school for oenology was founded in Conegliano in 1885, and today Europe's most important wine fair, VinItaly - with a draw of some 200,000 people - takes place each spring in Verona.

AMARONE DELLA VALPOLICELLA DOCG

Although hailed as one of Italy's top wines today, the first bottle of Amarone wasn't produced until 1938 - making it a true youngster by European standards. Moreover, like Brunello, it wasn't sold commercially until the 1950s. Nonetheless, Amarone remains one of the most stiffly governed DOCGs. Not only are producers limited to a short list of grapes (the baseline being Corvina), but they also cannot choose their own harvesting date - instead, the Consorzio provides one for them each year!

As with all wines, terroir is critical to Amarone, but what happens after the harvest is what actually sets it apart from so many others (including those made from the same exact grapes, like basic Valpolicella). Winemakers use a unique drying process called appassimento, wherein clusters are placed on bamboo racks called arele (usually in a room or shack called a fruttaio) that permit airflow from beneath. Grapes dry for an average of 90 days (December 1 is the legal minimum to press, but most producers wait until the New Year). During this time, the fruit loses at least 30% of its mass through dehydration. The resulting juice is rich, concentrated, and higher in sugar content. Ergo, once fermentation converts the sugar to alcohol, the finished wine usually comes in at 15-16%. Amarone is then aged for a minimum of 2 years; 4 years for a Riserva.

The Amarone DOCG has three geographical sub-zones: Valpolicella Classico, Valpantena, and 'Est', (the extended zone), all with unique variations. Wine from the higher altitude Classico zone tends to be more elegant and aromatic; Valpantena wines are generally lighter and fruitier; the greater, 'extended' zone (stretching to the Soave district) tends to produce muscular wines with a higher alcohol level.



MONTE TONDO

In almost every way, the small, family operated estate of Monte Tondo sets itself apart. Contrasting the large coops which dominate the Soave Classico region, Monte Tondo represents the true artisanal minority: not only are their wines low yield, single estate and picked by hand, but in lieu of grapes grown in the vast alluvial flatlands, Monte Tondo's whites hail from various crus on the hillside above the town, each complete with its own unique soil profile. These sites in turn allow Gino Magnabosco and his daughter, Marta, to create tiers of Garganega-driven whites with a remarkable array of personalities. Their Soave Classico, for example, comes from vines growing halfway up the slope in a pocket of clay and limestone, lending the wine its bright-eyed structure and telltale minerality. From even higher up the hill, the single cru Slavinus and Casette Foscariin both derive from volcanic soils, possess a big-boned structure usually reserved for oaked whites, and promise to age beautifully for 5-10 years.

More recently, the Magnabosco family invested in red wines, as well. Located some 90 minutes inland from Venice, Monte Tondo serves as a physical bridge between the subalpine hills of the Valpolicella region and the sprawling, sea-level fields that produce so much of Italy's affordable white wine (i.e. Soave and Pinot Grigio). Established in 1979 by Aldo Magnabosco, the estate was expanded 20 years later by his son, Gino, and currently has 32 hectares spanning two different DOC's: they now have 22 hectares in Soave Classico and 10 in the Valpolicella (lying on the opposite side of the same hill). Fortuitously once again, both locations enjoy a bit of extra altitude. The estate's Garganega sites start at 110-150 meters (high for the region) and roam all the way up to 280-350 meters for the cru whites. Likewise, the Valpolicella vineyard is also lofty at 450 meters, to the extent the grapes are actually harvested in mid-October.

For anyone visiting Monte Tondo, it would be awfully hard not to notice the charm and constant hospitality of Marta Magnabosco, who assists her father both in making the wines and then promoting them. Along with Gino's work ethic, Marta also inherited the twinkle in her father's eye and possesses a winking, warmhearted, bilingual wit. If you're going to be near Venice, we recommend making the quick drive inland to meet Marta and her familia!