

Danila Pisano

Visits

This visit with Danila Pisano took place in November, 2012.



Words by Jules Dressner, photos by Josefa Concannon.

After saying goodbye to Antonio Perrino, we drove up to the village of Soldano, home of [Danila Pisano](#)! The single mountain road to get there was full of upward twist and turns, and the further along we went, the more remote it felt. We were trailing Kevin, and after losing him I couldn't help but feel like we were in the [beginning of a horror movie](#).

Fortunately, we arrived unharmed and were greeted by a joyful Danila hanging out at the cafe with her long time boyfriend Tino.



Because it was later in the afternoon and the vines are a 20 minute drive out, we proposed that the couple hop into one our cars and show us the way. Tino laughed heartily and told us there was no way what we were driving could make it up there. He was not kidding! The drive in Danila's 4x4 was full of super sharp turns and one of the steepest I've ever experienced. There were points when we were on a 60% incline!

Danila and Tino parked the cars, and from there it was a short walk to one of the most peaceful vineyard sites I've ever experienced.





From the vineyards, you can spot the beginning of France.



The estate consists of 0.8 h of vines spread over three different sites in the Val Verbone valley, all in Rossese. The vines are actually from Tino's family, and were inherited when his father retired. Tino has always worked in highway maintenance, but decided with Danila to start cultivating the vines and making wine in 1996. They immediately converted the vines to organic viticulture. The parcel we visited is exposed Southwest, and though it felt much higher, at 250 meters elevation.

They are also beautifully terraced, which has always been the tradition around these parts.

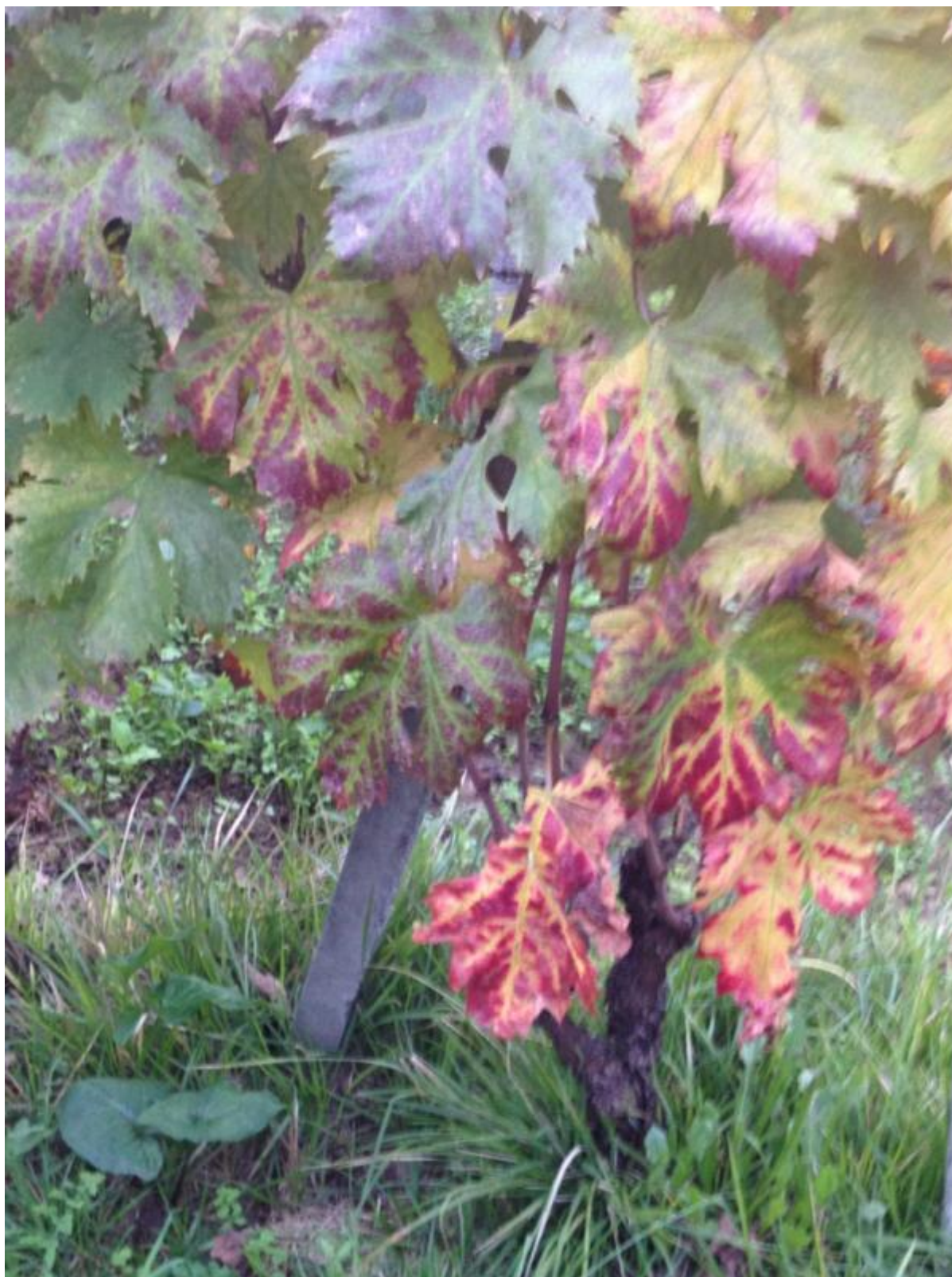






The terraces were built in 1933. The soils consist of 40% sand, 40% clay and 20% limestone. All the vineyard work is done by hand, but they have a small tractor for transportation. The vines are all trained in *albarello*.





It's hard to tell from the pictures, but the rows are on very steep hill. I think this one with Denyse looking like a superhero (with Lee as her sidekick) gives you the best idea of the steepness.



After visiting the vines, we drove back to Soldano to taste the recently bottled 2011's. They were incredibly good. Both cuvées are vinified the same way: 8-15 days maceration in stainless, then racked and hard pressed. Fermentation usually takes 10-15 days, also in stainless steel. "*Savoia*" is a selection of the best grapes from their best site. It's the best!

With the 1978 Testalonga fresh on my mind, I asked if there were any back vintages to taste. At first Tino was hesitant, as he truly believes that the wines need to be consumed within two years. Nonetheless pulled out a 2006 for us to try. And you know what? He was right. The wine hadn't completely fallen apart, but had none of the vibrancy and brightness that I'd come to expect.

Fortunately, the wines are so good young that they get drunk up promptly!

As we left, this painted sign on the road caught my eye.



I don't know, I just found it funny that the girl basically looks like a shovel.

After saying goodbye, we drove to Sanremo, gambled the night away, drove to Nice the next morning and flew back to our respective cities.