

Cà de Noci

Visits

This visit to Cà de Noci took place in November, 2012.



Words and photos by Jules Dressner.

Two coinciding trends with the last two Italian Fall trips:

[1. They keep almost not happening](#) and [2. I get to fly in business class and learn all about wine from the airline's master sommelier.](#)

For hurricane Sandy related reasons, it was looking like we weren't going to be able to go to Italy at all. After some desperate rescheduling (including a particularly daunting option that involved flying to Moscow to connect to Milan), we somehow managed to nab a direct flight two days later than scheduled. It meant missing visits with [Fonterenza](#), [Sanguineto](#) and [Luciano Saetti](#) (BUMMER!), but it was better than not going at all.

When we arrived, we all got upgraded and for the second year in a row I once again got to enjoy the laps of of luxury that is business class. I totally recommend spending the 5000 dollars it would normally cost to do this: made to order hot fudge Sundaes, [seats that turn into beds](#), getting to watch everyone in economy stare at you in contempt as they walk by and MOST OF ALL, having master sommelier Andrea Robinson answer every question you've ever had about wine!

Legs? Who knew? Also, worth viewing, [this video](#) lets you know that "*Once you get to 30 000 feet, your sense of taste and smell are really attenuated*". You do get used to the beds though...

Enough funny business!

After landing in Milan and driving to Parma -where we'd stay for the next three days- we set off to the commune of [Quattro Castella](#) to visit the Masini brothers of [Cà de Noci](#).



Alberto and Giovanni were there to greet us, as was their father Vittorio.



Vittorio had never met Kevin (or any of us, for that matter), and was delighted to finally put a face to a name he'd been hearing for years.

"Every time I have to add the back labels or hear about the U.S.A, it's always Kevin, Kevin. Kevin! Finally I know what you look like!"

A large portion of the vines surround the farm, so after saying our hello's we jumped right into the visit by checking out their old vine Spergola.





These were all planted in 1970 by Vittorio. As you can see from the pictures, every single vine has grown independently and differently. This is where the *Querciole* is produced; the cuvée is named after the large oak tree in the middle of the parcel.

Close by, they have bee hives. Alberto explained:

"It's very important for pollination. Grapes like Malbo Gentile would have a hard time without them."

The whites all grow in the less fertile soils around the farm, and with the exception of the older Spergola, all the vines are younger re-plantings of almost extinct local varieties. A short walk from the old vines, we got to check out young vine Spergola, Malvasia and Muscat all randomly co-planted together.





The fall colors of the leaves were beautiful, including some strikingly red plants.





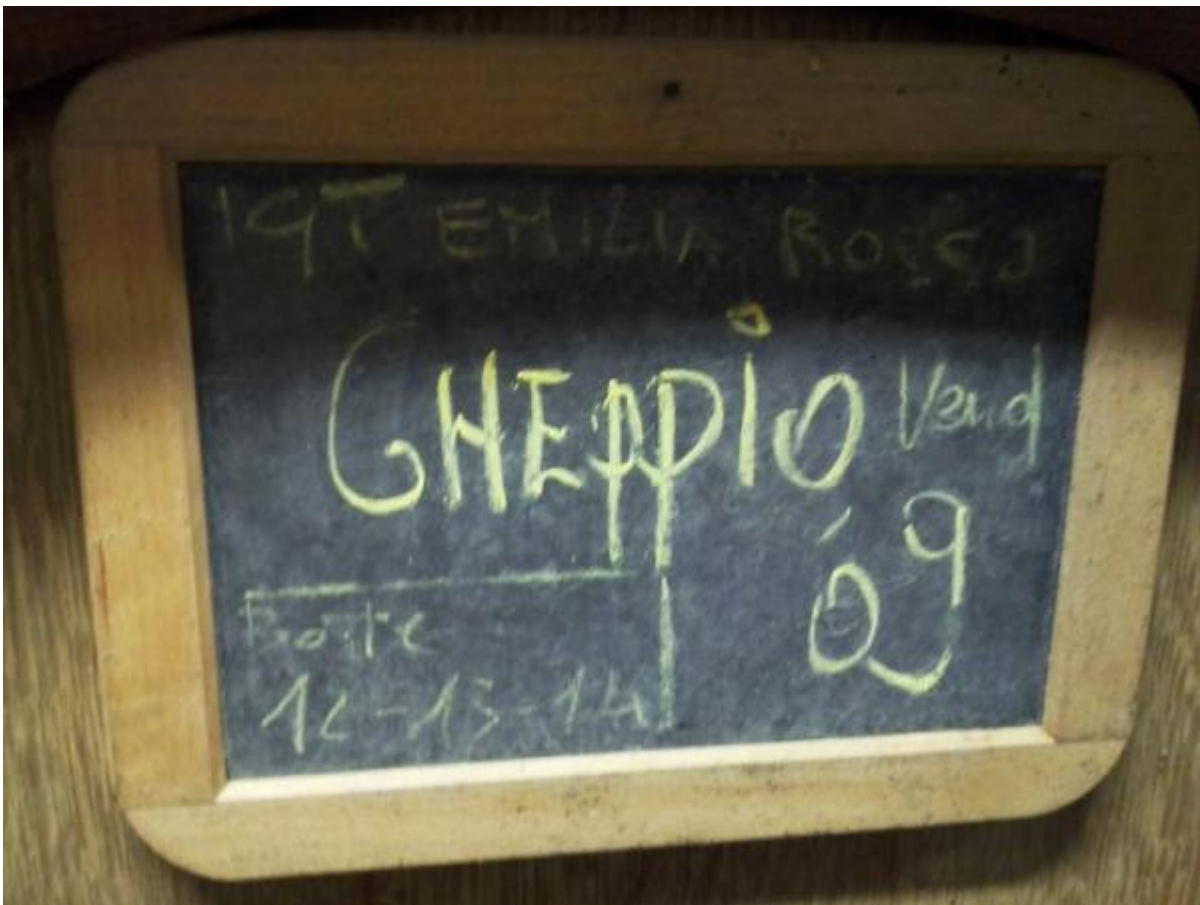
This year, the brothers tried using a new, mineral based product on six rows of these vines to protect them, the idea being to find a substitute for copper and sulfur. It was a first year experiment, and they lost about 50% of the grapes. They are still motivated to make this work, and will try again.

After walking around the farm, we took a short drive into the hills to visit the reds.



Up in the hills, the soils are composed of sand and are more fertile. The oldest vines are Cabernet Sauvignon of 15 years. All the different red varieties are planted here, which include: Lambrusco Grasparossa, Lambrusco Maestri, Lambrusco Montericco, Malbo Gentile and Cabernet Sauvignon. In total, the brothers have 5,4 hectares of vines. Alberto does the majority of vineyard work and Giovanni makes the wines.

After visiting the vines, we took a quick tour of the cellar before tasting.



For aging, they only use old French barrels. With the exception of *Riserva dei Fratelli*, the frizzante wines are made using old vine Spergola must. The wines referment in bottle, but are never disgorged.

Riserva dei Fratelli, on the other hand, ferments three years in bottle before being disgorged. Look at all that floaty stuff in there!



The Masinis disgorge every bottle manually, which is an extremely time-consuming process. It takes about a month to do 140 bottles, because you can only do it very early in the winter morning, when the day is at its coldest (has to be done at 0 degrees). You also lose about 10% of each bottle per disgorgement. While tedious, this permits the brothers to produce a disgorged sparkling with no added sulfites (a true rarity), and is totally worth the extra labor.

Speaking of no sulfites, nothing at Cà de Noci ever sees added sulfur, even at bottling. Though they make skin contact whites and work with thick-skinned red grapes, I still have to say that I am very impressed by how consistently stable these wines are. Kudos!

It was officially tasting time, and we got things started by disgorging a magnum of *Fratelli 09*. This was actually the first time Alberto and Giovanni were tasting it! It was savory, tangy and very dry. Next, we opened up some *Querciole 11*, which was excellent; giving on the fruit and very a long finish. We also tasted some the still *Spergola* from 2012 pre-must: it was obviously very young, but still tasty.

At dinner, we went through a vertical of *Sottobosco* 08, 09, 10 and 11 to compare and prove that Lambrusco really can be a wine that expresses vintage: for example, the 08 was super robust and tannic, while 10 was fruity and fresh. Still tannic though!