

Camillo Donati

Profile

The Donati estate is a family estate started in 1930 which is now run by the third generation of Donati -- Camillo Donati, his wife and their children. They cultivate 11 ha of vines (7 of which they own as Tenuta S. Andrea and 4 which are leased at Tenuta Bottazza) using organic and biodynamic practices. They are about 20 km away from Parma in the hillside at an altitude of around 250 m with an eastern exposition.

There are a number of diverse strains of the Lambrusco grape family, but the main Lambrusco grape of the Parma zone is Lambrusco Maestri and it is planted on flat plains because of its characteristic resistance to humidity and mildew, and also for its relative abundant fruit. For this reason, the Donati do a severe pruning to produce low yields of better quality.

The Malvasia Candia is historically from Crete, arriving in this part of Italy many centuries ago, and it is also one of the oldest known grapes. Up until 30-50 years ago it was only vinified in sweet and demi-sec style, but Donati now makes both a dry and sweet Malvasia.

The range of vines at the estate also include: aromatic Sauvignon Blanc, Moscato Giallo, and Barbera. They also have a little of Trebbiano, Pinot Blanc, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. All the grapes are vinified and bottled separately.

All the grapes, including the white, are fermented like red wines (with skin contact), without temperature control, and use no other controls or enhancers at fermentation, no fining, no acidification or de-acidification, no selected yeasts, etc. They make Malvasia Dolce (sweet) from a stopped fermentation by filtration through a sack filter and it remains at about 4-6% alcohol with a bit of natural sweetness balanced by acidity. The other wines are fermented dry, including the Lambrusco.

The carbonation of these *frizzante* wines comes from the traditional method of refermentation in bottle, a method that does not require preservatives and which makes this wine, unlike those produced in *charmat* method, age better. The wines are not filtered and are topped with a crown cap (a traditional closure for some decades in this region). There may be resulting sediment and the bottles should be poured somewhat carefully without a lot of intense movement.

These are very delicate and natural wines that have immense glugability and unique character. They are meant to be drunk simply as you would a refreshing beer or cider at cold temperature (even the red) with simple foods. They go particular well with cold cuts, prosciutto and dry sausages and *gnocco* - fried squares of dough - that are traditional in Parma.