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Climate

Two distinct climatic trends, cool temperatures between April and May and hot dry weather through July, characterized the 2019 growing season. April and May slowed down vegetative growth, however the vines quickly caught up during June and July when temperatures rose sharply and there was an extended period with no rainfall. These conditions led to the development of lighter, loosely packed clusters. Stable, sunny weather in August and September allowed the grapes to progress to perfect ripeness in optimal conditions. The first selection of Merlot for Cont'Ugo was harvested on September 8th. Harvesting was completed at the end of September when grapes were picked in the later-ripening vineyards.

Vinification

After the grapes were hand harvested and carefully selected on sorting tables, the berries were transferred into temperature controlled stainless steel vats where alcoholic fermentation and maceration on the skins took place over a period of about 20 days. Fermentation temperatures were managed based on the ripeness of the grapes: lower temperatures were applied to preserve and enhance aromatic freshness while higher temperatures, up to 30 °C (86 °F), to boost extraction of phenolic compounds and enhance structure. The different batches were divided according to their individual characteristics and then transferred into barriques, one third of which were new. Malolactic fermentation was completed by the end of the year. The finest batches were blended and transferred back into barriques for a further 12-month period of aging, then bottled. Cont'Ugo was left to age in the bottle for an additional 3 months before being released for sale.

Historical Data

The Guado al Tasso estate is located in the small, but prestigious, Bolgheri appellation on the coast Tuscany's Upper Maremma, some 60 miles (100 kilometers) to the southwest of the city of Florence. This appellation has a relatively short history (it was created in 1994) but can boast a worldwide fame as a reference point wine on the international scene. The estates covers an area of about 320 hectares (790 acres) planted to vines, in a splendid plain surrounded by hills known as "the Bolgheri amphitheater" for its particular geographical conformation. The Guado al Tasso vineyards consist principally of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, and Vermentino grapes; this last cultivated with both with white and red varieties. There is also a small presence of Grenache, Petit Verdot, Viognier and Sémillon. They enjoy a mild climate due to the nearby presence of the Mediterranean Sea, constant breezes mitigate summer heat, and the rigors of winter clear the sky and maintain a high degree of solar light and radiation. Cont'Ugo is produced exclusively from Merlot grapes in order to interpret the territory of Bolgheri from a new perspective. The vineyards, situated at an altitude between 150 and 200 feet (45-60 meters) above sea level on clayey-loam soils prevalently of alluvial origin, gave Cont'Ugo great depth and complexity while conserving the fragrance and richness of fruit which are typical of Merlot.



Tasting Notes

Cont'Ugo 2019 in an intense ruby red color. On the nose, it offers intense notes of small ripe red fruit accompanied by sweet spices and light hints of peaty and earthy aromas. On the palate, tannins are exceptional, with good tension and excellent persistence. This vintage produced a wine with outstanding harmony that is extremely pleasing to drink.