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Climate

The 2018 growing season will be remembered for frequent rain showers particularly during winter and spring. These climatic trends guaranteed excellent groundwater reserves that were considerably depleted after 2017's drought conditions. Bud break took place one week later than seasonal averages. Summer's hot and dry weather provided ideal conditions for slow, progressive ripening of the grapes. September, the month when grape harvesting takes place, saw low levels of rainfall and above average temperatures however nights were cool preserving the grapes' aromas and acidity levels. Merlot for Cont'Ugo was harvested between the first and second week of September.

Vinification

After the grapes were harvested by hand 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 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 6 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 2018 in an intense ruby red color. Its nose is compelling, rich in intriguing aromas of Mediterranean herbs, sweet spices and liqueur cherries. Velvety tannins on the palate are well sustained by bright acidity imparting freshness and pleasurable mouthfeel. Excellent length.