

## MONFERACE, VOICE OF LOST TIMES.

An association of producers is committed to promoting the aged version (at least 40 months) of the historic Piedmontese vine > At the conference in Ponzano (Alessandria) we talked about genetics, diffusion and organoleptic analysis

They took his DNA, the researchers at Crea in Asti carried out the spectrometry, a panel of 60 people traced his organoleptic profile and Professor Anna Schneider of the Cnr Institute for the sustainable protection of plants in Turin highlighted his historical origins . We are talking about Monferace, the protagonist of a conference last October 2nd at the Castello di Ponzano, in the Alessandria area.

### Origins and diffusion

Yet, all this is still not enough to describe the emotions of Monferace, "the woman with a hoarse voice" from Cesare Pavese's Monferrato. One of his poems reads: "suddenly it sounded / as if coming from these hills, a voice that was clearer / and harsher at the same time, a voice from lost times", Here is the aged Grignolino, a voice from lost times. Harsher and clearer of Nebbiolo. They also called it Barbesino, it has a network of relationships with the vines of the Northwest of the Peninsula, but he is a native Piedmontese. He is the grandson of Nebbiolo, an ascendant of Ruchè and a descendant of Freisa and Vespolina.

Like Grignolino he is mentioned even before Nebbiolo, going back to 1249, although as explained by the prof. Anna Schneider of the Cnr, the "uncle" was already widespread throughout the region. It spread from the Casalese area and was said to have resembled Nebbiolo since 1800. Its production today is mostly focused on a light-coloured, fresh, fruity, fragrant, tannic wine for pairing due to the grignole, the seeds of the grape of which there is always plenty.

### His identity card

Then there is Monferace, which of the Grignolino is the best selection aged for at least 40 months, of which 24 in wood. 4.23 hectares are dedicated to him, 18% of which represent selections of the best grapes, 45.5% single vineyards and 36.4% unique parcels. Between 20 and 30 thousand bottles are produced per year. It is a niche, such excellence does not and cannot be anything different. But we also need to make it heard

own voice on the market. Monferace is a dream come true, it is not a denomination. It was born from an association between Grignolino producers to rediscover an ancient tradition, as recalled by the president of Monferace Guido Carlo Alleva, owner of Tenuta Santa Caterina.

A dream that was scientifically "psychoanalyzed" last October 2nd, highlighting its DNA, spectrometry and aromatic profile, but now it is necessary to share it, live it, taste it, get its pinch of spiciness and acidity. Analyzes have revealed that it contains rotundone, the molecule (sesquiterpene) responsible for the hint of pepper that it shares with some of its cousins such as Pelaverga, but also with Corvina or Syrah. It's as if it were the color of the eyes, to which we must add the pink and violet of the hair, raspberry, red currant and cherry of the complexion, resinousness and balsamic of the build. On the nose, Monferace is more fickle, explained Maurizio Petrozziello, researcher at Crea in Asti, in technical terms. «The refinement greatly increases the intensity and complexity, the character of the aromas differs based on the hand of the producer and the management in the cellar. However, there is less variability in the taste, being characterized by acidity and astringency."

If you really want to use the numbers you would have to, glass in hand, underline the acidity, almost always one point above Nebbiolo, and the pH, with numbers low enough to make winemakers sleep more peacefully than certain modern vintages of the great Italian reds . At times it feels like tasting certain Barolos from fifty years ago as well as the great Grignolins of today.

### The reduced volumes and the authors

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