

Spotlight on La Viarte, March 2015

“Wine is an act of gratitude, towards nature who creates it, towards mankind who tastes it. Wine is an act of love. Viarte has the honor to accomplish it.”

La Viarte is a quintessential expression of Friuli, the northeastern-most province in Italy that borders Slovenia. The white wines are clean, mineral and vibrant while the reds have a richly savory, rugged and spicy appeal, near perfect reflections of this picturesque region. The story of la Viarte begins in the childhood of Giuseppe Ceschin, who always dreamed of being a winemaker.

As a young boy, Giuseppe was fascinated by the wine traditions of his country. After studying enology, he traveled throughout Italy to deepen his knowledge and eventually settled in Friuli with his wife Carla. He studied the viticultural history of the region, working as a share-cropper for 13 years before a rare opportunity presented itself. In 1973, he purchased 35 hectares of raw hillside land facing east and southeast. Although it was largely forested and had never been planted to vines, it featured a 38-52 million year old marly sandstone soil called *ponca* and elevations ranging 290 to 600 feet.

Over the next 11 years, the couple went about terracing the site and eventually planting 21 hectares of vineyards, carefully tending to the land, and studying the delicate interaction between themselves, the land and the vines. They chose to plant a mix of traditional varieties of the region, including Friulano, Ribolla Gialla, and the local red Schioppettino as well as Chardonnay, Riesling, Pinot Bianco, Pinot Grigio, Sauvignon, Picolit, Verduzzo and a little known red called Tazzelenghe. It wasn't until 1984 that the first wines were produced and the Ceschis founded La Viarte, which in Friulan means “openness” and “spring”. From the beginning the farming has been sustainable with a deep respect of the integrity of the land, much of which is still conserved as forest to maintain diversity and encourage ecological balance.

In 2003, Giuseppe and Carla welcomed their son, Giulio, into the family business. Giulio and his wife Federica purchased an additional 6 hectares and continued the traditions of sustainable farming and production of wines that are both distinctive in terms of the world of wine and typical of the region. The vines are planted densely on grass and trellised to maximize airflow and maintain an open canopy. Harvest is done by hand, and clusters are first sorted in the vineyard. Winery practices focus on crafting wines using a mix of traditional techniques and modern equipment to craft wines of place.

The Ribolla Gialla is pressed before fermentation and aged in stainless steel for seven months. The lees are stirred twice a week to encourage richness and body, which lends balance to the bright, saline and slightly structured character. This cultivar dates back as early as 1299, and may well be Friuli's most ancient vine type. It is dry, vibrant and mineral driven with floral and soft citrus tones. Tazzelenghe is an indigenous red Friulian variety that is directly translated as “cuts the tongue”. There are reportedly only 6 producers growing the grape in Friuli! The vines are cropped low to reduce herbaceousness and focus ripe fruit flavors. At La Viarte the grapes are destemmed, then sorted and fermented over 15 days in temperature controlled stainless steel tanks. The wine is aged for 12 months in new oak barriques before spending 6 months in stainless steel. It is then bottled and receives 2 years of bottle age before release. It is chewy, savory and dense with a refined and dark fruit and spice character.

As we slowly move towards the Spring, (sorry to hear about the snow NYC!) we hope you enjoy the distinctive Friulian wines of La Viarte!

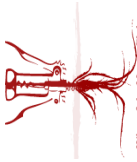
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Purevinewines.com, (877) 404-1121

Until next month,

Joe, Tom, & Andria

“fighting for the soul of wine..”



This Month's Biodynamic® / Organic Selections

La Viarte

Ribolla Gialla

100% Ribolla Gialla

**Region: Friuli Colli
Orientali, D.O.C., Italy**

Vintage: 2012

Crisp, clean and saline, this wine is floral, mineral, and full of tart pear and white pepper notes. There are hints of fennel, and green apple as the bright acidity lengthens out the long palate. There is a slight dustiness and extract to the structure of this wine, which is typical of the grape. This Ribolla is energetic and vibrant and it screams for beautiful, raw oysters, spring vegetables with baked poultry or delicate fish with mushrooms and lentils as well as antipasti.

Hey, why did my wine come in a used box?

In conjunction with Portland Wine Storage and our commitment to the environment we re-use wine shippers as many times as possible making them 100% recycled on our end.

La Viarte

Tazzelenghe

100% Tazzelenghe

**Region: Friuli Colli
Orientali, D.O.C., Italy**

Vintage: 2009

The 2009 Tazzelenghe is powerfully spiced, decadent and concentrated with aromatics of cloves, cedar and rich raspberry toffee. The dusty flavors are richly spiced and savory with cigarbox, plum, and currant fruit. The acidity is bright and lengthens the round, distinctive tannins which have become plush and fine. The bottle age on this wine has allowed the herbaceousness of its youth to transition into a savory richness. Distinctive and generous, this wine wants savory braised lamb and fennel or wild boar sugo with sweet potato gnocchi.