

## VALPOLICELLA CLASSICO SUPERIORE DOC

### “LA ROVERINA”

NEW LABEL!

The name *Valpolicella* comprises the Italian word for “valley”, *valle* or *val*. The Valpolicella appellation, however, is not so much a single valley as a number of small valleys fanning out towards the hills behind Verona. Its wonderful climate, abundant sources of water and gently rolling landscape have made this a densely inhabited territory throughout the centuries. *Classico* is the Valpolicella appellation’s historical core, covering a mere fifth of the DOC’s total territory: select, elevated terrain on the Alpine foothills, enjoying a temperate climate you would not expect at this northerly latitude.

The Speri’s presence in this heartland of fine winemaking goes back to 1874, and the family is in its fifth generation. Today, proprietary surface under vine totals over 148 acres (i.e. 60 hectares) in the finest *Classico* districts: Fumane, Negrar, San Pietro in Cariano.



#### La Roverina,

within the commune

of Negrar, is the vineyard closest to the Speri winery. The ensuing Valpolicella Classico Superiore now exhibits a brand new label, shown left. A blend of 70% Corvina (a.k.a. Corvina Veronese), 20% Rondinella, 5% Molinara, and 5% other native varieties, this single vigneto is grown on alluvial soil, particularly well drained and rich in mineral components.

Fruit is handpicked between the last week of September and the first week of October, then immediately vinified. The must undergoes 10 days’ maceration on the skins at a controlled temperature, previous to being placed in vats of vitrified cement to complete alcoholic and malolactic fermentation. Subsequently, the

wine ages in 50-hl. oak barrels for approximately 10 to 12 months, and is finally bottle-aged several more months previous to release. The result is ruby red, with intense, ample bouquet recalling vinous and almond notes, structured palate and great food versatility all around, best appreciated at 18° C (64.4° F).



The La Roverina vineyard



### TASTING NOTES:

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**VALPOLICELLA**

“Ripasso” is the name of

**Speri**



RIPASSO  
2005

The wine itself is a blend of **70% Corvina** (a.k.a. Corvina Veronese), **20% Rondinella**, **10% Molinara and other native grapes**, from vines around 13 years of age and various vineyards owned by the Speris in the heart of Valpolicella *Classico* – more precisely, within the districts of San Pietro in Cariano, Fumane and Negrar. Harvest takes place the last two weeks of September, and the grapes are immediately soft-pressed. The must undergoes 8 days of temperature-controlled maceration on the skins in stainless steel tanks, after which it is placed in vats of vitrified cement to complete alcoholic and malolactic fermentation. The first week of March, the ensuing free-run **referments on Amarone marc (“ripasso”** method) for 8 days at a temperature of 15° C (59 degrees Fahrenheit), and is subsequently racked into vitrified cement tanks to complete alcoholic fermentation. Finally, the wine ages **1 year in 20-hl. oak barrels**, and several months in the bottle.

## This image shows a full page of primary-ruled paper. It features approximately 20 horizontal rows, each defined by two parallel dotted lines. The rows are evenly spaced across the entire page, providing a guide for handwriting practice. There are no margins, text, or other markings present.





## AMARONE DELLA VALPOLICELLA CLASSICO DOC

### “VIGNETO MONTE SANT’URBANO”



The story of **Amarone** saw chance rhyme with choice. In the distant past, the drying process of Valpolicella exclusively produced a sweet wine: Recioto. In time, however, as climatic conditions changed and the seasons evolved, grapes that were processed in the usual manner progressively yielded a wine that was considerably drier than it had been. Eventually, demand for this... ‘mutant’ wine grew to the point that both versions found favor: the sweet and the dry. The latter was called Amarone from its typical bitterish vein – “amaro” is Italian for “bitter”. The first, unofficial Amarones were bottled in the early 1900s, for private use. It was only after WWII that the wine was marketed as such, and its quality was so superb – luscious and powerful, evolving over three decades or more – the DOC appellation soon followed, in 1968.

Speri Amarone is only released in select vintages, and is **70% Corvina, 25% Rondinella, 5% Corvinone**. The vineyard is located within the estate’s top cru, Sant’Urbano, in the Fumane district. Altitude, as for the Valpolicella Classico Superiore “Sant’Urbano”, is around 920 feet above sea level (280 meters). Terrain is calcareous-cretaceous, volcanic in origin, and tends to retain humidity, thus preventing problems relating to drought. Training is the Veronese *pergola*, terraced onto ledges formed by dry-stone walls, as shown in the picture (right), which gives some insight into the cobbly nature of the soil prior to reclamation. The vines themselves are at their peak, averaging 18 years of age.

The best bunches are handpicked and selected the first two weeks of September. The fruit is subsequently placed in small, wooden boxes and **dried on the racks, with a unique procedure** and under ideal conditions of temperature, ventilation and humidity, for a total of 110 to 120 days. In the course of these months, grapes **lose around 41% of their initial weight, and sugar levels and concentration increase accordingly.**



The terraced vines of Monte Sant’Urbano

In early January, the grapes are soft-pressed and destemmed by means of a roller press. Maceration on the skins lasts 35 days, with regular pumpovers and *délestages*. The must is separated from the skins in early February, and completes alcoholic and malolactic fermentation in 50-hectoliter oak barrels. Finally, *élevage* takes place in 500-liter *tonneaux* of Allier oak for approx. 30-36 months, previous to some 12 months further in the bottle. The resulting wine is characterized by the deepest color and very, very intense bouquet with spicy, aromatic and jammy notes combining power and finesse, prelude to a palate that is rich, sensuous, highly structured and complex, lingering on and on.

## TASTING NOTES:

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## RECIOTO DELLA VALPOLICELLA CLASSICO DOC

### “LA ROGGIA”



Valpolicella's treasured dessert wine, **Recioto**, takes its name from the dialect word “rece” (“orecchie” in Italian), meaning “ears” – more precisely, the “ears” of... grape bunches! I.e., those portions of the grapes that are best exposed and get the most nourishment from vine and sunlight – the only ones to be selected in the vineyard and set aside for Recioto.

The fruit destined for this precious nectar is **picked even later than grapes going into Amarone**, and has an **even higher level of natural residual sugar**. It is left to dry on the racks a little longer, leading to **incredible concentration, intensity and natural sweetness**. Moreover, fermentation is extremely slow and stops spontaneously as the action of yeasts is cut back, by comparison with Amarone, owing to the very high sugar concentration.

Recioto production is much smaller than Amarone's, and the wine is released exclusively in years whose conditions are ideal for the finest possible quality: sweet yet never palling, structured and at the same time, seductive and appealing.

The blend is **70 %**

**Corvina and 30% Rondinella**, from the cru vineyard of **La Roggia**, which is surrounded by a low wall (something locally called a “brolo”, meaning *vigneto* surrounded by a wall) at Villa Giona, on the slopes of mount Sausto, in the district of San Pietro in Cariano. Its surface is 9.75 hectares (24 acres), and terrain is predominantly miry, with a bed of gravel at 50-60 cm. – 20-24 inches – below the surface, which favors good drainage. Vines are very densely planted for particularly concentrated, sugar-rich grapes, perfect for Recioto's lengthy withering process.

Grapes are handpicked the first week of October. The fruit is subsequently placed in small, wooden boxes and **dried on the racks, with a unique procedure** and under ideal conditions of temperature, ventilation and humidity, for a total of 130 days. In the course of these months, grapes **lose around 42% of their initial weight, and sugar levels and concentration increase accordingly**. After alcoholic and malolactic fermentation, the wine is aged in 500-liter *tonneaux* of French oak for approximately 30 months, previous to another year of bottle age. The result is amazing: intense garnet in color, with a superb bouquet of raisins, violets and jam, and a full, velvety, round palate that delights without palling, and matches even that wine steward's torment, chocolate!



*Botrytis cinerea, “noble mold”, on grapes destined for Recioto*

### TASTING NOTES:

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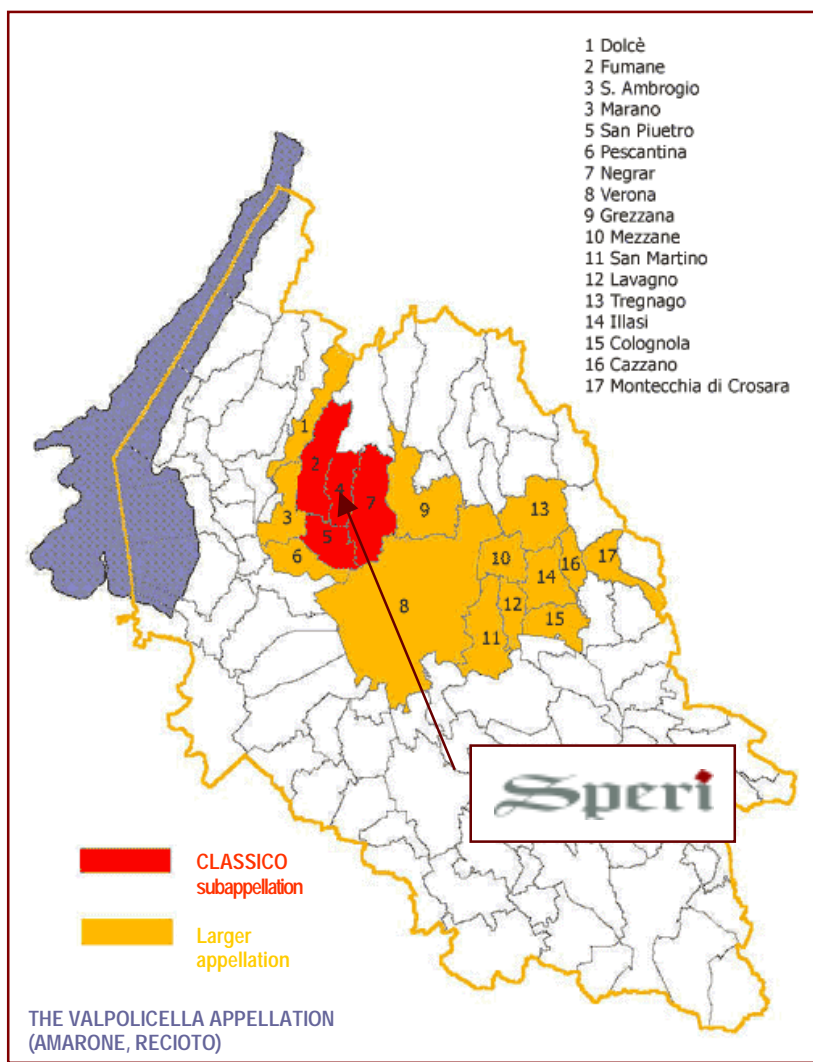
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# AMARONE TO BECOME DOCG



As we write, the Italian authorities in Rome are going through the paperwork, and it looks like Veneto's amazing Amarone – a lush, opulent favorite – will soon be upgraded (bureaucratic quagmires permitting!) from DOC to **DOCG**.

The proposal has been in the works since February 15th, 2005, when the region's Vitivinicultural Committee officially approved the request from Valpolicella producers, setting off the submission process. Today, the weighty little *G* for *Garantita*, Italy's top category, is just a step or two away, and the growers are hoping to label their Amarones as DOCG starting with the 2006 vintage.

**Hillside vineyards and grapes with the finest exposures are the new denomination's ultimate objective: in other words, the present CLASSICO subappellation** (historical core of Valpolicella), comprising the townships of Negrar, Marano, Sant'Ambrogio, San Pietro in Cariano and Fumane and constituting a mere fifth of the total DOC.

Crop yields in the area in question should decrease from the present *maximum* 120 quintals per hectare<sup>1</sup> to *maximum 90 quintals per hectare*

(approximately 3.6 tons per acre). Amarone<sup>2</sup> thus promises even more remarkable quality in future.

Another change has recently been implemented: one in varietal percentages. **Corvina Veronese/Corvinone**<sup>3</sup> has gone up from 40-70% to **40-80%**; **Rondinella** has been decreased from 20-40% to **5-30%**, and **Molinara** – a native grape of minor merits – has been made *optional rather than obligatory*, and cut back from 5-25% to a **maximum of 15%**.

**Speri** The **Speri** family's presence in the Classico heartland goes back to 1874, though the original homestead and cellars are even older: 1580. Their select, elevated terrain under vine (totaling 60 hectares, i.e. **148 acres**), on the Alpine foothills, enjoys a temperate climate you would not expect at this northerly latitude, and is divided into distinct **crus** comprising **La Roverina**, **Sant'Urbano**, and **La Roggia**. Throughout the property, the native vines of Corvina, Corvinone, Rondinella and Molinara are planted with a **much higher density than the appellation's average**, and a **training system specifically devised by the Speris to lower crops** and enhance exposure and concentration: the "small, open pergola" (*pergoletta aperta*, sloping and V-shaped) in lieu of the area's traditional *pergola veronese*.

<sup>1</sup> A quintal is equivalent to 220.46 pounds.

<sup>2</sup> As well as a Recioto, which will also be upgraded to DOCG.

<sup>3</sup> **Corvina Veronese and Corvinone** were once considered one and the same; today, we know they are actually very similar yet ampelographically distinct. However, DOC regulations lump the two together still. **The two varieties (see photo, page 2) actually complement each other perfectly when they hail from hillside terrain:** Corvinone (meaning "big Corvina") has larger berries and thicker, tougher skin (hence, more color and tannins), and the berries are more spread out, thus resistant to withering and molds; Corvina supplies greater finesse and velvet texture, hillside Corvinone enriches these with its sturdy structure, which contributes to Amarone's longevity.





# Amarone della Valpolicella Classico "Vigneto Monte Sant'Urbano"

## THE VINEYARD: "Monte Sant'Urbano"

takes its name from the corresponding cru (the estate's most prestigious) and is located within the township of **Fumane**, in the **Amarone Classico** subappellation, on the top of a hill (the name "Monte", *mountain*, is a bit of an overstatement...), at 280 meters above sea level. Exposure is excellent, facing south. Soil is volcanic in origin, calcareous-clayey, favoring the retention of humidity and consequently sustaining the vines in times of drought. Surface is 19 hectares (**47 acres**), planted with old rootstock, averaging 16 years of age. The wine is a single-vineyard.



The vineyard of Monte Sant'Urbano



Corvina Veronese



Rondinella



Corvinone

**VARIETIES:** Corvina Veronese 70%;  
Rondinella 25%; Corvinone 5%.

**VINIFICATION:** Grapes are withered on racks (see photo, right) for 120 days, and vinification takes place the month of February. Maceration on the skins lasts 25 days, with daily pumpovers.



**AGING:** In medium-large Slavonian oak barrels and 500-liter *tonneaux* of Allier oak (see photo, left) for 3½-4 years, followed by a further 12 months' bottle age.

**MATCHES:** Structured second courses, red meat, game, seasoned cheeses... Also outstanding on its own, as a *vino da meditazione*.

**RETAIL PRICE:**

