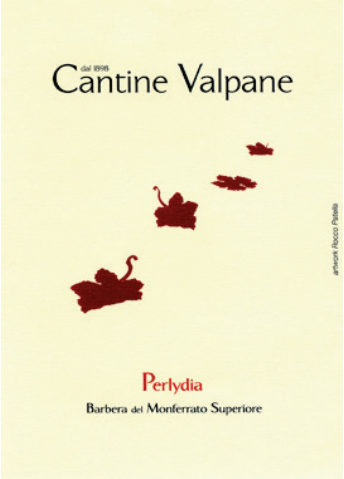
CANTINE VALPANE



Country: **Italy**
Region: **Piedmont**
Appellation(s): **Barbera del Monferrato, Barbera del Monferrato Superiore**
Producer: **Pietro Arditi**
Founded: **1899**
Annual Production: **3,500 cases**
Farming: **Sustainable**
Website: **www.cantinevalpane.com**

The Fojadelli family proudly displayed the awards bestowed on their Barbera: gold medals at tastings in Dijon and Bordeaux in 1898, silver the same year in Hamburg and the next in Rome. Their stately villa at Valpane overlooked one of the most enviable vineyard sites in the Monferrato, a perfect amphitheater that had been planted with vines since at least the 1700s. One day a young man came to the estate and enthusiastically described his dream to buy Valpane and pursue his passion for winegrowing on this exceptional plot of land. The elderly Fojadelli brusquely refused at first, but a housekeeper saw the young man's desolation as his hopes were crushed and convinced the owner to give him a chance. Pietro Giuseppe Arditi began working the land in 1900 under a sharecropping agreement, and after his passion and dedication to his work had earned Fojadelli's confidence, he purchased the estate in 1902. Over the years he planted more vines and raised his family at Valpane. His eldest daughter, Lydia, was a brilliant student with a bright future in mathematics, but her mother needed help around the house so, like many girls of her generation, she was pulled out of school at an early age. But instead of cooking and tending to her elderly grandmother, Lydia followed her father out to the vineyards, where she quickly became fascinated by his craft. Before long, she was working alongside him and showing a keen business sense in dealing with clients. As Pietro grew older she gradually took over the estate, continuing to make the same structured, aromatic wines for which Valpane was already known. Today Lydia's nephew, named Pietro for his grandfather, runs the estate. He is bursting with pride in his vineyards and the distinguished history of Valpane, but he never takes credit personally for his wonderful wines. "People tell me I'm a great winemaker," he says, "but the wines of Valpane have been winning awards for well over a century, so it can't be my doing. I'm just careful not to ruin what the land gives us!"

Although the names Asti and Alba may be more widely recognized today, Pietro explains that the Monferrato provides more faithful expressions of Barbera. This is due in part to the warmer climate and longer hours of sunlight here, which allow the grapes to ripen completely and unfurl the full personality of the variety. The Monferrato is also still relatively untamed, and the forests and fields here benefit the area's vineyards by providing a natural source of variety. At Valpane these factors combine to provide meaty Barberas that nevertheless offer plenty of lively fruit. Pietro then lets them sit in large oak *botti* and cement tanks for several years, depending on the cuvée, and releases them only when they are ready.

CANTINE VALPANE **(continued)**

Wine	Blend	Vine Age	Soil Type	Vineyard Area*
Barbera del Monferrato "Rosso Pietro"	Barbera	Planted in 2000, 2005	Clay, Limestone	4 ha
Barbera del Monferrato Superiore "Perlydia"	Barbera	Planted in 2000	Clay, Limestone	1.5 ha
Barbera del Monferrato Superiore "Valpane"	85% Barbera 15% Freisa	Planted in 1980, 2000	Clay, Limestone	1.5 ha
Grignolino del Monferrato Casalese "Euli"	Grignolino	Planted in 2005	Clay, Limestone	2 ha
Monferrato Freisa "Canone Inverso"	Freisa	Planted in 2000	Clay, Limestone	1 ha
Vino Rosso "Rosa Ruske"	Ruchè	2/3 planted 1970, 1/3 planted 2005	Clay, Limestone	1 ha

* "ha"=hectares; one hectares equals roughly two and a half acres

VITICULTURE / VINIFICATION

- Vines are sustainably farmed, the equivalent of *lutte raisonnée* in France
- No fining or filtration
- All indigenous yeasts
- Length of *élevage* and bottling aging before release are adjusted according to the needs of each unique vintage

Barbera del Monferrato "Rosso Pietro":

- Fermentation takes place in cement tanks and lasts 21-23 days
- Aged 10-12 months in stainless steel and cement tanks before bottling
- Aged 3 months in bottle before release

Barbera del Monferrato Superiore "Perlydia":

- Fermentation takes place in stainless steel and cement tanks and lasts 21-23 days
- Aged 2-5 years in stainless steel and cement tanks before bottling
- Aged one year in bottle before release
- "Perlydia" = for Lydia, Pietro's aunt who ran the estate before him

CANTINE VALPANE **(continued)**

Barbera del Monferrato Superiore "Valpane":

- Fermentation takes place in wood vats and lasts 21-23 days
- The Barbera and Freisa are vinified separately
- The Barbera is aged 1-3 years in 30hL wood vats before blending
- The Freisa is aged 1-3 years in stainless steel vats before blending
- After the Barbera and Freisa are blended the wine ages 18-24 months in 500-liter *tonneaux*
- Aged one year in bottle before release

Grignolino del Monferrato "Casalese Euli"

- Fermentation takes place in stainless steel tanks and lasts 21-23 days
- Aged 12-18 months in stainless steel and cement tanks before bottling
- Aged 6 months in bottle before release

Monferrato Freisa "Canone Inverso"

- Fermentation takes place in stainless steel tanks and lasts 21-23 days
- Aged 12-18 months in stainless steel and cement tanks before bottling
- Aged 6 months in bottle before release

Vino Rosso "Rosa Ruske"

- Fermentation takes place in cement tanks and lasts 23 days
- Aged in cement tanks from end of vilification until February 2013 (for 2011 vintage)
- The name "Ruske" (roo-SKAY), is a combination of the grape name Ruchè, and Ruschena, the last name of Pietro's cousin who owns the vineyard.

MISCELLANEA

Rosso Pietro:
This wine is simply called "red Pietro," mainly because it is Pietro's red wine but also referring to his red beard. (Today Pietro jokes that the name should be updated to "grey Pietro"!)

Euli:
The name "Euli" comes from the name of a Longobard tribe that once inhabited the area where the Grignolino vineyard is now. The tribe was called "Ueel Waigkika", which in the contemporary German language was written *Euli-iup-pina*: euli = owl, pina = high/above, Iupi = Jove, so "the owl that is higher than Jove."

There are now owls living in the rafters at Valpane, and the name is also a nod to them.

CANTINE VALPANE **(continued)**

Canone Inverso:
A canon, simply stated, is a musical structure where different voices/instruments play the same melody at overlapping intervals (think "Row, Row, Row Your Boat"); an inverse canon is one in which the first voice sings/plays a line and the subsequent voice sings it backwards.

Most people see Freisa as a young-drinking, lively little wine. The name is therefore a play on words because his wine is the inverse of the canonical (= traditional, accepted) style.

Canone Inverso is also the name of a book by Paolo Maurensig that Pietro likes.