

# Villa Canestrari the strength of renovating

scritto da Fabio Piccoli | 21 Novembre 2016



One just needs to visit the Wine Museum of Villa Canestrari (Illasi, via del Castello 20) to get a sense of the long history of the winery (more than 125 years) and to see the extraordinary evolution of winemaking in an area that comprises two of the most important Italian designations, Soave and Valpolicella.

In this strip of land, east of the city of Verona, Villa Canestrari has built over the years an experience of winemaking among the most interesting in the entire province of Verona.

Today the winery is firmly managed by Francesco Bonuzzi, who, together with his mother Adriana, since few years now took over the baton that has been passing in the hands of the family members for four generations, since when in 1888 Carlo Bonuzzi, forefather of the family and owner of the vineyards in Val d'Illasi, graduated from the Royal School of Oenology of Conegliano Veneto and gave a key contribution to the

evolution of the winery. "In 1990" Francesco tells us "the winery was named "Villa Canestrari" thanks to the fusion of two wineries the one of Bonuzzi family (father side) and the one of Franchi family (mother side)".

There is a common denominator in the long history of this winery and that is the strength and courage of renovating, of using the experience gained to constantly improve.

"It is a family trait" Francesco explains "testified by the number of documents we still have and that can be seen in our Museum. Books, documents that say how to study and to deepen all topics regarding oenology and winemaking, all about the characteristics of our territory has always been the starting point to be able to improve our wines. For this reason we think of our Museum as testament of how development and evolution can't exist without research and innovation".

Today the Wine Museum of Villa Canestrari represents an excellent example of an effective tool of territorial enhancement and promotion of local wine tourism.

"Direct contact with wine lovers and clients" Francesco underlines "has always been our first commitment. Actually we are investing more to make Villa Canestrari a benchmark for events and hospitality able to capture the attention of present and future tourists".

But to Francesco Bonuzzi wine tourism also means to concretely demonstrate the difference between small artisanal producers and big industrial groups. "For us today finding tools to stress our uniqueness is crucial" Francesco explains "otherwise we might run into the biggest threat for Soave, but also for many other Italian designations, which is the threat of flattening".

"It gets harder and harder for small/medium size wineries like ours" Francesco adds "to make people understand we are different from big producers and consequently the price of our wine can't be the same of the one of big groups, like cooperatives".

"When we get to international markets" Francesco stresses "we always have to justify our prices somehow. It would be ideal

to have tools that allow us to be actually different, starting from procedural guidelines, but we don't have them yet". These difficulties don't prevent Villa Canestrari from trusting Soave as a brand.

"We keep on trusting it, but at the same time we are convinced an "Operation Truth" is necessary to unveil our designation and to let Soave different souls show off clearly. This can be said for Valpolicella designation as well, because it will undergo the same threats if its different characteristics productionwise are not properly enhanced".

"It's not about an ideological war between big and small" Francesco explains "it's about finding a way to make our differences in terms of production and territory (the role of cru is crucial) emerge in a clear and effective manner. At the moment Soave Consortium is definitely one of the most active in Italy on this matter, but this is still not enough. We need to have the courage to work on the norms that rule the designation itself".

But Francesco Bonuzzi is not one of those who "just" wait for change to come and he is trying no matter what, year after year, to make his Soave wines more and more recognisable with a strong identity.

"We are growing and are putting a lot of efforts in making our Soave Superiore Riserva grow as well" Francesco points out "because we want to underline the quality peaks this wine can reach. There are not many of us who produce Soave Riserva and it demonstrates how there are still a lot of producers who don't realise how far we can get with Soave, in terms of quality levels. While for our entry Soave "Vigne di Sande" we marked the concept of cru, aware of the relevance of the bond between wine and its growing site".

What is the vision Francesco Bonuzzi has for his winery?

"On marketing and communication side I can hardly imagine what more can we do to improve Soave reputation, so I think the most important front on which we have to focus is the one of an internal distinction among productive models. Probably one simple message is what we need to let people know about our

differences and it might also be a mean of transparency and clarity when it comes to the market".