

vin na tur

EDITORIAL

VINNATUR TASTING

**VINNATUR VINEYARD RESEARCH AND
THE COLLABORATION WITH VITENOVA**

**WHY ARE INSECTS IMPORTANT AND NOT
OUR ENEMIES?**

SPONTANEOUS FERMENTATION

VINNATUR WORKSHOP

INTERVIEW: SIMON WOOLF

magazine

N°0



BEYOND ORGANIC

_EDITORIAL

by Angiolino Maule (President)

In recent years, organic and biodynamic farming has grown exponentially in European viticulture, even in large companies. I consider this trend positive for everyone. It is finally understood that this is the only way that guarantees a future for our soils and our terroirs. In the early years of this “boom”, the lack of knowledge and the frenzy saw the proliferation of unprepared professional figures and unreliable solutions. The viticulture that we intend, that “more than organic”, does not have a unique recipe for everyone, but it is made of small steps, lots of knowledge and knowledgeable winemakers. I founded VinNatur to encourage the sharing of knowledge and skills among winemakers. The exchange of ideas between us producers soon proved insufficient to provide reliable answers to the problems of a truly natural viticulture and enology. For this reason, since 2009 we have been working with public and private scientific institutions, able to give practical results that are easily applicable to wineries. Some of the ongoing projects are detailed in the following pages.

Today, with VinNatur, entomologists, botanists and microbiologists specialize in scanning the living part of the soil. In addition to understanding the state of health of the vineyard, we must understand how to strengthen it, how to avoid human errors that spoil the balance of nature. The most ambitious aim is to eliminate the copper and sulphur used to fight vine diseases and to obtain stable and good wines without using

sulphites and other added products. This information is at the complete disposal of all the associated winemakers and many, with great determination and courage, are active and ready for experimentation.

One tool to prove that what we claim is true is the analysis of pesticide residue, carried out on the wines of all the associates every year: The removal of producers in whose wines we have found pesticides is categorical, I think it is a duty to the consumer. In 2016, we voted upon and approved an even more effective tool: the “VinNatur Wine Production Charter” which outlines all the admitted and not admitted practices in the vineyard and in the cellar. We are collaborating with five of the best Italian certification bodies for the first phase of checks that, in 2018, involved 50 wineries. In 2019, these checks will be extended and refined. Only when these checks have been completed will the charter be strong and no longer based on a simple self-certification by the winemaker.

In parallel, another project which I strongly pushed for was the “VinNatur Workshop”. An event dedicated to the international press, aimed at spreading our philosophy beyond national borders; a new way to bring VinNatur wines to the attention of external and authoritative personalities. One thing we are very proud of is being considered a springboard for the many young people who join our association every year: small, curious, with a great desire to produce unique and rare wines!

VINNATUR TASTING: THE SIXTEENTH EDITION IS BACK BUT WITH A FEW CHANGES

_ TO RENOVATE



The best results come with time and after sixteen years of hard work and dedication, the time has come for a few changes to our main and most famous event, starting with the name: **VinNatur Tasting**. This decision was provoked largely because of the second important change in 2019: the new location - the Margraf Showroom. This year, the traditional location of Villa Favorita was not available due to major restoration work. As organizers, we immediately committed ourselves to finding a suitable and functional area for both exhibitors and visitors, a commitment that from an initial need has turned into an interesting opportunity. The interior space at the Margraf Showroom is far larger than we had at Villa Favorita and all the stands are located on one floor and thus considerably eases the work of the exhibitors and the use by all visitors.

The main protagonists of the event are the **180 producers of natural wine from all over Europe**, united in the aim of diffusing their idea of making wine, using the most natural methods possible, and reducing interventions in the vineyard and in the cellar to a bare minimum. In other words, the culture of terroir. It was precisely the desire to disseminate and share the issues that are dear to us that led to the creation of **VinNatur Magazine**, a simple and direct communication channel that twice a year will allow us to inform members and supporters of the various fronts where VinNatur is committed. In particular, we will focus on the latest

news from the scientific research projects, in terms of analysis and experimentation on the vineyards, that we support as an association, and on the tools used to ensure compliance with our Charter. We continue to believe that the dissemination of valuable ideas and content is possible thanks to words, but not limited to such. Figurative art is an engaging and immediate language that we have been using and encouraging for the past four years, through the “Imagine Your VinNatur Tasting” competition, in collaboration with Italian Illustrator. Particularly representative of the spirit of VinNatur 2019 is the poster by **Giulia Perin**, with which the artist from Cassola (VI) won the first prize. The work has been described by the author as: *“taking time to be together; both in the relationship between the farmer and the grapes, but also among the people who share the pleasure of a beautiful glass of wine and enjoy the moment.”*

In line with the values of respect for nature and man, the association once again has decided to share part of the proceeds from the event to Sister Tiziana Maule’s **Progetto Alépè** association, which gives medical and social assistance to the inhabitants of the city of Alépè, in the Ivory Coast.

VINNATUR VINEYARD RESEARCH AND THE COLLABORATION WITH VITENOVA



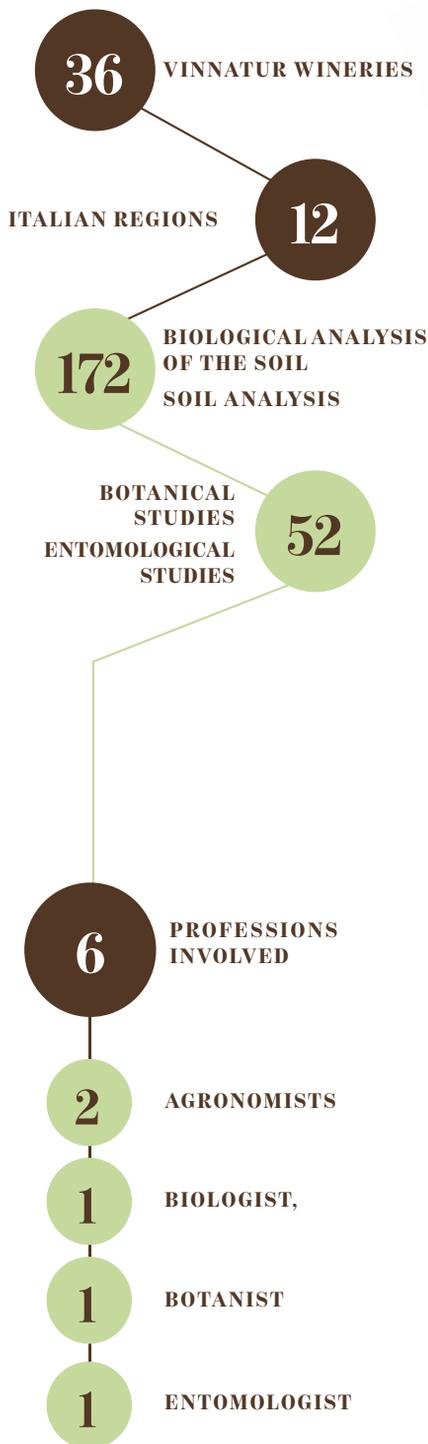
_ RESEARCH

by Stefano Zaninotti

The purpose of the VinNatur research in collaboration with the Vitenova team is clear: to cultivate a vineyard together with nature in order to obtain productivity and good quality of grapes and subsequently, wines. The goal may seem utopian for many people who work in the sector; because they are accustomed to removing everything that is not a vine from the vineyard through different methods: insecticides to eliminate “bad” insects, herbicides to remove the “weeds”, fungicides to keep diseases at bay. All this without thinking that there can be and that we can study alternatives. It is precisely this starting point that distinguishes a VinNatur winemaker: to believe and work to cultivate a vineyard whilst respecting the vineyard as a whole and its surroundings (including human beings). To address the topic, the winemaker goes beyond the technique applied by organics or biodynamics; there are no pre-packaged recipes, each vineyard is different from the other; one technique can work in one vineyard and another does not. There is therefore a need for a scientific approach, field observations (which are the basis of science but also the Biodynamic approach), respect for times and ways of working the land. For this reason, since 2009, I, Stefano Zaninotti, together with agronomist Stefano Amadeo and biologist Irene Franco (University of Udine) study and measure the biological fertility and the vitality of the soil.

HOW DID IT START?

My first meeting with Angiolino Maule dates back to 2012. At first, Angiolino tested our approach in his land for two years, then, given the results, he decided to extend this experimentation to 24 vineyards of 12 wineries belonging to VinNatur in the north and middle of Italy. After three years we presented the results, which evaluated the trends and usefulness of the agronomic techniques promoted to improve fertility. The data collected allowed us to create a model able to predict for different soil types the ideal amount of microbial biomass (quantity of microorganisms that populate the soil) that it should contain. In 2016, we decided to expand the experimentation starting to study the quantity and quality of the flora and the insects in the vineyard, with the help of the botanist Cristiano Francescato and the entomologist Costanza Uboni. Their contribution has allowed us to embark on a totally new and innovative way in viticulture. For the first time, we are no longer studying the best way to eliminate or limit insects or weeds. On the contrary, studying and measuring the biodiversity in the vineyard allows for more informed and reasoned agronomic choices to be made, always aimed at preserving or improving the system’s ability to return to equilibrium (resilience). This knowledge is of vital importance to VinNatur wineries, because they discover another world and a new way of seeing and working their vineyard. With these themes, the interest from the companies has increased from year to year. In the table below are some figures showing the scope of the experimentation.



WHY ARE INSECTS IMPORTANT AND NOT OUR ENEMIES?

_INSECTS

by Costanza Uboni

Very often farmers have the instinct to spray insects. And with reason, the damage to the leaves and the fruit makes the winemaker angry, and sometimes even angers the person who is harvesting and treating unhealthy grapes. It is a feeling which is also part of our daily lives: the bug, the ant, the cockroach, the mosquito, the fly have always been considered annoying and unwanted intruders. But if we look closely at what happens, perhaps we realize that for any excessive presence, the reason is an imbalance: for example, an excess of mosquitoes may be due to the presence of too few swallows, a cockroach in the house or in the cellar is probably the result of a lack of hygiene in that place or environment. It's like that in the vineyard too: if there's an insect that does damage it's because there's a source of trouble. The good and the bad, it's just that: what is the source? Here the study of entomology, together with an agronomist's eye, can guide the winemaker towards a solution and towards a new equilibrium.

My work as an entomologist starts from observation; first, I place traps to capture the greatest possible variety of insects in the vineyard and then catalog them and analyze them in order to draw the first conclusions, at least from the naturalistic point of view, and identify the source of the imbalance in the vineyard.

An example? We have observed that some products for foliar treatments contain an adhesive (to better withstand the rain) with an insecticide effect; whilst you might think that you're simply fighting a mushroom, you actually find yourself with absolutely nothing left in the vineyard. At this point, as in a desert or a vacuum, the first one to arrive (usually a harmful insect), finding no antagonist, spreads very easily. To reach these conclusions it takes method (scientific, from Obrist and Duelli, 2009, RBA Rapid Biodiversity Assessment), skills and time (2 months total of "fall traps" in the vineyard, 2 days per sample to analyze and catalog every single insect).

To take this even further, I will give you an example of what we have found in two adjacent vineyards of Montalcino, one worked consistently with the VinNatur approach, the other with integrated viticulture:

Year 2017

VinNatur vineyard	Integrated control viticulture vineyard
-------------------	---

N° morphospecies

73	67
-----------	-----------

principal morphospecies

regroupings of insects with similar characteristics

DIPTERA, BEETLES, ARANEAE	ARANEAE (SPIDERS)
--	------------------------------

N° carabids

predatory beetles of other insects

130	39
------------	-----------

N° springtails

wingless, small herbivorous insects that like humus - indicators of good organic presence

29	17
-----------	-----------

**ratio of carnivorous/
herbivorous insects**

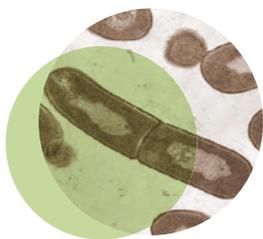
closer the value is to 1, the closer the ratio is to a natural equilibrium

2,35	3,13
-------------	-------------

N° pollinators

25	13
-----------	-----------

As can be seen, the important difference in insects (particularly springtails and carabids) is exclusively linked to the quality of the soil, the number of pollinating insects, and the relationship between carnivorous and herbivorous insects. Here too we have identified an important disturbance factor: weeding. This is the reason why the number of individual carabids and springtails is lower in the integrated control viticulture vineyard, and are indicators of the quality of the land itself. The type of treatments against downy mildew and powdery mildew has instead affected the number of pollinating insects and the ratio of carnivorous to herbivorous insects. The Biocontrol index (carnivores / herbivores ratio) is very important from an agronomic point of view: when the value exceeds 3, the herbivores are in a clear majority and can thus create damage on leaves and clusters. In the specific case, the phylloxera (insect that causes damage in the vegetative apices) was much more present in the vineyard managed with integrated viticulture than in the "VinNatur" vineyard that had not been treated with sulfur and had seen the use of a dose of copper equal to 2.4.



SPONTANEOUS FERMENTATION

_ UNIQUENESS

by Franco Giacosa

When fermentations fail to start, or slow down, or even stop before the complete transformation of all the grape sugars into alcohol by yeasts, it is very likely that acetic, heterolactic or other harmful microorganisms will develop. These are often responsible for an increase in volatile acidity and for the formation of various substances that are unpleasant to taste and smell. Defects in the wine hide the best qualities of the “terroir” and cancel all efforts made in the vineyard.

To avoid these problems that arise during fermentation, for several decades it became status quo to use selected yeasts and enological adjuvants that, on the one hand, enabled us to eliminate many of the most frequent anomalies in wines but, on the other hand, they influenced the characteristics of the wine by reducing biodiversity in the cellar and the territorial expression particularly sought after in quality wines.

The pioneers of “natural” wines who tried to produce wines without the addition of any extraneous substances to the grapes and don’t go for half measures in their aim to make wine with marked characteristics of the specific “terroir”, at the beginning, almost all of these pioneers had problems with defects in at least some of their wines.

These defects were often considered unsurpassable, above all due to the insufficient biochemical knowledge that small viticultural artisans had of spontaneous fermentations.

There were very few years in which the wines resulted in a clear taste profile without interference of defects in some form and to varying extents. In those years of grace, when the wines did not present defects, the results were exalting: consistently rich and pleasant wines capable of improving over time. With the passing of the years, fortunately much has changed; without yielding the naturalness, we can take advantage of the greater experience, the acquired knowledge and, most importantly, the change of mentality.

Many “extreme naturalists” in the past were convinced that it was enough to produce good grapes. Once those grapes arrived in the cellar, the wine would be “done by itself”. There is nothing more incorrect nor detrimental to quality. Because, in reality, even with the best grapes, if they are vinified without meticulous attention, you almost always get wines that lack pleasantness, probably uninteresting, and likely defective.

Obviously, for non-interventional vinification (with spontaneous fermentations, without selected yeasts, sulfur dioxide or other additives) to be successful, the winemaker must be fully aware of the need for greater and more precise efforts to be dedicated to juice.

Including the above, spontaneous fermentations represent a great opportunity for “natural” winemakers as they can exalt the uniqueness and unrepeatability of a particular wine, which can only be done in a particular vineyard. **For the winemaker, the yeasts from their vineyard and their own cellar constitute**



VINNATUR WORKSHOP

_BLINDFOLD

a specific ecological island that is an integral part of this uniqueness, which cannot be substituted by commercial yeasts.

Spontaneous fermentations increase the gap between industrial wines which are often homogenous and, consequently, very similar in the simple fruity olfactory and gustatory expressions. In many cases, it even becomes difficult to identify the varietal characteristics in various wines.

I believe that wines obtained with spontaneous fermentations can also transmit a lot more emotions to consumers of quality wine because of the wide organoleptic representation of the different territories. There is greater gustatory satisfaction for complexity, integrity, pleasantness and the possibility of being able to appreciate all the nuances that every particular “terroir” gives to the grapes, without any foreign interferences.



D From 29th May to 1st June 2019, twenty journalists will be invited to the 2019 edition of VinNatur Workshop. 6 Italian and 14 international writers from different parts of the world will come together in Lonigo, in the province of Vicenza, Italy. The group will be involved in a multi-day conference that will include a series of wine tastings as well as moments of round-table discussions with the participation of oenologists, biologists and representatives of VinNatur. During the three days, the participants will be asked to take part in blind tastings of wines produced by VinNatur associates, but the spirit of the initiative will not be competitive. On the contrary, the goal is to create an opportunity for constructive discussion around wines made from minimal-intervention methods, to take the opinions of experts and use them as stimuli for growth and improvement. In other words, a different way of measuring if the decisions we took on the road to putting the wine in bottle were correct or if it might be necessary to make some adjustments next time round. The participants will not be questioning the naturalness of the wines; this is now an established fact, which whilst it might be easy to take for granted, is also protected by our Charter. No, what VinNatur is urging its producers to focus on is to obtain good quality wines which best represent the territory of their origin. We are aware, however, that we sometimes have room for improvement in terms of taste.



In the current marketplace, it's not enough to make healthy wines, we need to be making good wines. Hence the need for external and competent judgments which can help broaden the horizons, outside the association and the narrow sphere of natural wines. Like that of Jacopo Cossater, a long-experienced wine journalist who commented on the experience of last year: *"Bellissimo! A moment not only for comparison and discussion on VinNatur and the movement of Italian natural wines but also the extraordinary opportunity to have an overview of the members' production in a context of rare professionalism, glasses in hand. To taste so many wines in those particular conditions - not as I was used to, standing at counters during fairs - was fantastic: a real panorama that exposed the peculiarities of the individual and the virtues of the group."*

The methods of conducting the workshop will be much the same in 2019: the selected jury will blindly taste the wines of the VinNatur members, expressing for each a technical judgment and an overall evaluation which will later be shared with the producer. In 2018, the jury's favourites included:

WHITE WINE

Il Carica L'Asino,

white wine

from Bruna Ferro's Carussin winery in Piedmont.

RED WINE

Il Castellero,

Barolo DOCG 2014

from Barale f.lli

SPARKLING SECTION

Corte Roncolato Durello

Spumante Classic Method 2014

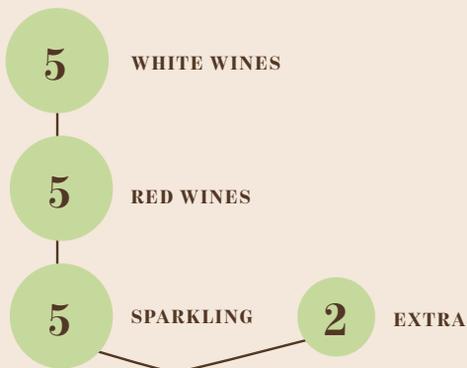
by Meggiolaro Vini

EXTRA

Zanovello Fior d'Arancio

Passito 2015,

from Ca' Lustra





_ INTERVIEW

Interview with Simon Woolf, the experience of the VinNatur workshop

Tell us a bit about yourself; how did you get into wine?

I was lucky. I had a mum who not only put good wine on the table, but was also able to tell me something about it. She knew the classics of course, and she didn't spend huge sums of money, but even from a fairly young age I became familiar with the taste of Bordeaux, Pouilly-fumé, Rioja, things like that. So an interest was fostered, and I continually yearned to discover more and drink better. Then when I was about 30, my girlfriend persuaded me to go and do a wine tasting course - out of despair I think, that I was boring her to death! The rest, as they say...

What is it about skin-contact wine that initially got and still keeps your interest?

Partly it's the distinct point of difference from the holy trinity of red, white and rosé, partly the additional textural elements that you rarely find in white wine. Additionally, the history and culture behind the style keeps me excited about it. **Orange wine** is a bit of an underdog, unloved, abandoned, eventually rediscovered but much maligned and misunderstood. Now it finally feels like it's having a moment.

More than anything else, I just like the range of flavours and aromas in **orange wines**. I drink them as often, if not more, than whites or reds.

The Workshop was your first experience at a VinNatur event, how did you find it?

It was quite unique, possibly the first time anyone has mounted such a major qualitative tasting exercise involving natural wines. The opportunity to taste such a great and varied



selection in objective, blind-tasting conditions was really a dream. I was also hugely impressed with the association's drive for learning and continual improvement, and by its willingness to pair scientific methodology with the more rootsy elements that normally dominate in natural wine circles.

What was your overall impression of the wines that you tasted at the Workshop and was it different from what you were expecting?

I felt that the overall quality level was very high. Out of some 200 wines, less than 10% were seriously flawed. Broadly speaking, the wines were as I expected. There were some nice surprises along the way, and some new producers I didn't previously know. I heaved a sigh of relief that there were no mouse-bombs to survive.

Is there any one memory of the Workshop which particularly stands out?

The culture clash when two "arrogants" from the French contingent insisted (publicly) that the Italian winemakers had it all wrong, because they were making wines with tannins and acidity that were (according to said contingent) "not drinkable". Needless to say, this was not a view shared by the whole room.

What's next for you professionally?

I'm now working on that difficult second album, having enjoyed some success with "Amber Revolution" last year.

182 exhibitors at this year's Tasting,

each one with a shared dream: to make wine which is naturally good, for the consumer and for the environment. The left-hand column shows the wineries who have joined the association this year; whilst the right-hand column those who celebrate 10 years with us!



NEW PARTNERS				2009-2019			
5G	AT	Burgenland	Judith Beck GmbH	3E	FR	Champagne	Domaine Laherte Frères
4E	IT	Campania	Villa San Lupara	6G	FR	Jura	Domaine Labet
3F	IT	Emilia Romagna	KOI - Azienda Agricola	7F	FR	Loire	Nathalie Gaubicher
4E	IT	Emilia Romagna	Podere Sottolnoce	5F	FR	Rhône	Eric Texier
4F	IT	Lazio	D.S. Bio	3C	IT	Alto Adige	Radoar Az. Agr.
3D	IT	Lazio	Il Vinco	8B	IT	Campania	Il Cancelliere Az. Vitivin.
3F	IT	Lazio	Marco Colicchio	8F	IT	Emilia Romagna	Cinque Campi Az. Agr.
2E	IT	Lazio	Colle Formica	7E	IT	Emilia Romagna	Donati Camillo Az. Agr.
4E	IT	Liguria	Terra della Luna	8C	IT	Emilia Romagna	Lusenti Az. Agr.
4F	IT	Lombardia	Perego & Perego	7C	IT	Friuli	Terpin Franco
4F	IT	Marche	Tenuta Ca' Sciampagne	3E	IT	Lombardia	Martilde Az. Agr.
2D	IT	Marche	Vino Cotto di Tiberi David	5C	IT	Lombardia	Piccolo Bacco dei Quaroni
7D	IT	Piemonte	Olek Bondonio	3C	IT	Piemonte	Carussin di Bruna Ferro
6B	IT	Puglia	Petracavallo	4F	IT	Piemonte	Cascina Tavijn Az. Agr.
4E	IT	Sardegna	Altea Illotto	3D	IT	Piemonte	Cascina Roera
4E	IT	Sicilia	Agricola Marino	8C	IT	Piemonte	Cascina Zerbetta
1D	IT	Sicilia	Raffaella Rappa	8E	IT	Sicilia	Lamoresca di Rizzo Filippo
2C	IT	Sicilia	Barracco Francesca	2D	IT	Sicilia	Marco De Bartoli & C. Srl
1D	IT	Sicilia	Mastro di Baglio	8E	IT	Toscana	Pacina Az. Agr.
3E	IT	Sicilia	Tenuta La Favola	8D	IT	Toscana	Santa Maria Soc. Agr.
5B	IT	Toscana	La Svolta	7B	IT	Veneto	Davide Spillare Az. Agr.
4F	IT	Toscana	Pian di Meta Vecchia	5E	IT	Veneto	Filippi
6C	IT	Veneto	Calalta	8D	IT	Veneto	La Biancara Soc. Agr.
4E	IT	Veneto	Il Roccolo di Monticelli	2C	IT	Veneto	Marco Sambin Az. Agr.
3E	IT	Veneto	Insolente	7B	IT	Veneto	Piccinin Daniele Az. Agr.
6E	IT	Veneto	Tenuta Maraveja	5B	IT	Veneto	Portinari Daniele
5E	IT	Veneto	Vini San Nazario	2F	SL	Brda	Nando Azienda
3E	IT	Veneto	Volcanalia di Rossella Mastrotto	2F	SL	Carso	Rencel
				1F	SL	Istria	Klabjan

Associazione VinNatur: Associazione culturale senza fini di lucro
Via Biancara 14, 36053 Gambellara (Vicenza) Italia



Cover Photo by Lorenzo Rui