



Euganean Hills

The Euganean Hills are located in the Veneto region. They are often referred to as “sea cliffs” that stand proudly at the heart of the eastern part of the river Po Valley. This group of hills stands out on the south-westerly horizon of the province of Padua, at approx. 60 kilometres from Venice and on a clear day the clock tower in St. Mark's Square can be seen from the top of Mount Gemola.

The Euganean Hills cover a total area of approx. 19,000 hectares. The perimeter of the area is 65 kilometres, with around one hundred hills which reach a maximum height of 604 meters asl, as in the case of Mount Venda. The area is made up of 15 municipalities areas and since 1989 they have been protected by the **Euganean Hills Regional Park** authority.

The hills were formed by a series of **volcanic eruptions**. The first activity dates at about 43 million years ago, but it was only the second volcanic phase, about 35 million years ago, that gave the region its present shape. From the the lava cooled down rocks like trachyte, rhyolite, latite, and strands of basalt were formed.

The climate

The climate is milder than that of the surrounding plain, in winter the thermometer doesn't drop below zero as frequently and for as long as it does in the plain. In summer it is cooler and less humid than the lowlands. This explains how the hills with a southern exposure, bathed by direct sunlight, can easily support vegetation like olive trees, cypresses, laurels, and other species of Mediterranean flora.

On the other hand, very different environmental conditions can be found on opposite sides of the same hill, creating contrasting microclimates, ranging from the mediterranean to submountain. That is why these hills bring forth so many different wines. The freshness of the northern area slopes is the natural habitat for Serprini, Moscatti and white wines in general, and the sun's strength and the warmth of the southern slopes is the terroir for the red wines.

Viticulture

Based on artifacts, such as drinking vessels and carafes, found at excavations sites around Arquà Petrarca and Este, it is believed that grapes were grown and wine made in the Euganean Hills since prehistoric times. The Hills, from its origin, have been an essential component of the Venetian landscape, as we can also read in the pages of the ancient historians. First among all is the Paduan Tito Livio, who in his tale lets the Spartans of Cleonimo, sent scouting in that area after the landing on the Adriatic coasts, glimpse in the distance the typical reliefs. And was this proximity to Venice to make the Euganean Hills a strategic point for Romans, who brought new grapes varieties and in the specific the Serprino.

Moscato is a huge, sprawling family of vines that includes many varieties, two of them the **Moscato Bianco** and the **Moscato Giallo**, believed to be of Greek origin, during the Middle Ages spread throughout the Tri-Veneto area thanks to Venetian merchants. The families of the Venetian nobility place their sumptuous residences on the Hills and buy most part of the lands.

Around 1870 grape varieties from France were brought to Italy, and the Counts Corinaldi, a noble family of Monseice, were the first in Italy to plant **Bordolese** vines to produce wine.

The volcanic origin, the influence of the near Adriatic Sea, the inclination of the slopes and the exposure to the sun, give to our wines a special euganean character., that distinguished them. In this area it's difficult to speak of autochthonous and international grapes. Here the international become autochthonous. Euganean growers are capable, but the most of the credit for this success belongs to the territory and to the nature.

From a biotype of glera grape, this is the special prosecco of Colli Euganei. Who has born first? Serprino or Prosecco? "Obviously" **Serprino**. There is the traditional sparkling version, and the new spumante version. It is the aperitif of the Venetian Hills, and the perfect company for a fish dinner.

Fior d'Arancio

Fior d'Arancio is made of Moscato Giallo. Fior d'Arancio became a Docg in 2011. The Docg is a very important acknowledgement, since in Italy there are only 73 Docg (Guaranteed and Controlled Designation of Origin) and 330 Doc (Controlled Designation of Origin). Both Doc and Docg require that a wine has to be produced within a specific region, using defined methods and with abiding by some defined quality standards. A notable difference for the Docg labelled wines is that they are analysed and tasted by government-licensed personnel before being bottled. To prevent later manipulation, Docg wine bottles then are sealed with a numbered governmental seal across the cap or cork.

Coming back to Fior d'Arancio, Yellow Moscato grapes have to be grown in the Colli Euganei region and in the traditional trellising, that is to say cordon training with a maximum yield per hectare of 12 tons. There can be 3 different versions of Fior d'Arancio.

_The SPUMANTE, the traditional version and the most well-known, is a sparkling sweet wine with an explosion of fresh citrus aromas. It is used to accompany the dessert, it is the must to party, and it is interesting as aperitif before the sunset. The alcohol is very low, around 6%.

_The PASSITO, made from semi-dried grapes it is a nectar with all the power of the sun, it suggests us with dried apricot, raisins, homey, candied fruit. This is the perfect companion for important cheeses, for foie gras and for dessert.

The good acidity of Moscato Giallo grown in the Colli Euganei Hills allowed to provide both spumante and passito with a great freshness, able to counterbalance the sweetness.

_Last but not least, the DY VERSION, which is the most recent version. The grape used is still the Moscato Giallo, with the only difference that fermentation is carried out longer, until the wine becomes

dry or with a very small amount of residual sugar. The dry version is great with local dishes but also sushi and fish preparations in general.

As for the name Fior d'Arancio, it means "Orange blossom". This is because orange blossom aroma had been found to be the most distinctive aroma of this particular variety.

Colli Euganei Rosso

Colli Euganei Rosso is the couvee that speaks about Colli Euganei. It is based on Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet franc/Carmenere, and a little bit of Raboso.

If we go around Colli Euganei visiting the different "Cantine", we'll find a great variety in style of "Colli Euganei Rosso". In this wine every producer express himself and his philosophy in making wine. Sometimes we'll find a lot of thinking and methods, sometimes a lot of poetry or philosophy, and sometimes we'll find the heart of the euganean grower who had made that wine.

There are the young versions that mature only in steel tank, those wines are fresh with a mix of acidity e sapidity balanced with a generous alcohol content and with a body who speaks of honest and precious terroir.

There are then a more sophisticated version that aged in wood, maybe in big barrels of second use. In this case we began to find in the glass a bit more complexity and intriguy.

Then we make landfall to the last. In this case we have a great wine at the beginning that could arrive only from great grape. The work in the vineyard is perfect, the growers for this bottle select the better vines, in the more vocated place of his teniments. He made an attentive thinning. In the end he reserve his better barrel or barrique for the ageing. The results could be full of every aroma we can think for the red wines. We need only the time to explore them.

Colli Euganei portrait by numbers

_ Total surface under vine: 3000 hectares

_ Mostly cultivated varieties

Merlot 500 h.

Glera/Serprino 430 h.

Cabernet sauvignon 275 h.

Cabernet franc/ Carmenere 230 h.

Fior d'Arancio 270 h.

Moscato bianco 170 h.

Others 1125 h.

_Total production: 3 500 000 bottles

_Potential production: 25 000 000 bottles