

# PORTOVINO

## VIGNETI MASSA 'MONLEALE' 2018

Walter Massa is the real deal: a *contadino* (farmer) with deep family roots in his native Colli Tortonesi who's usually plowing his vineyards or buzzing around his cellar when someone arrives for a visit. He'll then stop to spend hours pouring wines for, and talking with, the continual waves of journalists, sommeliers, importers, buyers, and just plain fans who make their way to his village of Monleale in the southeast corner of Piemonte. Massa is universally known as the *Maestro del Timorasso* — he rescued it from obscurity and near-extinction and now leads a renaissance of the variety in the Colli Tortonesi. But he also produces amazing and distinctive reds from the local varieties Barbera, Croatina, Freisa, and Nebbiolo. Besides being one of Italy's truly great producers, he's a stellar example of what the Italians call a *personaggio* — a real personality. We are lucky to have him - and his wines.

This is the top Barbera from the leading producer in the Colli Tortonesi (southeast Piemonte) and one of only a handful of truly age-worthy Barberas. This wine, along with 'Terra' Rosso Piemonte [Barbera], demonstrates that Walter Massa is an able and versatile "Barberista", in addition to having the magic touch with Timorasso. The soils in the plots are different but the pH is the same for all of them.

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**REGION:** Piemonte **GROWING AREA:** the village of Monleale, in the Colli Tortonesi DOC

**FARMING:** organic, not certified **VINEYARD:** a selection from Massa's five plots of Barbera totaling 9 hectares, with different soils, exposures, elevations, and vine ages. **ALTITUDE:** 250-300 m (820-985 ft.) **SOILS:** clay and limestone **VARIETIES:** 90% Barbera + 10% Croatina or Freisa, depending on the vintage **VINE AGE:** 2-73 years old **HARVEST DATE:** September **YEASTS:** Native **FERMENTATION & ÉLEVAGE:** Spontaneous fermentation with 14-20 days of maceration in stainless steel vats for a month, then élevage for two years in old barriques (225 L) followed by six months in 25 HL botti

**SULPHUR:** 20 mg/L added only at bottling (maximum 40 mg/L total SO<sub>2</sub> in the finished wine)

**ALCOHOL:** 14-14.5% **ANNUAL PRODUCTION:** 250 cases

**VINTAGE:** 2018 was an excellent and easy vintage, with no difficulties or abnormalities in the vineyard - a vintage "as it should be", as Walter



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Massa says. Quality and equilibrium were outstanding, and quantity was good without being excessive.