

PORTOVINO

VIGNETI MASSA 'PICCOLO DERTHONA' 2024 [TIMORASSO]

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 di 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.

For Timorasso as a variety: It's native and unique to the Colli Tortonesi (southeast Piemonte). Timorasso is one of those grapes that really is delicious and refreshing to eat right off the vine, due to its high sugar content and acidity. When Timorasso is vinified, you get lots of complexity and structure (from alcohol and from tannins – skin contact and thick skins!). Yet there's plenty of acidity to keep things fresh and to serve as a counterpoint to what we call 'honeyed minerality.' When Timorasso is young, it can be really tight. As it ages, it loses some of its baby fat, and Riesling-ish, petrol-like notes emerge. As far as terroir, Walter vinifies each vineyard separately and bottles a small portion of three of the vineyards separately.

REGION: Piemonte **GROWING AREA:** the village of Monleale, in the Colli Tortonesi DOC **FARMING:** organic, not certified

VINEYARD: a selection from Massa's 15 plots of Timorasso totaling 21 hectares, with different soils, exposures, elevations, and vine ages

ALTITUDE: 240-400 m (785-1,310 ft.)

SOILS: clay, limestone, and marl, percentages varying by plot

VARIETIES: 100% Timorasso **VINE AGE:** 2-45 years old

HARVEST DATE: September (typically earlier than the parts of the plots that go into Derthona) **YEASTS:** Native

FERMENTATION & ELEVAGE: Spontaneous fermentation without maceration in stainless steel vats at 20° for one month, and élevage in stainless steel for five months

SULPHUR: 20 mg/L added only at bottling (maximum 40 mg/L total SO2 in the finished wine)



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ALCOHOL: 12.5-13% ANNUAL PRODUCTION: 2,500 cases

VINTAGE: 2024 was a rainy vintage with outbreaks of peronospora (downy mildew). Production of Timorasso was 50% of normal. Nonetheless quality is good even if quantity is way down in this lighter vintage.