



Vigneti Massa 'Piccolo Derthona' Timorasso

Why Be Curious? So you hear it bandied about: “There are thousands of native grape varieties in Italy!” That’s true, but a lot of them are merely cute. The most serious native variety Timorasso deserves another category (and it’s white to boot). It’s utterly unique, complex, capable of aging, and transparent to where it’s grown. Walter Massa is the *contadino straordinario* who brought the grape back to life in the early 1980s. He remains the leading producer and go-to grower for Timorasso.

For Timorasso as a variety: It’s native and unique to the Colli Tortonesi (southeast Piemonte). Before 1980s, most growers were ripping out Timorasso and planting Cortese, as the latter produces more and Gavi was all the rage, so they could sell the grapes easily. Timorasso is one of those grapes (unlike, say, Cortese) 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 a definite counterpoint of 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 (or tries to if he has enough tanks) and bottles a small portion of three of the vineyards separately.

Produttore / Producer: 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 showing around, 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 of Timorasso — he rescued it from obscurity and near-extinction and now leads a mini-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.

Vigna / Vineyard: From several plots around the village of Monleale.

Vigneti Massa 'Piccolo Derthona' Timorasso

Vigna / Vineyard

Nome / Name: Boscogrosso and Sigala.

Ettari / Hectares: 2.8 Ha.

Quota / Altitude: 270 m (Boscogrosso) and 310 m (Sigala) / 886 ft and 1017 ft.

Suoli / Type of soils: Chalk with clay (Boscogrosso) and chalk with marl (Sigala).

Esposizione / Exposure: East (Boscogrosso) and North West (Sigala).

Vitigni / Varieties: 100% Timorasso.

Età delle viti / Vine age: 3 (Boscogrosso) and 5 years old (Sigala).

Densità / Planting Density: 5000 vines/hectare.

Allevamento / Trellis system: Guyot.

Data di vendemmia / Harvest date: September 10th.

Metodo di vendemmia / Harvest technique: Hand harvested.

Metodo agricolo / Agricultural technique: *Lotta integrata* (sustainable).

Resa / Yield: 8000 kilograms / hectare.

Cantina / Cellar

Lieviti / Yeasts: Native.

Fermentazione alcolica / Alcoholic fermentation: 15 days, 18°C.

Élevage: In stainless steel.

Chiarificazione, filtrazione / Clarification, filtration: Light filtration.

Zolfo / Sulphur: 20 mg/L added at bottling.

Altri prodotti aggiunti? / Other products added?: None.

Produzione annua / Annual production: 1,500 cases.

Gradazione alcolica / Alcoholic %: from 11.5% to 12%.

Tappo e bottiglia / Closure and bottle: Stelvin, 750 ml Burgundy bottle.

Vigneti Massa