

# A MASTERCLASS ON SAUVIGNON

## AT THE COLTERENZIO WINERY IN ALTO ADIGE

**T**he tasting of six Sauvignons, conducted by MW Frank Röderer from Germany, provided an opportunity to meet with around ten colleagues and Colterenzio winery's top management, namely president Maximilian Niedermayr, oenologist Martin Lemayr and sales director Alex Ferrigato. To mark the occasion held in the winery's new wing, Colterenzio's first vintage of Sauvignon Riserva Gran Lafóa 2021 was officially presented. Comparing the Alto Adige Sauvignon with three French Sauvignons from Loire, a Sauvignon from Styria and another from New Zealand, all from the same vintage apart from one, was extremely fascinating.

### Sauvignon blanc

The name sauvignon is said to derive from the French adjective sauvage meaning wild or feral (Bonnier and Levadoux, 1950). It appears that sauvignon blanc is the result of a cross between traminer and chenin blanc but its origin is still uncertain. Although certainly French, two regions claim it as their own: the Loire Valley and Bordeaux. There are at least two biotypes, the small or yellow sauvignon and the much less common large or green sauvignon, which corresponds to sauvignonasse. Sauvignon is the world's third most cultivated white grape variety. Most of the hectares are in France (about 30,000), but numbers are rising in New Zealand where it accounts for the majority of new plantings and 65% of New Zealand's total vineyards with about 27,000 hectares. In Styria, Austria, another region taken into consideration during our masterclass, Sauvignon is the most cultivated variety with 910 hectares. In Alto Adige, the surface area covers 510 hectares with planting that began in the 1950s thanks to the Terlano winery.

### Style

Sauvignon is two-sided: it can either express itself with herbaceous and vegetal notes (green pepper, asparagus, nettle, freshly cut grass, tomato leaf, notes that the public identify it with), or with a



Photo Carina Colterenzio

range of more varied and complex aromas such as citrus, gooseberry, passion fruit, boxwood, broom, redcurrant shoot, flint, eucalyptus. Underlying this differentiation are two different molecular bases: methoxypyrazines in the first case, thiols in the other. How do you prefer it, pyrazinic or thiolic? The shrewdest stylistic is to seek more complex scents to avoid allowing only varietal aromatic markers

prevail. It is, in fact, appropriate to create a closer link with the terroir rather than focus only on the varietal characteristics of the grape. This is the direction in which the Sauvignon Blanc of the future is heading. 1950s thanks to the Terlano winery.

Alessandra Piubello

## TASTING

### Cloudy Bay- Te Koko Sauvignon blanc 2021

Marlborough, New-Zealand

The varietal profile features herbaceous notes, aromas of asparagus, sage, boxwood and tropical fruits. On the palate it is quite structured and extremely fresh with vibrant acidity. The wine comes from the oldest vineyards on gravelly soil and is aged in wood. Impeccable technique, but unfortunately, it does not reach the fibres of our being.

### Alphonse Mellot Sancerre La Moussière 2021

Loire, France

Strong hints of asparagus and boxwood, sensations of iodine. The sip is dynamic, balanced, easy to drink and carefree. It comes from a single biodynamic vineyard on marl-calcareous soils. Aged in steel and new barriques.

### Domaine Vacheron Sancerre Les Romains 2021

Loire, France

Merely by the scent we realise that we have entered another league. The nose is fragrant yet delicate, between elderflower, citrus, flint, sensations of gunpowder and seaweed. But it is on tasting that it becomes an instant hit due to its extreme purity, absolute class and profound elegance. Saline, inviting, all on the rise, almost on tiptoe, and with a vital lengthening that enraptures the senses.

### Didier Dagenau - Pouilly Fumé Pure Sang 2020

Loire, France

The intense aromatic spectrum ranges from smoky to elderberry and spicy notes. On the palate it is round, voluminous, and powerful with evolutionary potential yet to unfold. The biodynamic wine comes from vines aged between 25 and 60, planted on limestone-clay soils, and is aged in wood.

### Sattlerhof, Ried Alter Kranachberg Sauvignon blanc 2021

Südsteiermark, Austria

Citrus and fruity notes, hints of graphite and herbaceous traits. The palate is precise, sapid, and persistent. It comes from the estate's oldest vineyard of about 50 years at an altitude of 450 meters on limestone and gravelly soil, cultivated biodynamically. Aged in steel.

### Cantina Colterenzio - Gran Lafóa Sauvignon Riserva 2021

Alto Adige, Italy

Polyphonic nose with hints of elderflower, cut grass, peach, citrus, passion fruit. The gustatory tract points to elegance and finesse. Fresh and vital, it is supported by well-tempered substance. The wine comes from a single area of about one hectare planted in the 1980s with French clones, selecting the best plots, at an altitude of 450 meters. Aged in wood.

