

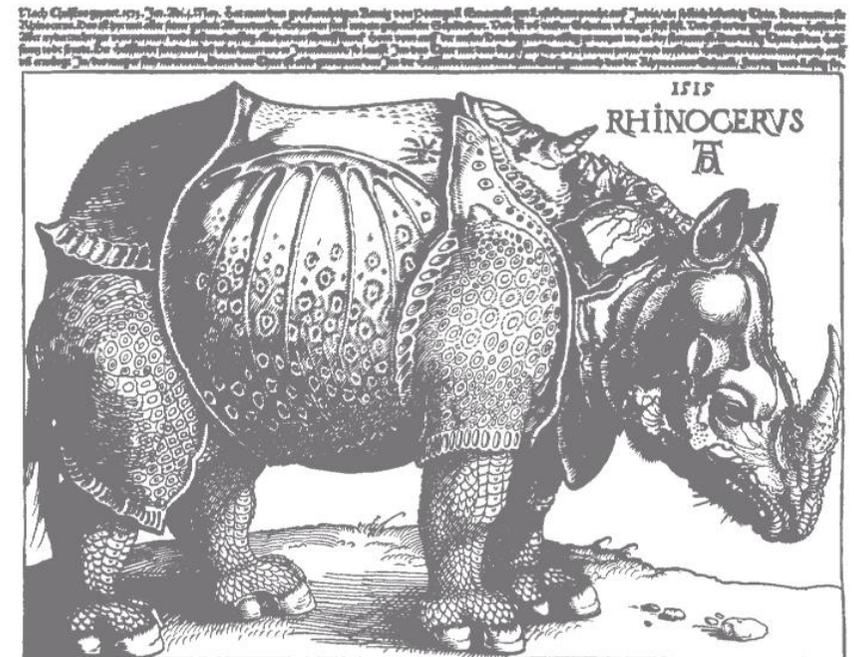
Where did this Summer go?

All of Europe had to face a Summer, that did not seem to want to start and then went by unnoticed. Cool temperatures and lots of rain were the consequences. Real heat we experienced for one week in March and for ten days in June. This might lead us to think, that the fruit in the vineyard suffered, but besides the fact, that the development and the ripening process is about two weeks behind, our fruit in Piedmont and Tuscany so far looks great. The only downside so far, we had to reduce yields even more than we normally do, to give the fruit a better ripening chance.

We have started to harvest beautiful Pinot Noir and Chardonnay grapes for CONTRATTO. For the production of classic method sparkling wines, cooler Summers in Piedmont are ideal, as they allow the fruit to ripen a bit more, while the sugar levels stay low. At Contratto one can already smell the beautiful perfume of first fermentation.

The Barbera and Nebbiolo in Piedmont, just like all the other red varietals of Europe's wine regions now need an incredibly sunny and warm September. Shall that be the case, the weather God will have saved us all.

Bruno, Carlo and Giorgio Rivetti and the La Spinetta Team

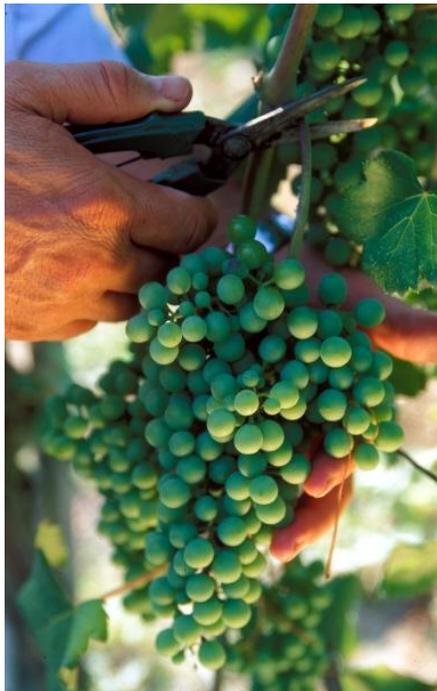


A word from Giorgio

“What really means green harvest”....

I think by now, you all have heard wine producers speak about “green harvest”. But what does green harvest really mean and why do I get so angry, speaking about this subject?

Low yields are the most essential tool to make great wine or great fruit in general and a green harvest in July is one of the many possibilities to control the amount of fruit being produced. Winter pruning is the first step to start with low yields. A thorough green harvest unfortunately is very expensive, as it is more time consuming than a harvest. It takes skilled vineyard workers, that are able to cut out the right amount of fruit in the right way.



At La Spinetta we are fortunate, as we work with vineyard workers that have been with us for many years, in fact, some of our workers represent already the second generation. At the beginning of each green harvest, I will evaluate the yields in the vineyard. The yield, one must know, differs from vintage to vintage. I therefore will explain our workers in detail how to cut out the fruit, where and how much to cut this time. For unskilled

personel, this would be an impossible task to fulfill. The vineyard workers will go through every row and cut the still green fruit. The fruit, that drops to the ground, is simply left and will eventually desolve, fertilizing the ground. To the unskilled eye, this procedure looks like throwing away production, which essential this is. We are left with the best fruit still one the vine, which will then get all the plant’s attention and speeds up the ripening process, something that is extremely important in years like 2014, where Summer temperatures were rather low.

I and many of my colleague winemakers take great pride in the green harvest, as it is a true sign of quality production. I am however a bit angry and at the same time feel disappointed, when I see others taking pride in the “green harvest” explaining the process proudly (some even on facebook) by showing photos (like this one to the left) of red fruit cut out and dropped on the ground. Wasn’t it called “**green** harvest” for a reason? Why these people wait to cut the grapes, until they have already changed color and are no longer green? Because they are cheating, because they want to sell something as green harvest and low yields, that has absolutely nothing to do with it. Because they carry a large production all year (no real trimming, lots of flower,



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lots of fruit) and by cutting the "last minute" after color change, they reduce an overproduction, promoting it to the consumer as low yields. By cutting red fruit, these people also avoid the risk of further reduction by hail, as Summer has nearly passed, when the fruit turns from green to red.

Even more cheating to me is, when these cut red grapes get picked up and are then being used to make a Rosé or sparkling wine.

My apologies if I speak so clearly, but to me it is time, that the people, who love wine, do not get fooled by some producers, who try to pretend to be something, that they are not.

Cheers, **Giorgio Rivetti**, the farmer

P.s. I almost forgot, don't miss the October release of our One Liters. 2010 Barolo Campe, 2011 Barberas, Pin and the Barbaresco Crus. The journalists are arguing which of the two vintages was the better one. Please rest assured, they are both great.

In June CONTRATTO cellar was added to the list of UNESCO World Heritage site...

The news, that the 5,000 sqm of Contratto underground cellar together with the other cathedral cellars in Canelli, have been added to the list of UNESCO World Heritage sites, was indeed very well received this June. Canelli's application had been sent in years ago. Contratto's previous owner, Carlo Bocchino, had dealt with all the paper work, that the UNESCO had required for the application

and we as the new owners received the last inspections by the UNESCO representatives. The announcement calls for a big party, that yet needs to be planned.

Of course it is a great honor for us to have become owners of such recognized heritage and to produce wine in such "halls of fame". We are very proud and at the same time dedicated to be worthy of the honor.

A great deal of responsibility comes with that honor. This is an extract from the UNESCO preamble:



"Heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations. Our cultural and natural heritage are both irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration. Places as unique and diverse as the wilds of East Africa's Serengeti, the Pyramids of Egypt, the Great Barrier Reef in Australia and the Baroque cathedrals of Latin America make up our world's heritage. What makes the concept of World Heritage exceptional is its universal application. World Heritage sites belong to all the peoples of the world, irrespective of the territory on which they are located."

UNESCO was founded in 1945 and stands for United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. In 1947 Italy joined the UNESCO. Today the UNESCO combines 1,007 world heritage sites, shared by 162 different nations. 50 sites of the

1,007 are located in Italy and Contratto, Coppo, Bosca and Gancia in Canelli are the only wineries, that own cellars with such UNESCO status.

At Contratto, we are determined to take "belonging to all the people of the world" seriously. Although it means a great personnel investment on our part, the winery stays open to the public for visits seven days a week, including national holidays.

Hail in the vineyards, a disaster or not such a thread after all?

Every Summer Piedmont gets hit by hail, fortunately any hail storm is extremely local, to the extent, that fruit might be damaged in one part of a vineyard, where non was damaged in another.

Hail can have any size, from small to the size of a golf ball.



Although the damage it makes does not only depend on the size, it also depends on the wind, the direction of the wind, the duration of the storm and the amount of leaves that were on the vines to protect the fruit.

Hailstorms and hail damage are certainly not good for any wine producer, but they sometimes seem to be welcomed by the press. Anytime hail hits Barolo area, most of the wine press will write about it, making sure that the hail storm, no matter how big or small the damage, will be perceived as a disaster, tragedies sell.

The wine producer however is left with quite a lot of options to protect the precious fruit from hail, even try to prevent hail or reduce the damage.

Hail prevention: Hail prevention is done by using so called "hail cannons", that ignite a charge of acetylene gas into a blast chamber, releasing an explosive pressure wave, that disrupts the formation process of the hail. The Roero uses such expensive cannons, that, when bein used, remind of war times 100 years ago.



Hail protection: One may cover the vines with nets to protect the plant from hail. This system works well, if the hail stone is not too big. Unfortunately the nets make vineyard maintenance work very difficult.

Hail damage reduction: Most wine producers are insured against hail damage. This insurance however is not very efficient for high quality producers, as the winery gets reimbursed according to the loss of fruit at low market price and not in relation to the actual loss of market value of the wine.

Producers may also reduce the damage of a hail storm, by cleaning the bunches from the damaged grapes. This is a very lengthy and money intensive procedure, but it is the only one, that will allow the producer to still make great wine from the fruit, that is left.

At La Spinetta so far we have been very fortunate regarding hail damage. It certainly helps, that in Piedmont we own and cultivate a large area of about 100 hectares and that our vineyards are located in very different areas (Barolo, Barbaresco, Costigliole, Castagnole, Montegrosso, Mango, etc.) We don't try to prevent hail and if we get hit by hail, we try to minimize the loss by cleaning the bunches from the damaged fruit.

La Spinetta on Facebook, *by Giorgio Rivetti*

I clearly remember 10 years ago, when I met my wife for the first time and I was interviewing her for a job position at La Spinetta for Export and Marketing, she had asked me an important question: "Why La Spinetta does not have a website?". I remember my answer, and although today I am a bit embarrassed about my response, I will share it with you. I said, that La Spinetta did not need a website. Boy was I wrong back then and boy did I have very little clue, what I was talking about (at that point I did not know the difference between an email address and a website). But in all fairness, I was and still am a farmer.



In ten years things have changed in the world and at La Spinetta. Even I have entered a life of technology and own a smart phone, read emails (never answer any) and are able to use the computer technology in the cellar (with my son's help). La Spinetta long has a website, that we keep as informative and updated as possible. So after having taken this technology hurdle, it was now time to take another: Social Media. That dreadful word that I despised, especially since I did not know what it was referring to. Interesting how one may hate Twitter and facebook, without ever having had a look at them.

La Spinetta since May of this year is an active participants on facebook and with now over 4.000 likes, we probably are doing, what we long should have been doing, communicate more with the young generation of wine lovers and wine connoisseurs. I am not on facebook on a daily basis, but I enjoy checking in here and there and I like to use facebook as a platform of posting my ideas and opinions in form of a blog.

I am also amazed, that this communication tool is so interactive. The more feedback we can gather from the people, who enjoy our wines, the better of a job, we are able to do.

Who knows, how many technology hurdles I still will have to take in my life, but res reassured any hurdle I will enjoy with a great bottle of wine...

Join us on the next OLC Hands On Day!

Hard to believe, but this next OLC Hands on Day will already be the ninth time, that we gather our members for some life hands on action. Eight times before, we have gotten together to do vineyard or cellar work. So this year, we thought, we do something a bit different. We harvest, but this time no grapes, instead we meet in Tuscany and pick olives. Our winery, La Spinetta Casanova,



southeast of Pisa, is producing top quality olive oil since 2004. Old trees, biological growth, hand picking and immediate cold pressing in our own press, make this possible.

We invite you, as an OLC member to join Bruno Rivetti (our olive oil expert) and the La Spinetta team on **Saturday, October 25th**, for a full day of olive picking, pressing and tasting. Hard work, that will be honored with great wine, delicious food and lots of fun. Join us and learn in depth about great olive oil production, that Giorgio claims, is the fastest way to lose money.

If you are interested please send an email to anja@la-spinetta.com to reserve your spot. La Spinetta, as always, invites you to all the fun, food and wine. You will have to arrange for your travel and hotel stay. We gladly provide a list of recommendations.



Available are direct flights to Pisa from many European destinations such as Amsterdam, Hamburg, Berlin, Brussels, Copenhagen, Eindhoven, Frankfurt Hahn, Helsinki, London, Oslo, Paris and Stockholm Arlanda. Plan a Fall weekend in Tuscany and become an olive oil expert! We already have several members signed up and have 14 spots left. So hurry up and contact us, if you decide to join.

What is new at La Spinetta?

Every year more wine lovers come and visit us at the winery. This is a trend that we are extremely happy about. In order to be able to accept more people, or rather not turn down visit requests, we are planning to remodel our old tasting room at La Spinetta Castagnole to use it as a second location to receive visitors. Any of you, who have visited La Spinetta before 2008, will remember the old tasting room, where once in the 1980s we stored our first barriques. This room resembles with all its changes a big piece of La Spinetta history and remodeled should become additional space to enjoy your La Spinetta wine tasting.

The past twenty vintages in Piedmont, here is your ideal vintage overview from 1992 to 2012:

2012 very good vintage, the wines are too young yet to be judged properly

2011 warm year with lower yields, early ripeness of fruit due to hot temperature in the middle of August. A very good vintage, similar to 2007. Intensive wines with lots of finesse.

2010 very good, fruit and elegance are dominating, well balanced wines in harmony with their acidity. Excellent full bodied wines, balanced alcohol and juicy fruit

2009 a wet Spring and a very warm tropical Summer, balanced ripeness, wine with a feminine touch, that show finesse and elegance. Very good.

2008 cooler and quite wet Spring followed by a nice and warm Summer, elegant and balanced wines with a fresh crisp acidity, and firm tannin structure. Top wines, especially the Barbarescos

2007 a hot year with an early harvest, full bodied wines, approachable from an early stage, ripe tannins and lots of fruit

2006 cool Summer, many sunny days in the Fall, well structured wines with classic tannin structures, wines needed to be laid down, excellent aging potential

2005 good Spring and Summer, rain during harvest time, wines have developed nicely, are beautiful to drink now, elegant tannins with delicious fruit

2004 excellent vintage, but wines need to rest still, strong classic tannins, great fruit and balanced acidity, wines from this vintage may still rest a bit or should be decanted for quite some time

2003 the very hot vintage, wines with warm fruit and hay notes, round tannins, drink now

2002 the year of rain and flooding, underripe tannins, little fruit

2001 similar to 2004, an excellent vintage with very classic and firm tannin structure. Drinks beautifully now and has still great potential

2000 very good vintage with a hot Summer, wines are well balanced with big fruit and crisp acidity, tannins are soft now and wines have developed well

1999 initially not a great vintage, but wines are still fresh and young with further aging potential, a vintage that was highly misjudged

1998 still shows very good fruit and are lovely to drink now until the next five years

1997 was a warmer year, not as extreme as 2003, wines have less structure than the ones from 1998 and 1999

1996 very positive vintage, elegant wines with structure, drink now or keep some more years

1995 a mediocre vintage with wines of less body and less fruit

1994 a rather bad vintage, wines might already be too old to enjoy

1993 a mediocre year, good wines from this vintage should be drunk now

1992 a rather bad vintage, wines might already be too old to enjoy