

**Malvazija**  
Istrian  
history  
and culture

WRITTEN BY  
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# Part of our **culture** and our way of life...

The President of the Region of Istria, Boris Miletić, describes Malvazija Istarska as “part of our culture and way of life.” He says that modern Malvazija is the result of many years of work that he started with winemakers in the early 1990s.

“Among a large number of initiatives, a very important one at that time was to contribute to a large extent to the planting of new vineyards and olive groves. The agricultural policy has always been directed towards the same goal, that is, towards quality in all its aspects. Even then, we set ourselves a definite goal: to rank among the most important European regions in terms of quality. We are fully aware that achieving perceived excellence is only the first goal on the long road we have set for ourselves. The more demanding part is in front of us now, if we want it, which is to firmly root success by integrating another element that we care a lot about, that of identity. But even that is not enough: our brand Istria must strive to represent a region with very well-defined distinctiveness and character. In one word: uniqueness. All elements that pair well not only with wine, but also with oil, truffles, prosciutto and cheeses and, basically, with tourism that unites it all. Tourism, which is our real big industry that has brought us well-being, introducing our beauties to the whole world. Given that it is precisely tourism, along with wine, oil, the art of cooking and agricultural products, that has created an indescribable attractive force on the market. From this need arises *IQ, Istria Quality*, a project brought to perfection by the Vinistra Association, the cornerstone of our wine policy, based in Poreč and founded in 1995, which brings together all of our winemakers and winegrowers. It was the Association itself that was responsible for developing the strategies that have led us to the highest positions we are in today.”

**Boris Miletić**  
President of the Region of Istria

— Istria  
must strive  
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In one word:  
uniqueness.



# The **success** we are currently experiencing began ages ago.

Denis Ivošević from Novigrad was twenty-seven years old in 1995. After graduating in economics in Croatia, he also obtained a degree in literature and philosophy at the University of Trieste.

That year, the then President of the Region of Istria, Nino Jakovčić, and tourism leaders, Veljko Ostojić and Branko Curić, invited him to join them in the activation of the *Wine Roads* project. “It was a very difficult task”, says Ivošević, “because at that time the perception of tourism in Istria was only related to the coastal area and not to the interior. Youthful enthusiasm and awareness of the rich territorial heritage were a winning combination for reinterpretation in a modern style. Back then, there was soil on the floor of our wine cellars. Winemakers had no idea how important wine tourism would be. They would freeze at the mere thought that foreigners would be able to visit their cellars, followed by a categorical refusal.”

With tenderness in his eyes, as he relives those moments from the past, recalling “how he teamed up with the children of winemakers with whom he shared the same ideas in order to convince them to listen to him and follow the protocols of the *Wine Roads*, which were very ambitious for that period. To turn them into *Open Cellars*, we decided to focus on education. In other words: instead of waiting for producers to grow on their own, we immediately helped them with a series of initiatives that brought them into contact with modern winemaking. First, it was by attending courses for sommeliers in Trieste organised by the AIS (Italian Association of Sommeliers of the nearby Friuli-Venezia-Giulia region), and then, when interest grew, courses were organised in Istria. We also have to thank the Friuli-Venezia-Giulia region and Italy in general because they were a great source of inspiration for us. At that time there was no money to spend, but there were many ideas, a lot of enthusiasm and courage which proved to be essential elements in such conditions. In fact, we never lacked enthusiasm and ideas.

The *Wine Roads* project continued with impressive and surprising dynamics. In just five years, we have positioned seven wine roads along the entire territory of Istria with over 150 wine producers.” In 2004, Denis Ivošević came into contact with the Italian wine guru, Luigi Veronelli, who supported his philosophy. Luigi himself entrusted Ivošević with the selection of the best restaurants and hotels in Istria, which he included in his *Guida d'Italia ai ristoranti e alberghi di Luigi Veronelli* guide. Cooperation with the Austrian and then the German Gault Millau followed.

The same thing happened in 2007 with the Italian Michelin wine guide *Itinerari tra i vigneti (Vineyard Routes)*, which devoted two chapters to foreign regions: one to Ticino (Switzerland) and the other to Istria. “Back then, no one knew us as a food and wine destination and it was the first time we appeared on the international scene”, recalls Denis. In 2010, a collaboration with the *Vini Buoni d'Italia* guide followed (which was the best-selling wine guide in Italy) by Mario Busso.

“The goal was to position our wines - along with our oil, truffles, art of cooking and tourism - at the highest possible level. The strategy that we are still implementing, which refers to, for example, the revitalisation of a large area of the Mirna River valley and the hills around Buje and Motovun. That particular area is the centre of our oenology, and it is from there that the revival of Istrian wine, extra virgin olive oil, the art of cooking and truffles began.”

“In this area, which stretches from the Mirna River to the border with Slovenia, we have catalogued as many as 330 excellences. In addition to beauties, it is a mine of flavours and delights. This region of ours, which stretches over 2,820 square kilometres - therefore a small area that also has two out of three of its sides bathed by the enviable sea - is abundant with top quality products.”

“I would put oil on a pedestal since it was with extra virgin olive oil that we experienced our first successes on the international

scene. Istria has been ranked first in the world eight times already by the Roman Flos Olei, a guide that selects the world's 500 best oils, of which about seventy are Istrian, which is 15% of the total number of olive growers from over 50 countries.

Let's mention the truffle in second place, because we are the only region in the world that has both the white *Magnatum Pico* and the precious, black *Melanosporum* truffle in large quantities.

In third place is the wine with which we have already placed ourselves among the best European regions and where we have set ourselves the goal of giving importance to a strong identity in addition to quality. Since we don't have more than 4,500 hectares of vineyards, the only viable way is the one I mentioned.”

However, in Istria, the force that drives everything is tourism, and we must appreciate it as such. Moreover, here we can understand that the permanent perspective is exactly the one we heard from Denis Ivošević, who has been the director of the Istria Tourist Board since 2010.

“Since way back in 1996 I have wanted to emphasize that every year our Tourist Board checks the quality of all the best restaurants, taverns, and wineries in the region, with the aim of providing tourists with security related to both product quality and hospitality. In 2009, we launched the club known as *Izvorni tartuf - Tartufo vero*, in order to point out the authenticity of our production, which was previously anonymous and lost among the crowd. Authenticity and uniqueness.

As many as 310,000 guests visited Istrian wine cellars in 2019. Because today each of our cellars is a small museum worth visiting, where hospitable hosts speak several foreign languages. So much that the producers themselves confirm that direct sales have become a very important source of income. In 2020, we opened 5 private oil mills with an internal processing plant, a tasting room and a sales point.

It should be noted that the success we are experiencing goes back a long way: from the vision of the then President of the Region of Istria, Nino Jakovčić, who together with his closest colleagues





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made a contradictory decision in 1995: to return people to the fields in the interior in those areas that had been abandoned due to the migration of the labour force to the coastal tourist areas.

So, we ended up with 330 empty villages without any basic necessities: water, electricity, telephone. Dark, defunct villages, without a living soul. In 1995, the trend changed completely thanks to the courageous and permanent political choices just described. Today, of those 330 abandoned villages, over 200 have been revived; there are also people living there who can turn on the lights in their homes and are connected to the world. A small social and economic revolution, just to think that in 1910 we had 34,000 hectares of vineyards, and that, after 20 years of replanting, in 2021 those hectares were, as already mentioned, 4,500. At that time, we had 3.5 million olive trees, and in 2021 that number was reduced to 1.6 million. A huge effort has been made to revive not only tourism, but also agricultural activity, including the production of oil and wine, which has certainly been rewarded by the attention these two sectors have gained in the market.”

What is the future seen through the eyes of Denis Ivošević?

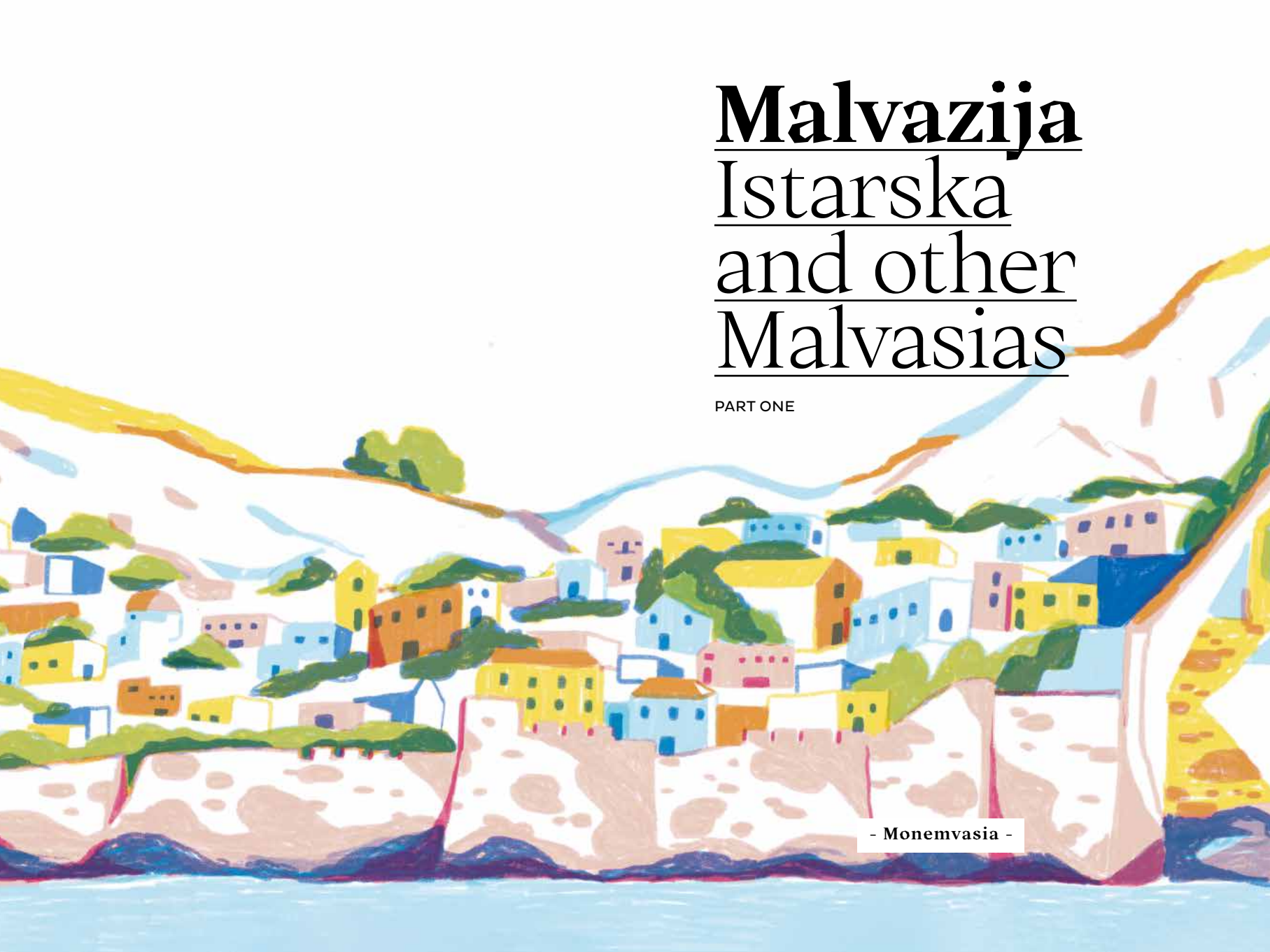
“Connected with the sustainable development of tourism, but coordinated with other production sectors, firstly with hotels and restaurants, and then with the agricultural sector. To continue to guarantee people the well-being of Istria, it will be important, now that success has been achieved, to persevere because if we rest on our laurels, even a small mistake is enough to make us fall from the throne. We have to maintain the image and reputation of the whole of Istria. Because that's the only way we can pull all the elements that make up the real driver of our economy: tourism together. The efforts and investments we make are focused on consolidating the positions we have won, but also on further work. Today we can say that Istrian wine is among the best in Europe. And our goal as a tourist destination is to be in the top

ten in the EU. Not in terms of numbers, of course, given our size, but with regard to the high quality of the tourist product we offer. This includes raising the quality to stand out from the rest. We have won awards of great international value. As well as the fact that ADAC has been offering us as the best destination for German tourists for 12 years in a row. Furthermore, the National Geographic, Forbes, the New York Times and USA Today have mentioned us under these criteria, but above all, we are the official partners of the Bayern Munich football team, and have entered into partnerships with BMW and Mastercard, and since 2015, we also have Cube, the leader in the electric bicycle sector supporting us. These are all brands that strengthen us and bring us tourists from two rich areas, such as Bavaria and Austria, and which have saved us, starting from 2008, when we experienced a decline in Italian tourists to Istria, who represented a very important backbone for us.”

**Denis Ivošević**  
Director of Istria Tourist Board

# Malvazija Istarska and other Malvasias

PART ONE



- Monemvasia -



**Malvazija Istarska** is  
the most prestigious  
and certainly best  
suits the style of  
today's dry white  
wines among the  
many that have found  
their home from the  
Mediterranean to  
the Canary Islands  
in the Atlantic.

Yes: instead of “*istarska malvazija*” we prefer to call it “*malvazija istarska*” because it seems to us that such a definition further emphasises its elite production area. We are convinced that the inherent value of the vine, as we will explain later, is just a tool used to achieve the goal, which is a well-defined and unrepeatable quality. With the fact that *terroir* is an indispensable envelope that unites everything. To complete the story, there is the climate and the soil, which represent the final touch.

It is a combination that affirms diversity and creates identity with, of course, the irreplaceable “cooperation” with man himself. Marijan Bubola is a professor at the Institute for Agriculture and Tourism in Poreč, Istria. He is an expert viticulture researcher. We have had a long conversation with him about Malvazija Istarska, and apart from looking at the documents he kindly gave us, we also exchanged opinions and took into account all the aspects that allowed us to expand our knowledge about the white wine that represents Istria.

“First of all, we can say that we noticed that the origin of Malvazija Istarska has not yet been clarified, although it is considered an autochthonous variety typical of Istria,” says Professor Bubola. The assumption of some authors that it originates from Greece is mainly based on the name of the

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MALVAZIJA GRAPE



variety, from which, as we know, many different vines got the same name. It should be added that several genetic studies have proved that Malvazija Istarska is different from other varieties of Malvazija. Historical research carried out by the University of Zagreb and the Poreč School document the ancient cultivation of this variety in today's Croatia, so it could be assumed that it originated in Dalmatia.”

From DNA research so far, it is obvious that Malvazija Istarska is not related to other Mediterranean Malvasias. In fact, it is genetically relatively similar to Sultanina, whose properties differ greatly from Malvazija, and is used in the statistical analysis of the results only to increase the diversity between the varieties. None of the research carried out over the last two or three decades on the pedigree of the grapevine has found a relative of Malvazija Istarska. So, at this moment, the thesis advocated by Professor Bubola is confirmed: although it is not known with certainty where it comes from, it only resembles itself. “The first historical traces of the appearance and cultivation of Malvazija in Istria date back to the Middle Ages (Vivoda, 1996, p. 13), while detailed descriptions of its characteristics, especially the wine, date back to 1891, when Istrian wine producers presented it at an exhibition in Zagreb.” (Despot., 1976, p. 106-107).

Professor Bubola reveals to us that “the first certain document to talk about Malvazija in Istria (published in the *Archeografo Triestino* journal in 1837) is that of the Novigrad bishop, priest and scholar Giacomo Filippo Tommasini (Jacobus Philippus Tomasinus) (Padua, 1595 - Venice, 1655) who was also a doctor of theology, a writer of philosophical works, biographies, erudite bibliographies, catalogues and “tabulas”. “He came from an ancient noble family and is important for Istria because he was the bishop of the Novigrad Diocese for a long time (1641-1655). A note on Malvazija is found in his work *De Commentari storici geografo della Provincia dell'Istria, libri otto* (1641).

It is a multidisciplinary work that also represents a contribution to history, ethnology, anthropology, sociology, and the mentality of human groups, as well as a contribution to the knowledge of Istrian society and the natural environment of that time. In the fourth volume of his work *Commentari*, Tommasini lists 15 Istrian varieties, including Malvazija.

“It's hard to imagine”, thinks Marijan Bubola, “that in the nineteenth century white grape varieties occupied only 10% of the total vineyard area. Of that 90% of black grapes, 80% was Teran. It was only after the First World War that the amount of the white variety grew rapidly, including the Malvazija Istarska. Following the Second World War, its share already exceeded 40% of the vineyard area in the region, and today it is cultivated on slightly less than 60% of the total vineyard area.”

In the book *Malvazija istriana* (Kopar, 2003), the author Vido Vivoda mentions a very interesting document: “To support and promote the direction of viticulture with regard to the production of high-quality wines, a meeting of experts in viticulture and winemaking took place in Pula on November 6, 1931, about which in brief reports prof. Dalmaso: *It has been decided that white varieties will have the absolute advantage for the production of premium and luxury wines. Malvazija Istarska will certainly be the most widespread because it produces truly recognisable wines... given that the conditions of Istria's natural environment favour quality production.*”

The first ampelographic description was published by Libutti in 1913 in the journal *L'Istria Agricola. Periodico quindicinale dell'organo dell'Istituto agrario, del Consiglio agrario e della commissione d'imboschimento (Agricultural Istria. A fortnightly periodical by the Agricultural Institute, Agricultural Council and Forestry Commission)*, under the name “White Malvazija”, which corresponds precisely to Malvazija Istarska. “When some autochthonous varieties of grapevine grown in Istria are mentioned” local Malvazija is still defined as *white Malvazija* which, apart

from being different from black Malvazija by the colour of the fruit, represents - more than a variety - a tribe of grape varieties that usually differ from each other by the name of the different countries where they are grown. Thus, there are: Malvazija di Toscana, del Piemonte, di Candia, di Lipari and various others. It is likely, the note continues, “that the white Malvasias that have been cultivated in our region since ancient times are only different subvarieties of the same variety and consequently have different characteristics.” The *L'Archeografo Triestino. Raccolta di opuscoli e notizie per Trieste*, volume IV journal, from 1837 writes: “as far as the variety of grapes is concerned, three varieties of low grapes are planted here; one is called *pelosa* (hairy). People from Piran call it *calcionesa*. The second, although it is a white variety, is called *Ribolla*, and the third white, *Pirella*. Among the tall vines, they estimate that the main black variety is *Refosco*, also known as *Terran Grande*. Among the whites, *Cividin* stands out, with a smaller grape, and *Tribiano*, although there are a large number of other varieties such as *Moscato*, which is widely used today, and *Malvazija Imperatoria* with large and long grapes, and others.”

Very interesting quotes come from a text published in the Friuli-Venezia-Giulia region by Enos Costantini, Claudio Mattaloni and Carlo Petrussi, who in their magnificent work *La vite nella storia e nelle cultura del Friuli* (The vine in the history and culture of the Friuli region (Forum , 2007) write: “Even from reading the statutes of the Friuli region, which our cities and towns wrote for themselves to regulate civil life (between 1400 and 1500), we conclude that Malvazija wine has always been *foreign*, so the exact opposite to wines that are defined as *Terrani*.” As further confirmation of the importance and value of this wine, Costantini and his colleagues note that they “examined volume VI of Di Manzano's *Annali* for the period from 1388 to 1420 and found that Malvazija wine was mentioned 26 times, almost always as a gift to the powerful or their envoys. A numerical comparison with other local wines (from the Friuli region, author's note) will not

— However, these wines (Malvazija) spread to such an extent that as early as the seventeenth century, the custom of calling **Malvazija** the locality where wines imported from the east or, as they were also called, “Greek wines” were sold, started.

↓ ROVINJ - VIEW FROM ABOVE





be useless: *Rabiola* wine (or similar names) is mentioned 8 times, *Romania* three times, *Pignolo* twice. *Terrano*, or locally produced wine, appears thirteen times. The monetary value of Terrano is 3 times lower than that of Malvazija.”

However, these wines (Malvazija) spread to such an extent that as early as the seventeenth century, the custom of calling the locality Malvazija where wines imported from the east or, as they were also called, “Greek wines” were sold, started.

Again, the famous oenologist Giovanni Dalmasso, in the introduction to the book *Malvasie*, published almost 50 years ago in the magazine for viticulture and winemaking (*Rivista di viticoltura e di enologia*), wrote: “If we had to list all the vines that, more or less legitimately, carry the name Malvazija and in the process tried to determine which have the right to keep that name and which do not, we would have to fill several pages, without hope of success.” All of the above leads to thinking that they can be adapted to most European wine-growing regions, except for France, which has its own history and has served as an example for us all.

The vertical growth of wine quality that we see in Istria is also the result of a favourable convergence of various factors.

First, a better general economic condition of the population, which experienced a marked improvement in the early 1990s, and permanent economic and social political decisions.

Thanks to technicians who have completed professional schools and the international exchange of new winemaking techniques, better knowledge of viticulture and winemaking follows.

Finally, the birth of a new wine bourgeoisie that decided to introduce detailed innovations at the agronomic, oenological and market level in order to modernise the wine sector.

Private individuals accepted the risk of starting this socio-economic revolution that turned hundreds of farmers into successful entrepreneurs whose labels can now be found on the tables of the best restaurants, not only in Croatia. It also used to happen, although not at the same time, in Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Spain and Portugal.

— The **Istrian revival** took shape in the early 1990s thanks to a small group of winemakers who rediscovered Malvazija and its history, and knew how to give it, because they wanted to, an identity and uniqueness - interpreting it in accordance with the style of our time.

Although they were competitive on the market, in 1994, Istrian wine producers joined together to found Vinistra, the Association of Winegrowers and Winemakers of Istria, with the aim of promoting Malvazija Istarska around the world together with the region. Producers have always been the ones to understand the importance of investing in cellars, not only from the technological side, but also as places designed to be visited, starting wine tourism which, by expanding to hotels and restaurants, fills local coffers so well.

A group of visionaries, who talk about themselves in the final part of the book, encouraged the search for the best wines, transformed the vineyard environment, which is no longer based on quantity, but on quality for the implementation of a superior wine project. It is them we must thank that today Malvazija Istarska has found its place among the best European white wines.

Since history, the past, and tradition only gain value when there are those entrepreneurs who know how first of all to understand, appreciate, and ultimately improve them.



The components that make up the *terroir* have existed since time immemorial, although no one noticed them and no one realised that they needed to be brought to light.

One fact is certain: Malvazija remains the only wine in history to be at the centre of trade and winemaking for more than four centuries, that is, at least until 1669, when the Ottoman expansion in the Mediterranean stole the island of Crete (Candia) from the Venetians, and with it a large part of the Malvazija production.

What is the reason for this success? Where does this fascinating story that has led it to become the first *wine brand* in the world begin, anticipating the marketing strategies of our time centuries in advance? How can we explain that Malvazija became a status symbol for wine thanks to the intuition of the pioneers of the time? After all, is Malvazija a wine or a variety?

All the questions we want to answer with this text, which was made possible by the engagement of an Istrian company based in the municipality of Bale – Meneghetti by Miroslav Plišo, now part of *Meneghetti Winery and Relais Chateaux* - wanted Malvazija to become one of the symbols of their top-quality production.

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There is no doubt that the name Malvazija comes from the fortified port of Peloponnese **Moni Emvasis.**

↓ MONEMVASIA





It was created around 588 AD, and only came under Venetian rule in 1409: it is located in Laconia, an area that the Venetians called *Morea* because it resembled a mulberry leaf, which in their dialect is called *morer*. If we return to the etymological meaning of the word *Moni Emvasis*, it means a landing with one entrance: *moni* (only, one) and *emvasis* (entrance, passage), which was then distorted to the Venetian *Malfasia*, *Malvagia* and then *Malvazija*. Sweet wine called *Malvazija* was first mentioned by Nicola Mesarite, the metropolitan of Ephesus in 1214. The very long and magnificent history of *Malvazija*, as well as the distribution and success of this variety, was actually written by the Republic of Venice, also known as *La Serenissima*, starting, therefore, with *Monemvasia*.

When they supported Guglielmo de Villehardouin to temporarily occupy the site in 1248, the Venetians certainly came into contact with this wine “so sweet, delicious, a real nectar, the kind that everyone would want to take home.” This is how the ingenious Venetian merchants imagined it. But also, because it was “robust and suitable for traveling by land and sea”. They immediately tried to popularise their production on the island of Candia (Crete), which had been under their rule since 1204. To such an extent that in Venice in 1278 a quote appears referring to the importation of *vinum de Malvasias*. Thus, that anonymous wine from *Monemvasia* became the “wine” of Venetians, a brand then known throughout the world that revolved around the Mediterranean and which became a source of colossal business for the budget of the *Serenissima*.

Pierre Galet devotes a long chapter to *Malvasias* in his *Dictionnaire encyclopedique des cepages et leurs synonymes* (2018), reviewing about a hundred of them and citing an important study by Professor Logothetis (1965) who wrote: “*Monemvasia*, on the east coast of the Peloponnese, first became *Malfasia*, and then, after the Italianisation of the Venetians, *Malvazija*. Then *Malvasijie* in Croatian and *Malvelzevec* in Slovenian, *Malvagia* in Spanish, *Malvazija* in Portuguese, *Malvoisie* in French, *Malvesie* or *Malmsey* in English.”



— *Moni* (only) and *Emvasis* (passage) were later distorted by the Venetians into *Malfasia*, *Malvagia*, and finally into **Malvazija**.

“During the Crusades”, writes Logotheis, “Guillaume (Guglielmo) de Villehardouin (son of Goffroi de Villehardouin) took possession of Monemvasia in 1245 and then handed it over to Michel Pelaogue in 1263.” It is worth remembering (as reveals Michela Dal Borgo, curator of the State archive in Venice) the importance that the Serenissima gave to work related to wine. In fact, “as early as May 1268, Venice created a special magistracy, the *Ufficiali al dazio del Vin* (wine customs officials), to administer the tax and customs systems and to control the retail sale of wine in various shops.”

Vido Vivoda (*Malvazija istriana*, 2003) claims that “Malvazija Istarska has nothing to do with Venetian one because it is not possible to connect them because, it literally says, “various historical Venetian sources speak of the use of wine called Malvagia (imported from Greece) in church ceremonies and therefore, it is logical to assume that the wine had to be absolutely red, since at that time white wine was not allowed in religious ceremonies at all”. Except that, as Attilio Scienza points out with regard to the use of wine during Mass, “white wine was used in the Byzantine rites of the time, and even now in the Orthodox church, white wine is used, especially wine from Santorini, because it is not acidified.” Furthermore, in Article 3 of the canonical law, the colour of the Mass wine is not specified.

White wine was only introduced into the Roman ritual later, dating back to the Council of Trent (which was held from 1545 to 1563), in order to avoid the repetition of miracles like the one from Bolsena.

— Venice was the **New York** of that era where all trends were born thanks to trade, its laws, art, music, publishing.







White wine is used in the Orthodox Church, especially that from Santorini as written by Aldo Manuzio in his 1501 book which we still understand today. Furthermore, the only existing copy of the second book in Glagolitic script (the old Croatian alphabet) is a breviary from 1491 which is believed to be printed in Venice and now kept in the Marciana Library. And then the fabrics, glass, lifestyle and the cult of beauty were a source of continuous imitation. As well as coffee, and the Venetians were the first importers and suppliers of this green gold in Europe back in 1683. Being in that market meant being, in a cultural sense, part of the capital of the world at that time. They were also advanced when it came to secret services, thanks to an invention that can now be compared to cyber espionage. Although it only possessed some regions in the interior of north-eastern Italy and small coastal areas in some parts of the Mediterranean, Venice actually opposed kingdoms and empires that were much more powerful from a military-geographical and economic point of view successfully. It turned its ambassadors and consuls, a number of trade representatives and traders into highly informed agents, placed on a geographical and economic chessboard through a network of complex relationships. All these people were able to very quickly inform the top managers of the Serenissima and enable them to act and react quickly to events, announcements, rumours and commercial flows. For a long time, the people of Venetian espionage were among the most sophisticated in terms of information management, with the most effective ink produced by the Serenissima using a variety of plant and mineral raw materials and even urine. Information travels as it is written between the lines, and even today the expression “read between the lines” is used to denote careful reading that interprets the (true) reality of facts.

Thanks to  
their sensory  
characteristics,  
the **Malvasias**  
of the time were  
highly valued.

Malvasias had a pleasant taste because they adapted to the wine traditions of the countries bordering the Eastern Mediterranean. In fact, everyone talked about production techniques such as concentration of must for cooking, drying on racks or adding resin to ensure preservation.

In addition, wines were often named after places that became famous for their quality, such as Byblin, from the city of Byblos, today's Sidon. Even the myth with which they were often associated determined their fame and thus their commercial value, like the wine from Thrace, the homeland of Dionysus.

But what did they taste like? In 1509 Pietro Belon wrote that two types of Malvazija were produced on the island of Crete: one sweet and the other dry (which the Venetians called *Malvazija garba*, which means sour). This first one was liqueur-like (for the *siorie*, the rich in the Venetian language, which, of course was the more outstanding wine), much more suitable for transport, while the *garba* probably got sour during the journey.

Malvazija (along with other liqueur wines such as Muscat and unidentified wines from Cyprus, Spain, Sicily and from various Aegean islands - all wines produced in *terroir* by the sea) met with great success on Venetian tables as it paired well with a number of desserts, such as *pignoccata*, marzipan, doughnuts, *bussolai* and a variety of biscuits that were never missing at lunches of a certain elegance and sophistication. These were often organised not only in the Doge's Palace, but also in patrician and clerical houses. Unable to fight for supremacy among "table" wines, both because of the higher alcohol percentage and the higher price, this was a wine intended for the middle- and upper-class consumer group.

Furthermore, it is enough to read the following document kept in the Marciano library in Venice that is a "recipe" for fighting the plague (1347-1352): "Burn the spruce and the cypress, don't worry about anything, stay happy, eat well and drink better than prized wine and good Malvaglia."



The success of  
wines sold under  
the generic name  
Malvazija is the  
result of the biggest  
**marketing** project  
in the history of  
this drink.

Malvazija is also the first example of the commercial interpretation of wine as a commodity, which was made possible by the great experience and naval power of the Venetian Republic.

Attilio Scienza observed what was implemented by the Serenissima with Malvazija in detail, “it was an *ante litteram* example of the globalisation of the sweet wine market, where the name of the place of production becomes a generic term denoting a wine with certain organoleptic properties, but without reference to the place of origin (and vine - author's note).

The economic importance of this wine (which in England was exchanged in such a way that one barrel was exchanged for a bale of wool) led the Republic of Venice to build a special port, which is still called Fondaco della Malvazija.

It goes without saying that the increase in demand involved the search for new sources of production, with the choice of grape variety being free. Hence the confusion about Malvazija. “In order to fully understand the significance this wine had in European oenological history,” notes Attilio Scienza, “it is also necessary to understand the climatic, economic and social events of the 14th and 15th centuries on the old continent.

The cold wave, known as the “Little Ice Age”, decimated Europe's population with famine and plague. Due to the climatic conditions, many wine-growing areas were abandoned, and the quality of the wine deteriorated significantly. Due to frequent visits to eastern churches, nobles and high clergy knew the wines of the eastern Mediterranean and their quality well and therefore became a privileged market not only for the Venetian navy that offered Malvazija and Vinsanti, but also for Genoese wine, which turned Vernaccia, produced on the northern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, into a symbol of its trade.

The Ottoman expansion in the Mediterranean took away the island of Crete (Candia) from the Venetians in 1669, and with it a large part of the Malvazija production. This is the key event

after which many Mediterranean Malvasias were created: on the one hand, because Venice did not give up its rich market, and on the other, because the famous wine encouraged the production, albeit from different grape varieties, of similar wines by imitating its organoleptic properties in many Italian, French, Spanish and even Portuguese regions. Namely, in a certain sense, Venice ordered the production of sweet, aromatic and alcoholic wines similar to Malvazija from many producers, especially from areas over which it had political supremacy such as Istria, Dalmatia, the Adriatic coast and the interior of the Veneto and Friuli-Venezia-Giulia regions. The oldest written evidence of the cultivation of Malvazija, including in Italy, dates back to between 1500 and 1600 (as we saw in Istria, from a quote by the Bishop of Novigrad, Tommasini), and apart from being proof that Venice had already created the network of subcontractors of Malvazija in its vicinity in order to make this wine more available to it before the loss of Candia (Crete), also represents an attempt to threaten the Venetian hegemony in some local markets of this wine. Its commercial success, however, disappeared soon after, partly due to the decline of the economic power of Venice, which no longer controlled the wine trade in the Mediterranean in relation to English competition, and partly due to the “drink revolution”, which affected the countries of northern Europe between 1600 and 1700 when consumer interest was directed towards the wines of Sauternes, Porto, Andalusia and Vermouth.”

At the instigation of the market managed by the Venetians, many varieties changed their name to Malvazija, with the addition of an adjective indicating their origin (from Candia, from Lecce, from Casorzo, etc.), qualitative characteristics (aromatic, white, pink, black, etc.), and the usual production technique was applied, such as drying on the vine or on racks depending on the climatic conditions. Scientists have tried to divide them into four groups based on their geographical origin or place of cultivation: Malvazija of the Western Mediterranean, Malvazija of Catalonia, Malvazija of the Adriatic, Malvazija of the Atlantic.



— At the instigation of the market managed by the Venetians, **many varieties changed their name** to Malvazija, with the addition of an adjective indicating their origin (from Candia, from Lecce, from Casorzo, etc).



— According to the ampelographic history from which we were formed, **DNA** research began in 1997 and nothing has been the same since.

Carole Meredith's American team and a group of collaborators from France and Germany proved that Cabernet Sauvignon originated from *Cabernet Franc* and *Sauvignon Blanc*. Research that finally brought order to history, and was often seasoned by political or “local” pressure, with an incredible obsession to make the variety indigenous at all costs.

It must be said that a wine being autochthonous is not synonymous for quality. If only it were that simple! Much more is needed. It can certainly be the basis of a project that will determine the quality of the territory, which we prefer to define with the French word *terroir*.

“The subgroup collects aromatic Malvasias, which, among other things, have been shown to be related to Muscats in a certain way. It is also necessary to highlight the presence of a weak genetic link between Greek and Italian Malvazija, and this can be justified by the fact that in the production areas of Malvazija in the Peloponnese, other vine varieties were used, such as Liatico, Vilana, Thrapsathiri, etc. In Greece, for example, there is only one grape variety called Monemvasia or Monemvasitica that is grown in the Cyclades and Euboea, while other varieties called black and white Malvazija are very sporadically distributed in other Greek wine-growing areas such as Santorini.

Furthermore, the case of some white Malvasias of the same name (from Dubrovnik - from the Bosa grape, from Sitges from the Madera grape and from Lipari from the Greco di Bianco grape) which are currently cultivated in various locations in the Mediterranean is unique and, not surprisingly, their DNA analysis has shown that they are all the same grape variety.

It has also been confirmed that Malvazija di Basilicata originates from a spontaneous crossing of *Verdeca* and *Plavina*, which confirms the connection of this southern variety with the Primitivo variety, that is, the connection between the viticulture of Apulia and Dalmatia. Furthermore, Malvazija di Candia is genetically very close to *Garganega*, and at the same time to *Malvazija Albana*, *Catarratto*, *Dorona*, white *Marzemina*, white *Montonico*, *Susumaniello* and Tuscan *Trebbiano*. The origin of the *Malvazija del Lazio* or *Puntinata* variety is interesting, as it is a natural cross between the *Moscato di Alessandria* (Zibibbo) and *Schiava Grossa* varieties. *Malvazija di Schierano* is also very similar to this cross. Black Malvazija from Lecce or Brindisi, the most common of the coloured Italian Malvasias, is the result of crossing *Negroamaro* and long white Malvazija varieties.

We should also not forget those varieties called Malvazija, which are primarily grown on the shores of the Mediterranean, among which we remember *Malvoisie à gros grains* or *Vermentino*, *Malvoisie du Roussillon* or *Torbato*, *Malvoisie du Valais* or *Pinot Gris*, *Malvazija Rosé* or *Veltriner*, *Malvazija di Candia* and *Malvazija di Madeira* which was used to produce Malmsey, *Malvazija Rei* from Portugal, white Malvazija from the Aegean islands (especially Paros and Syros) and Malvazija from Croatia. Malvasias, which today are mostly grown in Istria (Croatia), Slovenia and the Friuli-Venezia-Giulia region, are surprisingly the furthest from the sensory perceptions that this wine had in the Middle Ages, as they are only slightly aromatic and are not at all suitable for drying.



— Within the well-known Malvasias, the Iстриan one is perhaps the best. It is certainly **the most modern** if we consider today's style of white wines.

It is a wine that has personality, style, grace and is characterised by vertical ascent. It is long-lasting and has all the characteristics that represent a rich *terroir* such as Istria, which abounds in God-given beauties. Our belief, supported by ten years of research, is that where top wines are made, there are beauties that represent inspiration for the production of noble wines.

Yes, as far as we are concerned, wine quality and beauty are inseparable.

And *Histria* is also a country rich in tradition and culture, finding a unique language used to present its wine.

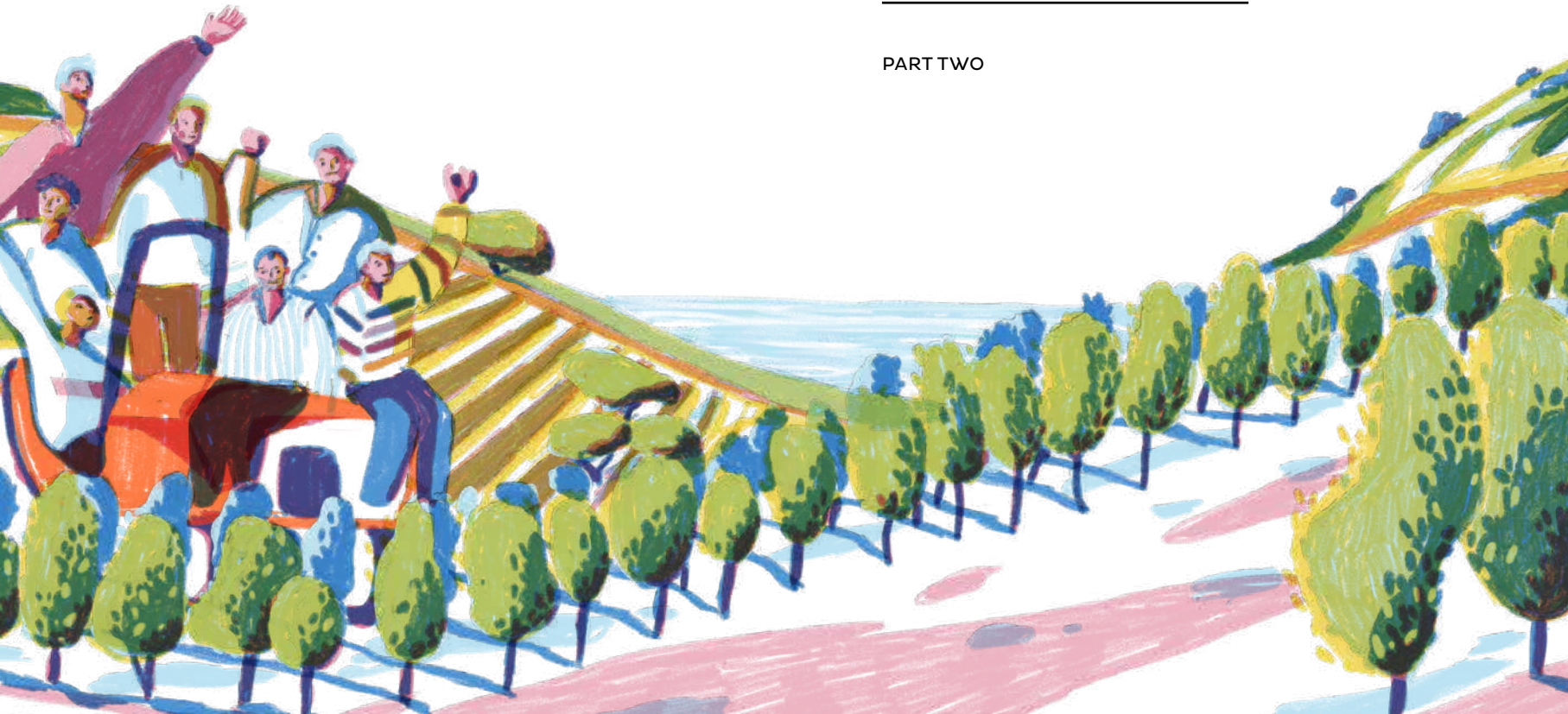
This is why Malvazija Istarska has all the necessary parts needed to write about the great success of its country. Along with this historic and first-class wine, let's not forget the olive oil unique in both its tone and strength (even the ancient Romans were aware of it), and the art of cooking that unites and tells a story that stretches from the sea to the land.

Here we are, we have reached the natural beauties: the beautiful green interior of Istria alongside the coastal area, bathed with an unforgettable sea, with a series of dream-like coves.

Last, but not least, is the cultural wealth of different communities that live peacefully together that are an irreplaceable support for growth and development.

# Pioneers of the revival of Malvazija Istarska

PART TWO



# Nino Jakovčić

## “Our primary goal was to get farmers back in the fields”



Nino Jakovčić is a first-class Istrian politician from Poreč, born in 1957 and one of those who leave a very positive mark. Now, after leaving politics, he lives in Poreč. He won the elections with the Istrian Democratic Party in 1991, and a year later entered the Croatian Parliament, where he held the position of Minister of European Integration in 2000/2001. In 2001, he was elected as the President of the Region of Istria, and held that position, without interruption, until 2013. From 2014 to 2019, he was a member of the European Parliament, where he joined the committee for agriculture. His political involvement was often directed towards agricultural problems, especially those of Istria. In our conversations with pioneers of the Istrian wine revival, his name often and spontaneously appears in the sense of an enthusiastic promoter and animator of that period who was full of ideas and who implemented many initiatives and projects. Therefore, it seemed natural to start the interviews with President Jakovčić, as the people of Istria call him. It was a very pleasant conversation full of ideas, thanks to which we received an insight into the picture of the social, political and economic situation at the time of the emergence of modern Istrian viticulture: “My father Božo, who died in 1985, was an agronomy engineer and did not have the opportunity of experiencing the Istrian wine revolution. He worked for important agricultural companies, including Agrolaguna, so the family always talked about that sector. Pazin was also a centre with an important part of the population dedicated to working in the fields. The life of the peasants at that time was gloomy, arduous and difficult. Despite this, they loved their work and were proud of the wine they produced. When I won the election, I thought of them first. So, we developed a complex project for Istria that was implemented in the period from 1992/1993 until 1997, which, in addition to rural, also included cultural (related to tourism) and infrastructural development. It is painful to remember that at that time houses in the countryside had neither water nor electricity, let alone a telephone: a catastrophic





— If winemakers had not shown **enthusiasm** and that hint of recklessness in accepting the risk that new challenges bring, political engagement would not have brought the desired results.

situation that had to be solved immediately. We were not only involved in wine, but also in other sectors such as cattle breeding, where we invested in the preservation and protection of authentic Istrian cattle, the *boškarin*. At that time, there were only 40 specimens of this species, and today there are over 2,000 of them.

Wine was, of course, the most important sector since we sensed that it was possible to promote the entire region as well as tourism. That's exactly what happened. At that time, we lived in great uncertainty (let's not forget that the Croatian War of Independence broke out in 1991 and lasted until 1995, completely turning the tables). Fortunately, private business proved to be both reactive and enterprising. I say this very clearly: if the winemakers had not shown enthusiasm and that hint of recklessness in accepting the risks that new challenges bring, political engagement would not have brought the desired results. So, the revival took off thanks to their courage. Our first goal was to return the remaining farmers to the fields they had abandoned because they were not profitable. Thus, the first activity was to encourage the planting of olive trees and vineyards. Hence the seven-year program (1993-2000) related to the provision of free vine and olive cuttings (which were approved after terrain checks). Given the success achieved, the second phase of the aid made it possible to split the cost equally between the region and the municipalities, so that the project could still be sustainable. The funds were not infinite, so the third phase of the aid program provided that a third of the costs would be borne by the region, a third by municipalities and a third by farmers themselves. In this way, Istria partially recovered its wine-growing and olive-growing heritage. However, it was necessary to think about how to produce wine in the right way and how to sell it. I remember the enthusiasm with which Franko Kozlović, Ivica Matošević and I decided to go to the sommelier course in Trieste. It was 1994.





My day as a politician consisted of going from Pazin to the Parliament in Zagreb in the morning, and then returning to Istria in the late afternoon to go to Trieste with Franko and Ivica. A course that directly connected us to an unknown world, and which gave us a strong push to continue. To such an extent that in 1994, during that wave, the Vinistra Association was created in Poreč thanks to the political desire to push the emerging world of Istrian wine towards new forms of promotion. This was followed by the presentation of Istria at the Vinitaly wine fair in Verona and at the Wine Festival in Merano. Our representatives did not sell wine, but learned a lot about it. We placed all our cards on two autochthonous varieties: Malvazija Istarska and Teran, as well as on extra virgin olive oil, which began to win awards around the world.

Teran deserves a special explanation. While I was a member of the European Parliament's Committee on Agriculture, I fought for this wine, whose history is linked to the area of Carso DOCS in the Friuli-Venezia-Giulia region of Italy, the Slovenian Karst and our own Istria, to be part of the cross-border DOCS (controlled designation of origin) of three countries. The Slovenians opposed it. It's a shame, because it would also have been a strong media feat. I hope that this project will be reinstated, to forcefully re-market a wine that is as fascinating as it is difficult to produce. So, I hope that Vinistra will commit to finding the best production areas, as it did for Malvazija. We also worked a lot on the promotion of tourism, which is directly related to wine and agricultural and food activities, thanks to the synergies we achieved with Veljko Ostojić, the former Croatian Minister of Tourism, and then responsible for the tourism promotion of Istria. Together we launched the slogan "Istria, land of good people" which is part of the Istrian national anthem. We are committed to the creation and promotion of wine and olive oil roads and have been involved in TV broadcasts.

— Yes: wine, Malvazija in particular, was one of the advantages of this project that gave us and continues to give us great satisfaction. To the extent that I can say: **“Malvazija is the only love that has never betrayed me.”**

Another one of the choices was that of Denis Ivošević, who launched the “Izvorni tartuf - Tartufo vero” club (Original truffle), whose sign is appearing more and more in different restaurants today, proving that Istria has an excellent production that it wants to improve.

The marketing strategy, which we insisted on with Veljko Ostojić, was to try to produce only excellent products in order to reach peak quality in every sector: wine, oil, truffles, Istrian cattle, cheeses, prosciutto, etc.

The same applies to tourism: instead of building new hotels, the recommendation was to raise the quality of the existing ones, giving preference to those with 5 stars.

We are a small region, and this is the only way we can overcome market challenges.

To face what the future holds, we must be brave and look forward as we did back in 1994.



# Franko Kozlović

“We started talking  
about wine and  
olive oil roads,  
organising courses  
for sommeliers in  
our area”



Franko Kozlović, born in 1965, is the most famous producer of Malvazija Istarska from Momjan, and should be thanked for being the first to recognise the great potential of this wine.

“A real thoroughbred horse”, as described by the President of the Region of Istria Nino Jakovčić. It was not easy because in that period, we are talking about 1985, the economic situation of the former Yugoslavia was very shaky, having been destroyed by inflation that had reached 50% in a week. “However, we were lucky then thanks to the great demand of the people of Trieste for our bulk wines, who came to buy them directly in the wine cellars, paying in lira. The business was so lucrative that we wondered if it made sense to go in other directions, when business was booming anyway. Be that as it may, in 1987 we came out with our first bottle. The scenario suddenly changed in 1991, when the Croatian War of Independence broke out, which lasted until 1995. We then had to think about what direction to take, and those were quite radical decisions. At the same time, the bottled wine market was born, which had the important cities of Rijeka and Zagreb as sales points, and we, in terms of wine innovation and the wine sector as a whole, looked up to Collio, a hilly area in the Friuli-Venezia-Giulia region that was then considered the first laboratory region of the new style of Italian white wines.

In 1992, I had a very poor understanding of the market, and launched my bottles at a very low price of around 3,000 liras. In 1994, I set myself a challenge to put a nominal value of 10,000 liras per bottle, which was automatically reduced to 8,000. Later, in 1997, when the war ended, my Malvazija won first place at the Zagreb fair. The following year, I produced the first Malvazija Istarska to be aged in *barrique* barrels, while with the 2001 vintage, I sent the Santa Lucia Malvazija to the market, obtained from old vines and designed to be long-lasting. I had a premonition that only in this way would I be able to highlight my identity more strongly, focusing on one specific vineyard, the evolution of a style from which I have never been parted.



— We then learned to present the wine and realised that it was not enough to make a top-quality wine...

The bottle was then sold at a price that could be compared with today's 20 euros. It was a historical moment in which everything changed in Istria: the style of wine, hospitality and the art of cooking and tourism. The air exuded some exciting restlessness. Let's take a step back in history to talk about an episode that meant a lot to us and to Istria's food and wine industry. It was back in 1994. With Ivica Matošević and the then President of the Region of Istria, Nino Jakovčić, I enrolled in my first course for sommeliers, which was held in Trieste. After that, we founded the Association of Wine Lovers in Istria, which, in addition to producers and restaurateurs, brought together architects and professionals, which the poet and writer Drago Orlić referred to as *luxury drinkers* in a pleasant and vivid way. That course generated palpable enthusiasm. Then we learned to present the wine and realised that it was not enough to make a top-quality wine if there were no tools for its proper positioning on the market. It should be said that during that movement the institutions were very close to us, and especially two people: Nino Jakovčić, the President of the Region of Istria and Veljko Ostojčić, who became president of the Istria Tourist Board. We started talking with them about wine and olive roads, organising courses for sommeliers in Istria, presenting and promoting Istrian wine. To such an extent that not a single reception, meeting of authorities, visit of journalists was complete without a newly created Istrian wine, especially a newly interpreted style of Malvazija. Furthermore, they took us to all the most important fairs, from the Merano Wine Festival to Vinitaly in Verona. Their contribution to our revival was crucial, and on that wave, in 1994, Vinistra, the Association of Producers, was founded, which became a reference point for the growth of the entire sector to such an extent that even today almost all producers are part of the association itself. We are now entering the third decade of this oenological revolution, and questions are being asked, the most important of which is to imagine the wines of the next decade. Which way to go? How to strengthen our uniqueness?



How to give our companies more value for investment in the market? We cannot rest on our laurels. We need to prepare ourselves in order to design future stylistic and communication strategies, and to deal with foreign markets in a precise and decisive way. Our generation is aware that the enthusiasm of the nineties will not repeat itself, but it is good to create new motivation for the younger generation, to encourage the need to continue with innovations and production processes. First, they should look at viticulture 4.0. and thus, sustainability in the vineyard, but also in the cellar, as well as at the product itself, paying more attention to the intangible part of the wine equation: communication, language, foreign markets, positioning, distribution, image and so on. If, on the one hand, the annual Malvazija harvest serves to fill the coffers, on the other hand, if we want to stand out, it will be necessary to think about more advanced wines, and thus about more recognisable wines too. We need to raise the bar to reach what I call “author’s wines”, connected to a person and a specific vineyard.

Cellars are not places  
where work is done, but  
places to be visited.

#### AUTHOR'S NOTES

On the day of St. Martin, November 11, 2011, Franko Kozlović ceremoniously opened a new wine cellar that had been masterfully designed by architect, Željko Burić. St. Martin's Day is a significant anniversary for farmers because it marks the end of all crops of the agricultural year. The cellar, which was well hidden among the terraced hills, allows the wines to go from vinification to *barrique* barrels by gravity. But above all, it is a





cellar that, apart from being designed for workers, represents an invitation.

Cellars are no longer places where entry is prohibited, as in the past, but have become a showcase, a mirror of the company's production philosophy, an opportunity for meetings and tastings and for cultural events.

The cellar therefore has become the first expression of the product that is transformed within it. Like a three-dimensional label, the cellar may now speak more about the wine than the advertisement itself: it contains all the inherent characteristics of the wine.

The goal of turning the place of production into an "open cellar" allows us to understand how wine has been created within suggestive spaces, and not in soulless places.

The real intuition was to succeed in creating an interdisciplinary discussion around wine where the cellar was a chest capable of spreading wine culture in all its aspects, to include a discussion of applied art, to create a place of social exchange and fellowship, in order to illustrate the specific technological culture of the company.

All cellars of the latest generation have a relationship with the morphology of the soil in common, which leads the architecture to face the location, gradually developing from a simple building to a building that is an integral part of the environment. Designers show how basements can become the pinnacle of the respectable transformation of agricultural land.

Contemporary cellars can therefore be considered, in all their variants, as ecological and bio-climatic architecture, the goal of which, in addition to correct integration into the territory, is the realisation of the building's maximum natural energy supply, which, through the architectural solution, explores all external factors suitable for obtaining the best possible internal habitats. If we add the search for the aesthetic connotation of space to that, then the circle can be considered closed.



# Moreno Degrassi

“Creating new  
cuvées is always a  
new challenge for  
me, which gives  
me inestimable  
satisfaction”



Moreno Degrassi, who was born in 1959, studied agricultural sciences at the Agricultural University in Udine. His approach to wine is different from that of ordinary winemakers. His approach is as a restaurateur who offers a completely different, but equally interesting vision because he looks at wine from the sales side.

For example, from 1987 to 1996, after completing his studies in Udine, he took over the management of the restaurant "da Mario" (Mario Maurel is his father-in-law) in Savudrija and produced wine exclusively for use in the restaurant. Zadružni podrum Buje (Cooperative cellar), which was the largest cellar in the area owning vineyards on about 500 hectares in the area around Umag, Novigrad and Buje, went bankrupt due to rising inflation and poor management: "They suggested that I rent a cellar in Buje, but the situation was not at all clear, so I preferred to start with the small funds I had. I rented vineyards from a collapsed cellar for three years, which I bought after ten years, and now I have owned these vineyards for 23 years, most of them in Buje, with the rest in Petrovija, on red soil that I intended for *Refošk* and *Teran*."

Moreno, in order to support the economic efforts that the newly opened cellar required, valued his knowledge acquired in Udine and thus became a distributor of oenological products. The fact that he applied all the techniques he learned in his newly opened cellar was taken for granted, except when he was a sort of reference to the numerous winemakers who exploited him. "Instead of asking me for explanations about the products, they tasted my wines and asked me: how do you do it?" "It's like I built myself," he says, smiling, "on the back of local competition." This, obviously, was not the case because the dissemination of new oenological knowledge was a fundamental step for our sector. Let's go back to the wines that were created and changed in a very short time. We could almost say overnight. And what about the consumers? "They were our first allies: they rewarded such wines and helped us to further present them."

That's how I presented my first bottle in 1996. After so many years, I still wonder if it was crazy to start with such a large number - as many as 50,000 bottles that I sold for 5 euros in today's money. My answer today is that the spirit of the private entrepreneur is a mixture of courage and recklessness, where risk is part of the game. At that time, Slovenian wines occupied market places in the restaurants of our most important cities in both Istria and Dalmatia.

They started before us, and they too found inspiration in the border hilly area of Collio in the Friuli-Venezia-Giulia region. The arrival of our new wines attracted a lot of attention, so we quickly recovered on the domestic market. We were also greatly helped by the awards that the Malvasias of Istrian producers gradually won, first in Zagreb, and then at Vinistra. Then there were the courses for sommeliers that we attended in nearby Trieste. So, to cut a long story short, the desire for growth was palpable. Let's not forget that, along with wine, excellent Istrian olive oil and Zigante's truffles also started to be launched on the market, and that the growth in the number of restaurateurs became a springboard, but also a privileged sales channel. It should also be mentioned that in the area of Umag we are lucky enough to benefit from wine and food and wine tourism during the winter months thanks to the proximity of Slovenia, the Italian regions of Friuli-Venezia-Giulia and Veneto, and Austria. The wave of fans that in 2016 led me, together with six other fellow producers and restaurateurs, to open the wine shop ITISTRIA in Umag (that is now fully owned by me) which, in addition to giving us constant recognition on the path we were on, helped a great deal in spreading the new Istrian wine as well. A wine shop that currently, including direct sales in the cellar, brings in at least 30% of the turnover. And the new generation? "I have two children. A daughter who works as a doctor in Switzerland so I can't count on her to continue my work in the cellar, but I'm happy that she's doing what she loves. My son on the other hand, has followed in my footsteps and enrolled at the Faculty of Viticulture and Oenology in Udine.

In terms of stylistic and marketing innovation, I decided to have all certified organic vineyards, which remain at the heart of my oenological project, allowing me to produce complex long-lasting wines, overcoming the psychological barrier of wine produced after one harvest. Since young wine, although nice and pleasant, will never be able to express all the qualitative potential and identity of our territory. Given that I am still inexorably attracted to new varieties, I produce various wines that are the result of my passion for viticulture. Today, I grow as many as sixteen of them, for the production of over 40 types of wine. Creating new *cuvées* is a constant challenge for me, and gives me inestimable satisfaction. Nevertheless, Malvazija remains the leading wine, as it accounts for 30% of my production."

Oenological knowledge has played a key role in Malvazija Istarska's reaching a high position on the international scene.

#### AUTHOR'S NOTES

To be honest, all the world's oenologies were in the making. Apart from France, which had developed the modern one in Bordeaux, with Emile Peynaud and Pascal Riberau-Gayon, and Beane in Burgundy, and especially tastings as we know them today, thanks to Max Léglise and Jean Siegrist. In order to initiate a change in style, at the beginning of its modern history, Istria turned to new winemaking techniques, not to the vineyard. This is the moment in which Moreno Degrassi, in order to make ends meet, as we



have seen, decided to start distributing wine products. The wines “before” and “after” have changed radically. “Before” they were bad, rough, pungent and mostly “dirty” under the nose. “After” they became: elegant, pleasant, tempting, fragrant, clean, with beautiful colour. Two completely different worlds. It is interesting to note that, hand in hand with the qualitative evolution of wine, culinary style is also changing. In Istria, an example of this is Sonja Perić’s Valsabbion restaurant (unanimously considered the forerunner of modern Istrian cuisine), opened in 1995. A year after its opening, it offers two bottled wines: that of Franko Kozlović and Degrassi’s Malvazija Bomarchese. Thus, in Istria, the strategic role that the restaurant will play is growing, not only as an irreplaceable point of sale that gives prestige to the label on the wine list, but also as a centre where gourmets who feed the lucrative wine tourism gather. A capable circle whose importance is always growing, and in which the role of the sommelier is of strategic importance. In short: this restaurant-wine-tourism path is being developed, which will also affect communication projects in the tourist sense and which today cannot be ignored by the wine and gastronomy sector. That technical knowledge, which Degrassi applied and others followed, turns into a common good, contributing in a decisive way to raising the quality level of Istrian wine. Namely, Degrassi insists on the need for everyone to devote themselves to the promotion of the Poreč school, which in 2001, in cooperation with the University of Rijeka, founded the oenology course. Since a diploma obtained at a viticulture and winemaking school in Istria is a huge added value: without school there is no future! How does culture relate to that at the moment? It is connected, because we have to go exactly that way in order to grow and take a step forward in quality, that is, to move from “emerging” regional winemaking to “mature” winemaking. The first is typical for countries that are just emerging on the market that do not possess even the smallest form of wine tradition culture. It has happened to all budding winemakers and it will happen again. It is based on only 4 aspects at their disposal:



— The wines “before” and “after” have changed radically. They became elegant, pleasant, tempting, fragrant, clean, with beautiful colour.

the name of the wine variety, mostly chosen from among the most famous, often among the “international” ones. Adopted oenological techniques, a modest price and a style that is constantly changing because it is subordinated to the demand from the market where homologation does not give identity.

Secondly is the next level, which we define as “mature” and to which Istria strives because it has everything necessary to achieve this goal. “Mature” oenologies characterised by a recognisable style thanks to a specific identity and *terroir*, but also by the strength not to surrender, slavishly, to market trends, but to impose themselves on them. It should be noted that it is precisely with “mature” wines that greater value is created over time.

Furthermore, efforts to fit the oenological project into the needs of the environment must be the basis of the wine producer. In order to make a superior wine, however, purely technical terms such as oenological and agronomic, or, for example, an international name for a wine, are not enough. No. A superior wine is above all the work of a single mind, a project that finds inspiration in the cultural stratification that each of us has built from within and is therefore the basis of a collective project from which belonging is born. It is real knowledge, generated by continuous contamination. It is the birth of *terroir*. We will deepen this discussion in our reflections and conversation with Moreno Coronica.





# Moreno Coronica

“In order to ensure  
future positive  
business, companies  
must produce value”



Moreno Coronica, born in Umag in 1962, is a direct man with clear ideas and an innate ability to get straight to the heart of the problem.

From a peasant family that was also engaged in wine production, Moreno worked as a mechanic, but at the same time helped his father in the vineyard: “My first vintage,” he recalls, “was in 1993 when my father gave me the opportunity to manage the vineyard and the cellar. Of course, our ideas differed, which caused conflicts, but that’s how it should be. We were facing a major turning point in terms of Istrian oenology and it was not easy to coordinate ideas. During the Croatian War of Independence, I went to live with my brother-in-law in Italy, in Piacenza. There I was attracted by the fact that small Italian wine producers are growing. I also noticed that this dizzying expansion had transformed various aspects related to wine: viticulture, winemaking techniques, perceived quality, consumer relations, wine presentation and so on. The Friuli region attracted me for its white wines, and Piedmont for its red wines. It is obvious that the situation in Istria at the beginning of the 1990s, for reasons that are well known to everyone, was light years away from what I witnessed in Italy. After I returned, I was stunned by the almost complete absence of private enterprise in our sector. It was a rarity that the children of peasants wanted to become quality winemakers and that they understood what opportunity was available to them at that time. And then it was as if the stars aligned and, in short, a flurry of business *infected* many of us who were continuously growing. To such an extent that, looking back, we can say that today we are bigger than we could ever have imagined back then. Today, our company has 22 hectares on red soil. From the very beginning, I set the vineyard as my point of reference, the only way to make a lasting impact on the market. In my opinion, taking the adoption of new wine production techniques for granted, the real challenge we will have to face in the future is the role of the vineyard both for the

increase in quality and for the right way of communication. Since the vineyard is the true mother of wine. Burgundy and Piedmont (in Barolo and Barbaresco) teach us with their *crus* how each vineyard conveys its personality to the wine, leaving its mark. So, with the same wine production techniques, it is the vineyard that makes the difference and I consider that my most important mental achievement. The viticulture mania that leads me to harvest part of the crop in one row, leaving behind in that same row what is not yet perfectly ripe. This is nature playing with us, and we are the ones who must know how to interpret its game. Today, 70% of our production is related to Malvazija, and we make red wines from Teran (I dedicated 3,5 hectares to it), with which I have a kind of love-hate relationship. Yes, because it is a demanding variety and all year long I think about how to get rid of it. And then when I see the grapes and the wine it gives me, it makes me happy. If Malvazija is a wine that symbolises Istria - a worthy business card for the world, Teran can become its ideal companion on that journey taking us to the temple of great producers. If this does not happen, it will be a failure for Istrian winemakers. It needs to be protected in such a way that it is produced exclusively from 100% Teran. Absolutely. I see "my" Teran only as a backup. Actually, I'm going out after four years. I think I will limit my vineyards only to those areas that are ideal for it (while it happens too often that it is planted where it is simpler, and this spoils its character).

And here we should act smartly and involve the Poreč Institute in order to launch extensive research, invite other universities or scientists to cooperate, reach mass selections and thus identify the best genotype of the Istrian Teran that has acclimatized here. The complexity of the research cannot be left to just one producer for two reasons: because he does not have enough knowledge and because he cannot personally commit to the investments to obtain results that will then benefit everyone.



— If Malvazija is a wine that symbolises Istria, a business card for the world, Teran can become its ideal companion on that journey.



The goal will be achieved when visitors to Istria stop saying I'm going to Kozlović, Degrassi, Coronica..., but I'm going to Istria and to the winemaker I find most interesting. To me, that means creating a territory. My equation is simple: in addition to giving us a better guarantee in the future, if the territory is rich, I become rich.

Summarised, I am convinced that we should all work as “noble farmers” while thinking as entrepreneurs and as such be able to positively face the problem that concerns grape producers, those who do not process them into wine. We must look to other nations close to us, especially France, where grapes are paid fairly so that those who produce them have a more adequate income.

Interesting topics have emerged to the extent that an interesting discussion with Coronica developed.

#### CORONICA

“Creating value is an important goal. In order to ensure a positive future for companies, they must produce a product that is worthwhile, otherwise the investments required to continue will not be sustainable. How to turn a limited territory (small wine-growing area) into value? What strategies should we adopt in order to guarantee growth not only in terms of quality, but also in terms of value?”

#### AUTHOR

We know that the most suitable vineyards have limited production capacities, and therefore limited diversity, as we have learned from the experience of other producers. Since without rules there are no limits, and without limits there are no values.

The vine, it should be remembered, is only a tool to achieve the

goal, while the climate gives identity, and the soil the final touch. *Terroir* is an indispensable envelope that brings everything together and completes the story. The real perceived quality of the wine is connected with the values of the territory, with its identity, which is then transferred to the wines themselves. For this reason, it is not so important to present the vinification method, as it is to present the sensory expression that the vineyard, *cru*, gives (that is, to extremely emphasize the concept of *terroir*, primarily in terms of product quality: actually the *micro-terroir*), which is unique and as such unrepeatable. This is what human duty is: to penetrate deep into the core of the *terroir* and tell its story through the wine.

#### CORONICA

“If it is true that the quality of the wine is the result of the action of the climate, the soil and the interpretation given to it by humans, it must also be emphasized that this is still not enough to solve the puzzle, because the inherent quality presented becomes visible to the consumer through a whole series of actions that are part of the *terroir* concept.”

#### AUTHOR

The fact is that the presentation too often focuses on the technical origin of the product, sticking to aspects that concern choices such as the use of stainless steel or wood, small or large wood, the use or not of sulfur dioxide, adherence to biological, biodynamic or conventional viticulture methods, maceration before fermentation or during fermentation, filtration or anything else. In this way the identity is often confused, as if it is a technological choice that each manufacturer can adjust according to his or her feelings and business goals. It's not like that. It is not necessary to communicate “what is done”, but “the essence”.

# Istria and the way to *terroir* and *cru*.

## AUTHOR'S NOTES

After we have brought the conversation to an end with Moreno, we would like to further explore the concept and importance of *terroir* and *cru* in their most correct interpretation. Goals that are within Istria's reach.

In fact, if we want to find out the meaning of this term, we must state that the identity of the wine for a certain territory encompasses wider and more stable fields of knowledge. There is, therefore, a hierarchy of values from which one can start in order to summarise the concept of identity.

- I. Knowledge of the environment, which tells us what we want in the area in which we produce.
- II. The oenological goal, which allows us to identify the sensory profile of the *terroir*.
- III. Agronomic and viticulture techniques. For example, it is not possible to adopt a viticulture model typical for another climate zone and expect that the fruit will ripen in ideal conditions.
- IV. An oenological technique that, in order to be an expression of *terroir*, must be conservative with regard to all aromatic and structural ingredients.
- V. Finally, a style that results from productive behaviour that anticipates a path in hierarchical respect for the process and can express a long-lasting, and sustainable, interpretive style.

In the end, the approach to the story that is told to the consumer is important, to whom we must not present, as we have already stated, a way of saying "what is being done", but to explain the "essence" itself. It is not necessary to talk about techniques, but to connect the

taste and aroma of our wine with its climatic characteristics and the particularity of the soil for that specific *cru*. To create a true and lasting identity. So, creating *terroir* means knowing your soil and climate system without imitating other producers. That's the real value.

The second rule is that we cannot constantly adapt to the market. Burgundy stood up to Robert Parker, the world critic on whom the happiness and price of the wines he rewarded depended, and went its own way, without compromise! And that is not the only example. Therefore, it is not trivial to remember that important *terroirs* can produce long-lasting wines and that the excellence of a wine can only be witnessed after a few years of its life; and it must be said that some Istrian producers also took that path.

The market lives on expectations and fascination with products with high added value. The market must feel the need for the products of a certain territory. All areas that are already in this state represent an extraordinary definition of their reality. Istria has the potential to achieve this goal, but it is important to first be ready for a cultural and perspective name, and then come to the definition of the Istrian *cru*, which will be a consequence of that.

"Mature" regions, such as Burgundy and Champagne, have the possession of special characteristics of high social and economic value in common – the distribution of wealth through a supply chain consisting of the grape suppliers, who are the real gardeners of the territory, especially in hilly areas, without whom it would be unthinkable to preserve the integrity of the landscape which has become not only a cultural heritage, but also a communication and tourist attraction.

If they were to be thrown out of the system, as happens in industrial viticulture, who would we trust to take care of the grapes? So, the message that needs to be conveyed is that, in order to stand out as much as possible, it is necessary to devote more



attention to the vineyard than to oenology, because the world of global wine is moving towards homologation, which could be very dangerous for Istria.

We must not forget that *terroir*, as Attilio Scienza confirms, “is an irreplaceable and excellent source for creating communication that is not homologated, but, on the contrary, strongly personalised.”

In the term *terroir*, we can distinguish several aspects. The material aspect that refers to the agronomic characteristics of the territory that expresses the biological potential of the environment, the territorial aspect of the geographical place, the expression of the past built by the community of winemakers and which is often found in the sign of originality, protection and growth of value.

The aspect of identity with its ethnological, social and cultural meanings that are manifested in wine, which is perceived as a collective consciousness and a presentation of the winemaker's qualitative ideal.

The advertising aspect that must connect the term *terroir* with short formulas using communication vectors of strong symbolic value with rural, ecological and social values. *Terroir* must be able to convince the consumer of the originality of wines produced in limited areas, while on the practical side it has the operational purpose of favouring a better qualitative expression of the variety in certain pedo-climatic conditions.

It is appropriate to define new strategies for expanding the boundaries of its identity to cultural domains, where landscape, along with history, is an integral part of the emotional content of wine. In particular, it is necessary to convey the timeless character of wine, the expression of an inimitable, limited and recognisable *terroir* in which wines are born and live for centuries, through local and constant practices, with a soothing effect on consumers.



# Ivica Matošević “I am convinced that today's Malvazija must be special”



The path taken by Ivica Matošević, born in 1964 in Pula, to get closer to wine, stems from a kind of pride of belonging that manifested itself during the years he spent at the University of Udine from 1993 to 1996.

At the Institute for Vegetable Growing, Agriculture and Tree Breeding, where he received his doctorate with a work on the application of mycorrhizae in a Mediterranean environment such as the Brijuni National Park.

“So”, says Matošević, “when we organised dinners or gatherings with friends from the University, everyone brought something to eat or drink. I would come with the Istrian wines of the time and they welcomed me with respect, in order to avoid a negative assessment. On the other hand, I already understood that the region that hosted me, Friuli-Venezia-Giulia, was the most advanced in Italy in terms of oenological innovations aimed at creating a new style of Italian white wine. Italy opened my eyes. I realised how provincial our wines were. This led me to visit wine shops, restaurants and cellars at weekends. In fact, all the wines were better than ours. Therefore, it was natural that, after my PhD, I wanted to produce wine in Istria. I launched my first bottle in 1996. It was a wine that was the result of new production techniques that I had learned in the Friuli-Venezia-Giulia region, which were already well established there at the time. I started buying grapes from reliable farmers, and it wasn't until 2003 that I managed to plant my first “Grimalda” vineyards in the area of Pazin. At that time, I already understood how important it was to establish a good relationship with grape suppliers, who should be considered important partners for achieving the desired results. This is why I was happy to pay the most expensive grapes, just to get the quality I was looking for. At that time, our wish was to place ourselves among the world's high-quality wines, but also for Malvazija to become synonymous with Istria. It is no coincidence that Franko Kozlović, Nino Jakovčić and I were the first three sommeliers in Istria to complete the course in Udine and Trieste in 1994 and 1995. This meeting with the sommeliers

of the Friuli-Venezia-Giulia region, and thus with the Italians, was one of the important steps that helped us understand the mechanisms that drive the world of wine. From that moment, we involved a large number of enthusiasts, restaurateurs, wine-makers and professionals, until in 1996 we founded the *Kalavojna* association, which helped raise the image and consensus around Istrian wine. In 2002, I accepted the title of president of Vinistra, a position I welcomed with great enthusiasm and held for twelve years. It was that enthusiasm with which great discoveries are made, which however lacked the very important innovations and ideas that often arise under the pressure of searching for new ways. First of all, introducing the world to new wines produced in Istria and their promotion. Emphasising the priority of building a clear and strong identity around the leading wine, Malvazija. So, once you have established the “Malvazija Istarska” brand in the region of origin, making it recognisable in the rest of Croatia, and then beyond the national borders. We had strong support from the institutions. At that time, Malvazija Istarska began to win important awards at the annual Zagreb fair, which reflected the constant growth of quality. We realised that we were starting from an advantage - our history, although sometimes even stingy, has led us to the fact that there were no cultural barriers, because we already knew how to live together in different political situations. If I just think about my own family, my grandfather was born Austrian, my father Italian, I Yugoslav, and my daughter Croatian, but we never left Istria. We have accumulated a valuable cultural background and have turned necessity into virtue. Everything around us grew and developed, like tourism, which is a powerful driver of knowledge of our wines. In that period, marked by a remarkable fruitfulness of initiatives, a new style of wine was gradually imposed, and Vinistra was its incubator. The Association's obligation was to monitor the bureaucracy related to grants, as well as the structure itself with internal professionalism, such as organising fairs, planning marketing activities, helping our winemakers in all their technological, viticultural

and marketing needs. One of the turning points for the implementation of this project aimed at increasing quality and image was the creation of the “*IQ, Istrian Quality*” project in 2005 (on the page, under Vinistra, the reader will find the most important initiatives of the Association).

“I am convinced that Malvazija, which today represents 65% of the amount of wine produced in Istria, must be special in order to become, as it happens with a small number of producers, a long-lasting white wine, which, over time, is able to express all of its personality. With such thinking, it was decided to encourage the production of an aged Malvazija in 2009, by adopting *ad hoc* regulations that foresaw vineyard inspections. Now, thanks to *IQ* data based on tastings over the last 15 years, we are able to identify the best areas for growing Malvazija and thus advise our producers. Among all the activities we carried out with Vinistra, the one called “World of Malvazija” still stands out today - a competition of the OIV (International Organisation for Vine and Wine), which has been held in Poreč every year since 2009 and which brings together various Mediterranean Malvasias, promoting Poreč as the mecca of this variety. An event that offers a handful of technical content, which is a source of great satisfaction for all producers.

Then we organised an important event for Istrian winemakers that was launched in 2012, that we called *En Primeur delle Malvasie*, which takes place in Zagreb, where about sixty producers proudly present their young wines. All this contributes to strengthening the image of Istria, which extends over a small territory, but is capable of effectively refining its wines.

Let me get back to my own company - the vineyards are ecological because I am convinced that this path is now not only irreversible, but also necessary. Furthermore, we have invested a lot in the sales point in the cellar, which is really attractive, and which enables us to have a turnover that is currently around 25%

of our total sales. Identifying two strategic goals for us - the constant increase of foreign visitors, related to tourism and the success we have had with the young population, which is why we are adopting a digital model of engagement. If we want, but also must, prepare the future consumer, we must do it by speaking its language. Answer? Far above expectations.

## The sommelier and the function of the oenological education of consumers.

### AUTHOR'S NOTES

Several Istrian producers and people we met cite the sommelier courses they attended as the fundamental moment that led them to approach wine with exceptional interest.

Therefore, those courses that were the first in Istria, in 1994 and 1995, attended by Franko Kozlović, Ivica Matošević and Nino Jakovčič, were held in Trieste and were part of the program of the AIS (Italian Association of Sommeliers), section of the Friuli- Venezia-Giulia region.

At that time, the AIS was a real laboratory, even of visionary ideas that had a great impact on all the regions that approached its new learning and that encouraged the growth of a colourful world that was nourished by an unprecedented and fascinating wine culture thanks to the courses. To such an extent that, following this design, a transversal movement around wine was formed in Istria in the early nineties, which influenced restaurants and chefs, wine shops, producers, sales representatives,







— The courses were not only focused on winemaking, but offered an unprecedented reading of wine: from tasting to pairing with food; from serving on the table at the ideal temperature and in the ideal glass to discovering wines from other regions and countries, as well as discovering a new language.

journalists and simple enthusiasts and also contributed a great deal to the growth of a new perception of quality Istrian wine.

Reasons for success? The courses were not only focused on winemaking but offered an unprecedented reading of wine - from tastings to pairing with food; from serving at table at the ideal temperature and in the ideal glass to discovering wines from other regions and countries, as well as discovering a new language. All aspects that are taken for granted today, and which only became so thanks to those vanguards of wine culture who were then represented by sommeliers. Who, if not them, were the first to tell the story of the wines that were born and that had no connection with the previous ones in a new language? Who, if not them, became the precious link between producers and consumers? The sommeliers were the ones who determined the position where the table wine would stand, including serving it and choosing the glass.

The merit of AIS was to make that language more accessible and easier to understand and use. It did more - it made it universal because it managed to insert it into a communication system that included a huge audience, both professional and amateur. It is no coincidence that all other agricultural and food sectors such as coffee, oil, beer, chocolate, cheese, salami have adopted the same language, making full use of the lexicon coined by wine.

## A story about a glass.

Claus Josef Riedel, the father of Georg Riedel and the grandfather of Riedel's current president, Maximilian, was a genius: he was the first in the world to understand that the size and shape of the glass had a decisive influence on the perception of aromas and flavours. At that moment, his story, as well as the story of the world's first glasses designed for drinking wine, overlapped with the story of a young Italian association of sommeliers, with whom he wanted to cooperate in order to check whether his intuition was correct. The year was 1973. In the same year, the 7th AIS National Congress took place in Orvieto and on that occasion, Riedel presented his theory about a glass created for drinking wine in a crowded city theatre. The line of glasses he produced, which included as many as thirteen glasses of different shapes, in the creation of which the sommeliers of the national management actively participated, was called the "Sommelier series".

An era had ended, the time of the chalice separated from its contents. The second began, where the glass became an indispensable tool to improve the winemaker's work in the vineyard and in the cellar. All the way to the glasses for Malvazija and Teran, which Georg Riedel himself presented in Poreč, during the twentieth edition of Vinistra in the spring of 2013. The idea was initiated in 2012 by Moreno Coronica, who was immediately supported by Franko Kozlović and Ivica Matošević. The latter said: "For a small region like ours, going on the world stage with Riedel was a challenge. Since then, it has become the official glass of Vinistra", and has thus become part of the catalogue.



# Nikola Benvenuti

“It is necessary to invest in marketing and communication”



Brothers Albert and Nikola Benvenuti graduated in economics. Their first bottle of Malvazija in a modern interpretation dates back to 2003 (Albert was 24 and Nikola 20 years old), at the instigation of their father Livio, who passed away in 2020.

We talk about it with Nikola: “We started with one and a half hectares that our grandfather planted in 1946 and left to us, and today we take care of it with special love. Now, our vineyards cover 22 hectares of the property. At one point, our father decided that it was necessary to turn wine into a business. His idea arose at the end of the Croatian War of Independence, in 1995. He said he saw how orchards are now being planted where historic vineyards once stood. This was in the area of Motovun, which has always been considered one of the most prestigious in Istria. We must not make this mistake, he asserted. We must restore those vineyards and plant indigenous varieties that represent us - Malvazija, Teran and Muškat. Precisely because of this choice, which we accepted with great pleasure, today we grow 95% autochthonous grape varieties: 65% Malvazija, 30% Teran, 5% Muškat and some Nebbiola, Tempranilla and Merlot, where these last three are used for the production of a special red wine.”

Nikola recalls the enthusiasm with which he started the first course for sommeliers, which was held at Sonja Perić’s Valsabbion restaurant. An experience that helped him to develop the spirit of comparison and accept the challenges imposed by the market. The way was paved for us towards professional tastings, knowledge of wines from other countries and other producers outside of Istria and Croatia.

“Our Malvazija was declared the best in Istria in 2007. Stimulus for growth, in the belief that it was the starting, and not the final point. Then in 2014 I accepted the title of president of Vinistra, after Matošević led it and achieved important results. It was not an easy task, but I continued on its path, especially looking at marketing, advocating that even small producers had a chance to



stay on the market. That is our ambition. Today, the Association has 125 producers (including those who only grow grapes). We are lucky to be located near large markets, and Istria, thanks to its climate and the beauty of the landscape that stretches between the hills and the sea, is a green, unpolluted area with a high quality of life. For this reason, many foreigners have decided to buy houses here. The strength of our economic and productive tissue are the “boutique winemakers” and we must persist on that. Therefore, it is necessary to invest in order to implement the value of our work through appropriate marketing and communication choices. There is a huge market space ahead of us. We need to get closer to new generations, future customers, and we have to communicate with them in their own digital language, offering them experiences, places, a historical touch, but also to explain our identity and uniqueness to them.”

“Since the end of 2020, and this is news of strategic importance for the life of Vinistra and our Istrian wines, the collaborators, for the first time since the establishment of the Association in 1994, have agreed that a portion of the sales of each bottle will be set aside for marketing costs. This means that we are all mentally prepared to accept the need to invest in the market as a necessary element of success that must translate into an increase in the value of our wines. The task we have is to take care of the small grape producers who represent the basic tissue of the economy. We must guarantee them an income in accordance with their obligations. They are sacred.”

We asked Nikola to tell us about Teran, a variety they pay a lot of attention to. “It’s true, because it occupies 30% of our vineyards. Our father’s intuition turned out to be good, and we never doubted it. We work simultaneously on two sides - on communication, and then on quality improvement. The first is the most difficult and somewhat more complex, because Teran is associated with sour, unpleasant and short-lived wine, from a time that favoured quantity, and which is miles away from the quality we

are looking for in wine today. In fact, Teran is fighting to impose itself outside the production area. Wine lists in restaurants are being researched - it can be found in Istria, but it is very rarely present in restaurants outside our region.

So, its repositioning takes time, and given the area it is focused on, raising the quality helps us do that. Apart from having the same name, the red wine we produce today has nothing to do with the one from the past. We started from the vineyard, where we drastically reduced yields in order to fulfil the high-quality oenological goals we set for ourselves. We produce a kilo per vine, and the wine is aged for two years in large barrels with a further year in the bottle. Consequently, after three years, it comes on the market with a natural alcohol content that is always above 13 percent, while the “Single Vineyard” of large harvests can reach 15 percent alcohol. Today we are proud of our Teran and can say that it gives us great pleasure. So, together with Malvazija, the flagship of Istrian wine, if we can increase the quality and maintain the continuity and image of this autochthonous red wine, we will do an excellent job, both economically and with regard to the marketing.”

## Malvazija and... Teran’s *cru*.

### AUTHOR’S NOTES

Nikola Benvenuti brings us two pieces of very good news. The first is that “since the end of 2020, the collaborators, for the first time since the foundation of the Association in 1994, have agreed that a part of the sale of each bottle will be set aside for marketing costs.” The second: that “The strength of our economic and productive tissue are *boutique winemakers* and it has to stay that way.”



Two affirmations that represent a great omen for the future of Istrian wine, but which require a lot of effort. So, from our side, we are trying to deepen some topics that could be useful for the project.

At the same time, the other interviews with the pioneers lead to the same conclusion that the need to continue working in order to, on the one hand, raise the value of the producers' work, and on the other, stabilise the prestige of Malvazija Istarska and other wines. If we want to act concretely with the goal of building an Istrian *terroir* and *cru*, not only financial investments are needed, but also investments in culture. (see the author's notes on *terroir* in the interview with Coronica).

In order to keep that label, *boutique winemakers* need promotional support from the Association. However, promotion alone is not enough if we are working on creating models that strengthen the uniqueness of various wines in relation to their origin. The creation of the *cru* should be based on the fact that the Association has been overseeing tastings that have taken place as part of the annual competition of the best Malvasias and Terans for 15 years.

Therefore, the Association has all the necessary tools to compile a map of *crus* following, for example, the model of Burgundy or Barolo. A common and indisputable heritage of general knowledge, which could encourage Vinistra to publish the first map of the best locations for the production of Malvazija Istarska and Teran.

This is how the great *crus* of Bordeaux were created, which were defined as early as April 18, 1855, when the Gironde Chamber of Commerce made an official classification based on the experience of negotiators who analysed the qualitative stability of different parcels of land (*crus*) over a certain period of time. Good ideas have no expiry date.

— In addition to all that mentioned above, viticulture 4.0 is another topic, which also includes zoning that can be a very useful tool to solve, for example, the worrying situation related to climate change.

The fact that there is a united Association, would allow it to take on a consortium responsibility that it will then give to its collaborators, in order to better manage vineyards and grape processing in a scientific way, thanks to zoning, and taking advantage of the possibility of collecting data provided via the European Sentinel satellite.

Water. A key item for the survival of viticulture: “Equally important is the improvement of drought conditions in many areas of the world, including the Mediterranean basin, with potentially devastating consequences for the availability of water resources of a sufficient quality and quantity as well as for agricultural production. But also, on possible water wars. In short, too much water or lack of water. It is a difficult issue involving climate change, land use, social, economic, and political aspects, legal issues and infrastructure planning. A difficult but important question for our future that must remain at the centre of our attention (from *Cocodrilli al Polo Nord e ghiacci all'Equatore* da Antonello Provenzale, Climate Scientist).” Nothing needs to be added, except that it is necessary to plan our defence in time, such as building rainwater collection tanks. And only an association like Vinistra can take responsibility for promoting such a task in all locations.

On July 18, Luka Rossi from the winegrowing family of Vižinada was elected president of Vinistra instead of Nikola Benvenuti, whose mandate has expired. The news reached us just in time to mention it in the book. Along with Marco and Filippo, Luka, born in 1992, is the youngest brother of the fifth generation. Namely, the company dates back to 1885, although the current variant dates back to 1998. They own 18 ha of vineyards, while 4 are leased, and they produce 80,000 bottles per year, mostly Malvazija Istarska. In addition, they also produce typical distillates and olive oil. Tastings and sales take place in the wine shop and garden, opposite the winery. The new president, Luka Rossi, intends to continue with the Benvenuti program. A strategy that by 2030 envisages Istria being firmly included among the most prestigious wine regions in the world through the growth of wine tourism, which, with appropriate activities and investments, still has enough room for growth. Rossi states that he “received a precious inheritance from Nikola Benvenuti: those 3/100 euros per bottle that each member obliged to pay for the development of marketing and communication. My commitment, he emphasizes, is to follow that path, to include all members of the Association in this project.” In addition, he plans to work on increasing, not the quantity, but the brand of Istria, from which all associated wineries will profit. Finally, after achieving these goals, “I would like to devote myself to zoning and the problem of droughts, which has become more than alarming.”



# Giorgio Clai

“It is difficult to make  
a wrong step in Istria.  
It is a land that was  
born to produce not  
only top-quality wine,  
but also top-quality oil”



“I thank God that I was born in Istria” (1957 in Buje) is the phrase that Giorgio Clai wore printed on his shirt while working as a restaurateur in Trieste, where he stayed for twenty years working in the Da Franco buffet and the La Pergola restaurant. “Tolerating all the jokes about Istrians that amuse the people of Trieste,” he says, smiling.

Giorgio is an eclectic, likeable, unconventional character who goes his own way. His mother was born in the small village of Brajki, where he has a house and a winery, and his father is from Buje: he left Istria and headed to Trieste in 1963, only to return in 2000 as a wine producer. “In the past, winemaking was a hobby for me, but when I returned, I got down to business seriously. My first vintage was in 2002. Yes, I had that wine production in me. I set out to get to 10,000 bottles. Now I’m at 40,000, and it could have been more if I hadn’t been hit by three strong hailstorms in the last five years.”

His house and the nearby cellar are in a dream position, with a view that, before you are dazzled by the sea cutting the horizon, is lost among the dark green tones of the forests, the more pastel tones of the vineyards and the silvery green tones of the olive trees.

“While I was building the new cellar in 2014, I had serious health problems, which fortunately I got rid of, but which led me to the decision to insure everything, that is, to open a company with two private investors from America who had just bought the property, the house and the olive grove right on the border with my own property. It is an interesting fact how we met. They already knew me because they had drunk my wines in New York. When they came to see the property they bought, they asked where my cellar was: “It’s the land that borders your property,” my fellow villagers told them. That’s how we first became friends, and then partners.”

Let’s get back to wine, Giorgio tells us that “in a place like Istria, it’s hard to make a wrong step.” It is a land born to produce



excellent products, and not just wine, but also premium oil. In Trieste, the price of oil was determined based on the Istrian price. We have always been a country of oil: just think that, in order not to upset the ancient Romans, we had three million olive trees planted in 1700, and today we have one and a half million. Currently, 200,000 people live in Istria, while eighty years ago there were 500,000.

Istria is not only wine and oil, but also truffles and prosciutto (which, properly prepared, could surpass the famous Pata Negra and San Daniele, but production is declining). There are also cheeses. We could equally be a country of delicious vegetables and fruits. Istria is a God-given country; we just don't appreciate it the way it deserves. There is still no widespread entrepreneurial fabric that knows how to take business risks. This means that the example of wine and oil has not achieved the expected success to date. The impact has not yet spread to other agricultural sectors. So, there are many, many uncultivated areas. My soul sobs when it sees so many abandoned hills in magical positions, while areas of vines grow in humid lowland areas, where vegetables, fruits, cattle and many other things useful for the domestic market could be grown.

Essentially: "When we talk about wine, my choice was radical. I have an organic certificate and, unfortunately, there are no grape producers around me with the same selection. A few years ago, I was looking for farmers who would produce in the field for me, under my conditions, with a very high amount that I would pay them. It ended up that, as soon as we signed the contract, the owner stopped taking care of the vines, so the boars destroyed the crop, and I had to pay him anyway. So, I can say with some bitterness that Istria is not quite ready for cooperation in some respects. It is also necessary to mention that we are lucky to have had charismatic people who encouraged entrepreneurship, and first of all I will mention the President of the Region of Istria, Nino Jakovčić, a great admirer of wine who gave a strong impetus to the promotion itself. The new

generations rely on technology, but they are more sensitive to the environment and that gives me hope, so we have to follow them very carefully. Personally, this is confirmed by the average age of 40-year-old customers who come to my cellar. They are attracted by the latest innovations and really appreciate the effort we put into respecting the environment. The second limit that we have to overcome is that we must not only be satisfied with sales in our region or winning a gold medal with Vinistra. In order to become recognised, it is important to impose ourselves on foreign markets. I made that clear choice, so now 50% of my wine goes abroad; from the United States to Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Australia and all European countries. I preferred to reduce the amount of production, but increase the value and invest in communication, but also in the cellar." Giorgio Clai is an advocate of macerated white wine that is produced with wisdom and elegance, a non-invasive technique that retains the fruits and flavours of the territory, which is why his Malvazija is of high quality.

Our conversation ended with these words:

— "Wines are divided into good and bad wines. On white and red. Conventional and natural wines, and mine are natural."

However, his story does not end there. When we went down to the cellar, there was a surprise (actually it should have been expected from a visionary producer like Giorgio Clai). In fact, it could not have been any other way, but to devote all his attention, above all, to the vineyard. Namely, apart from choosing three Malvazija clones from plants that were over 100 years old, he also restored





life and dignity to the autochthonous white vine Plavina, which he mixed with red wines to make it more drinkable. Thus, using the classic method, a sparkling wine with a small addition of Malvazija was created. The bottles are there, in the cellar, aging, where they will sit on the lees for 30 months with the aim of reaching 36. We will return for the tasting.

## Uncultivated land in Istria.

### AUTHOR'S NOTES

Giorgio Clai touches on a topic of great importance when he complains about too many uncultivated areas in Istria, both in the hills and in the plains, and says that the region is extremely deficient in agricultural and food production. He also notes that with the land and climate that Istria fortunately has, it could strive for the production of the highest quality, following the example of oil and wine, with an available local market.

# Miroslav Plišo - Meneghetti

“Wine is a project  
and as such must  
be permanent”



Miroslav Plišo, a well-known lawyer from Zagreb (born in BiH, Travnik in 1957), entered the world of wine (and oil) after buying the Meneghetti family estate in the municipality of Bale, where he planted his first vines in 2000.

Later, he expanded his Istrian business with a visionary tourism project, through the *Relais Chateaux Meneghetti Wine Hotel & Winery* association. While the winery produces around 100,000 bottles of premium wines, the hotel currently has a hundred beds located in villas, some of which have a private pool. The restaurant can host up to one hundred people. The final project envisages the construction of another 5+12 villas, which will make the complex have about a hundred rooms with 200 beds.

*Wine project: “my wine must speak to the world, without forgetting that it comes from Istria.”*

“At the beginning, I decided that the focus would be on the classic international varieties: Chardonnay and Pinot Blanc; Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and a little bit of Cabernet Franc. My idea from the very beginning was to produce important and aged wines because only in this way could I emphasise the personality of my *terroirs*. Meneghetti wines “*feel a touch of the sea*”. Namely, we are located a kilometre and a half from the Adriatic Sea and are exposed to the *bura* wind that guarantees air flow and daily variation in air temperature during the harvest, while a wooded hill protects us from the south.

From the very beginning, the central theme of this wine project, apart from the vineyards, was the production of *wines that must speak to the world, without forgetting that they come from Istria*.

With this goal in mind, great attention is paid to the vineyards, under the guidance of Damir Bosek, the director of my estate, who treats them like his own garden. Very low yields per plant. Craft oenology. Aging in wood. That is, at least two years in the bottle before going on the market.”

What do Meneghetti wines have that clearly differentiate them from the others?





“The imprint of our Meneghetti *cru*, whose most recognisable wine is the Meneghetti Red due to the fact that it is predicted to be a wine that will last for years. *Climat*, as it is defined in Burgundy, has allowed us to combine two characteristics that are often at odds with each other: elegance and balance in accordance with strength, durability, and lasting aromatic persistence in the mouth. It has a vibrant, brilliant colour with no signs of sedimentation even after seven or ten years. This means producing a complex wine with a rich personality. A combination that is quite rare. A wine that has managed to build a style for itself: the Meneghetti style. In fact, we have all the vintages of Meneghetti Red on our list starting from 2009 that are kept in what we call our “Reserva Meneghetti”. With each harvest, we put a certain number of bottles in stock, which, after 4 or 5 years, we re-incorporate in the price list. At the end of 2021, for example, we started selling Meneghetti Red Val Gambalera 2015, which is an exciting reserve. Meneghetti Red has given us great satisfaction, starting with the fact that it was declared one of the best red wines in Istria. I will also mention the oil that brought me happiness. Namely, with my first harvest in 2006, I won the title of world champion at the international competition organised by Flos Olei from Rome in competition within 6,000 producers from over 50 countries. It was a surprising start. So, with very clear agreements with our winemakers, we started designing Malvazija. For the young one, grapes from red soil were used, while for the two older Malvasias with different names, Black Label and Moni Emvasis, grapes from old vines growing on white soil were used. In third place are the sparkling wines. A great challenge. Obtained using the classic method from Chardonnay, Pinot Blanc and Pinot Noir in various combinations. These are sparkling wines that sit on the lees for 36 to 60 months (such as reserva rosé in magnum). The customer rewards us very well. Prices: it is normal that top quality wines that are aged for a long time have a high price. This is because they require large





investments, but they also encourage the growth of the brand, laying the foundations for a stable image and value over time.” Taking wine as a starting point, as stated earlier, the lawyer has developed a demanding project, from both a visionary and a financial point of view. This is the basis of his philosophy: it is no longer “think global, act local”, but “think local and act global” instead. In other words: think about trying to fit into the local area as best as possible because the place itself cannot be exported, and start by observing the world and talking to it.

*Relais Chateaux Meneghetti Wine Hotel & Winery.*

“The idea is”, Miroslav Plišo says, “under the same Meneghetti brand, and starting with wine, to connect the most important sectors that make up the tourist offer of Istria: wine + oil + the art of cooking - restaurant + catering - hotel + the beauty of the place + the high level of professionalism.” Today, all this is united under the *Relais Chateaux Meneghetti Wine Hotel & Winery*.

A concept that, thanks to the authenticity of the architecture, design, local ingredients used in the restaurant with different production approaches, proves that this is the road Istria should take in the future.

Why all this? Istria is a new force in the world of tourism, wine, and agricultural products, and all of this must be explained and presented with great professionalism. We still have to win the right to join the elite of the world's leading regions. Of course, we are on the right track, but we still have a long way to go, so there is no room for error.

There is a future, and the best way to predict it is to invent it. Let's get back to the wine; at Meneghetti, we launched the “Meneghetti Wines 2030” project. Some of the ideas have already been implemented, while others are still in the making. This has helped us to raise the bar of quality higher in all sectors, in such a way that it is implemented in each of our activities. Because the competition does not stand still, and instead



— There is also a future,  
and the best way to predict  
it is to invent it.





— In this design of the future, Malvazija Istarska plays a leading role.

of chasing after it, we prefer to overtake it. One of the projects that has just been completed is the construction of a new cellar designed by architect Željko Burić. A cellar that fits perfectly into the Mediterranean scrubland, and which is located in front of the entrance to the *Relais Chateaux*. Built to support the philosophy of our business, which includes a space dedicated to a wine shop with an exhibition on the history of Malvazija, or a cellar for aging wines in *barrique* barrels and bottles, the scenery of which is designed to welcome the customer indoors.”

“*Mare Nostrum*” vineyard

“Wine is a 'project',” Miroslav Plišo emphasises, and as such it must be long-lasting. In 2017, the Meneghetti Winery decided, as you can see, to imagine its company in the year 2030.

In this design of the future, Malvazija Istarska would take a leading role. We realised that there was only one way to make the most of the wine that is the symbol of this peninsula: to raise the bar of quality high and, in order to take advantage of its ductility, we had to finalise it with different and also new interpretations. Starting, first of all, from the vineyards that are located on both red and white soils, taking into account their age. In order, from one production to the next, to adopt appropriate oenological techniques. Initially, the company produced two Malvasias: the classic Istrian one and the Dubrovnik one (thanks to the fact that the company's partner had vineyards in the area). Malvasias from the vintage, designed to be consumed young: a selection that greatly limited the potential of this grape. Putting ourselves at risk of committing the worst sin that quality producers can commit: to make homologated wines, which is the exact opposite of what unique means.

Instead, we had to think of Malvasias that were created thanks to the choice of vineyards. We told ourselves that we had to move away from the model of young wine regions in order to reach the characteristics of mature ones, that is, the ones we learn from - Burgundy, Barolo, Brunello and



Bordeaux! We needed to do this to strengthen our Istrian and Meneghetti identity, which had to be concrete and long-lasting, combining the concepts of aesthetics and exclusivity for a better presentation of the terroir, which is a true treasure, capable of making a difference thanks to its identity and as such, its climatic conditions, which are one of a kind.

We have already adopted this model with our excellent red wines, starting with the 2009 harvest. Today we can say that we have reached our goal with our Reserva Val Gambalera 2015, which entered the market at the end of 2021. A goal where the application of oenological techniques had to be at the service of creation of an ideal product, not a means of communication. If we get back to the Meneghetti 2030 project, we can say that in 2017 we released the Malvazija Black Label, which was placed on the market 12-14 months after the harvest (it is a wine that is pleasant on the palate, with an enchantingly ripe and “sweet” aroma), as well as the Malvazija Moni Emvasis – vertical tasting, which we can describe as rigorous and direct in its taste, and which comes to the market after about 30 months. In an internal company document dated March 6, 2018, we developed the last part of the project, which we called “Malvazija Simfonija” (Malvazija Symphony) with a cheerful assonance.

A symphony like a harmoniously organised complex of homogeneous elements, but also in the compositional sense of a “sonata for orchestra”. In fact, if we want to speak in musical language, we imagined a wine “structured” like an orchestra, where the sounds of different instruments merge into one message. However, we had to write a “score” by designing a vineyard that would be able to unify the centuries-old history of Malvazija, a brand created by the Republic of Venice, which came to us after an almost eight century-long history. We therefore collected all the Malvasias that Venice created on the shores of the Mediterranean, as well as eight clones of Istarska Malvazija from various European collections, in order







to form a unique vineyard called Mare Nostrum, the most important collection in the world composed of 47 genetic variants (of vines and clones).

In the following way there are:

- 4,057 cuttings in the vineyard at the entrance to our property (7,760 square metres and a sixth of the territory of 2.30 x 0.80).
- Next to the wine shop at the winery, 15 rows of cuttings of 15 plants each have been planted, representing in small scale the mare nostrum vineyard. Cuttings grown as saplings, as was done in ancient times. A garden of vines, a living museum of Malvasija.

Carrying out vinification of all the varieties together, we produce a wine that is both unique and one of a kind, strong enough to be able to celebrate this centuries-old oenological story.”

— We collected all the Malvasias that Venice grew on the shores of the Mediterranean to shape our “Mare Nostrum”.

“The wine is good,  
but there is too  
much water”.

The genius  
Leonardo and  
his love for the  
vineyard.

Within Meneghetti's Malvazija collection, one of the 48 genetic variants is linked to a vineyard owned by the man considered the greatest genius of all time - Leonardo da Vinci. Leonardo came to Milan in 1482 at the court of Ludovico il Moro, who commissioned him to paint the Last Supper in the church of Santa Maria delle Grazie. He finished it in 1498. In front of the church is the house of the Atellani family, where Leonardo stayed and where the vineyard is located. In 1499, Ludovico il Moro gave Leonardo a house and a vineyard to guarantee his citizenship. The vineyard grew so close to the artist's heart that he listed it as the only true estate in his will, describing it in the sheets of the Atlantic Codex (sheet 426r) by showing it in detail. In this way, we became familiar with its expansion to 8,320 m<sup>2</sup>. A vineyard that has survived for centuries thanks to vegetative propagation (shoots) that have kept its genotype unchanged. That was until August 1943, when, during a bombing of the allied forces, a fire broke out and completely destroyed it. Was everything lost?

We will leave the narration to Professor Attilio Scienza, from the Department of Viticulture at the State University of Milan, who with his team (geologist, soil structure expert, Rodolfo Minelli and researcher Serena Imazio) accomplished a miracle and gave Leonardo da Vinci's vineyard a new life.

#### SCIENZA

“Being able to determine the grape variety that Leonardo da Vinci grew in his vineyard as accurately as possible was an almost impossible mission for the project that began in January 2004.

We were lucky that, although the above-ground part of the vineyard (stalks and leaves) was completely destroyed by the fire, the underground part, its roots, remained protected by the earth, thanks to an appropriate layer of debris of about one metre that was created by the bombing of the houses, which additionally isolated and protected the underground part.



We were very sceptical about whether we would be able to hold at least a piece of the roots of that vineyard in our hands. Fortunately, that happened.

The approach was multidisciplinary, including different and complementary cultural levels: genetic-molecular and historical. The diagnostic tools we decided to use were those used in studies of the identification and reconstruction of *Simple Sequence Repeat* microsatellite molecular markers.

By comparing it with the European database related to the molecular profiles of vines grown in Italy, we came to the realisation that Leonardo's grapes were very similar to Malvazija, the aromatic Candia, which is characteristic of the Piacentini hills. Indirect confirmation was found in a manuscript in which Leonardo mentions Muscat, Malvazija and Passerina varieties, and points out that Malvazija produced the best wine.”

#### AUTHOR

Did you reread the evolutionary history of varieties during your research?

#### SCIENZA

“The history of the evolution of the viticultural genetic platforms of Mediterranean and Caucasian countries (the centre of domestication of the species) is fascinating. Malvasias are a real example. The research of historical sources carried out for this work opened up new hypotheses. Candia, in fact, is not only the name of the island of Crete (which was the Venetian “vineyard” where Malvazija was produced; editor's note), but also the name of the town in Lomellina where Giacometto della Tela, or Atellani, was *podesta* (*mayor*). Once again, the tools of molecular biology came to our aid. The recent discovery of the genetic profile of the highly aromatic Malvazija from Parma allowed us to reconstruct the pedigree of Leonardo da Vinci's Malvazija and to include this grape variety among the varieties that emerged in the Po Valley through numerous spontaneous



crosses, as evidenced by the genetic proximity of this variety to Bonard and Ruchè.

The material for planting Leonardo's vineyard was prepared in March 2015.

In 2019, the first wine was produced after that of about 500 years ago. It was a nice result. Aromatic Candia Malvazija, a variety that is also now present in the Meneghetti Mare Nostrum collection.”

#### AUTHOR

But there is one more, final clue involving another great artist.

#### SCIENZA

“Exactly. In Leonardo's Last Supper, features of the basket of fruit can be seen in the arms of the Apostle Bartholomew, the last person on Jesus' right. Caravaggio saw The Last Supper about 100 years after its creation and was amazed by the beauty of the still life.

Caravaggio's “Basket of Fruit” was created between 1594 and 1598 in Rome, on the order of Cardinal Borromeo, and is kept in the historical Veneranda Biblioteca Ambrosiana library in Milan. Among the details, what catches the eye is the “faithfulness to the truth”, and especially the shape of the leaf, an ampelographic tool with which we can detect the variety of the vine. There is no doubt that the one shown on the right side of the painting belongs to the aromatic Candia Malvazija. Leonardo da Vinci and Caravaggio, his intermediary, wanted to give the most beloved grape variety of their vineyard a place of honour at the table of the Last Supper.”

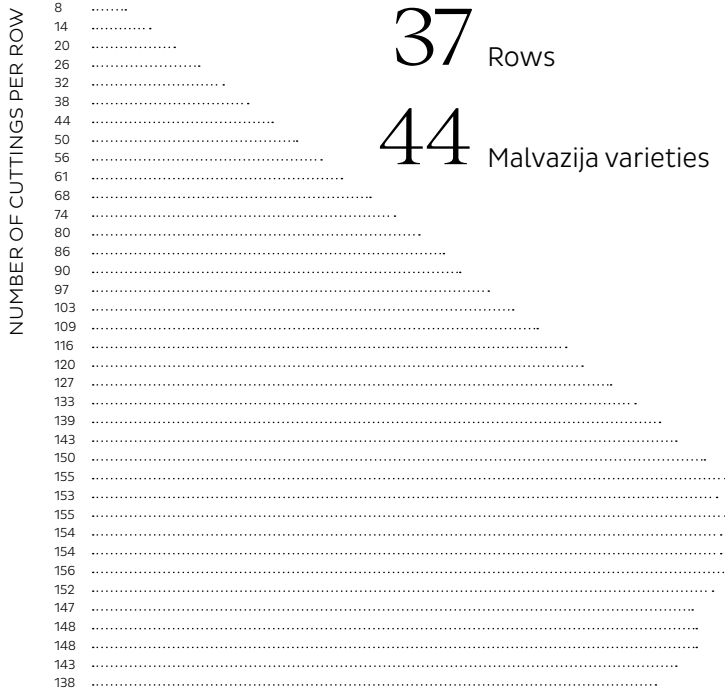
Professor Attilio Scienza collaborated on the Malvazija collection project of the Meneghetti property; and without his valuable studies the work we have done would have been impossible. We thank him from the bottom of our hearts.

# “Mare Nostrum” Vineyard of the world Malvasias

4826 Cuttings

37 Rows

44 Malvazija varieties



Malvazija Candia	Malvazija Nera Alto Adige
Malvazija Chianti	Malvazija Nera
Malvazija Lazio	Malvazija Sitges
Malvazija Aromatica	Malvazija Di Bianco Greco
Malvazija Casorzo	MI Di Candia Aromatica
Malvazija Di Sardegna	Leonardo Da Vinci
O Di Bosa	Malvazija Schierano
Malvazija Fina (Portugal)	Malvazija Lunga Del Chianti
Malvazija Nera	Malvazija Candia
Malvazija Rosa Vermentino	Malvazija Istarska
Malvazija Di Lecce	Malvazija Istarska
Malvazija del Lazio	Malvazija Nera
Malvazija Grigio Rosa	Malvazija
Malvazija Belaia	Malvazija Nera Brindisi
Malvazija Aromatica	Malvazija Scienza
Malvazija Di Asolo	Malvazija Scienza
Malvazija Moscatel	Malvazija Scienza
Fonte Grande	Malvazija
Malvazija Fina	Malvazija Odorosissima
Malvazija Lipari	Di Parma
Malvazija Rei (Portugal)	Dubrovačka malvazija
Malvazija Fruherot	Istarska malvazija
Malvazija Schierano	



# List of Malvazija producers

**Meneghetti vina**  
Bale  
meneghetti.hr

**Capo vina**  
Brtonigla  
capovina.hr

**Cattunar**  
Brtonigla  
cattunar.hr

**F&F Ravalico  
- Vinarstvo**  
Brtonigla  
f-f-ravalico.hr/

**Novacco vina**  
Brtonigla  
novacco.hr

**OMO**  
Brtonigla

**Veralda**  
Brtonigla  
veralda.hr/en/

**Bastian**  
Buje

**Celega vino**  
Buje  
celega.eu

**Clai Bijele zemlje**  
Buje  
clai.hr

**Kozlović vina**  
Buje  
kozlovic.hr

**Vina Franković**  
Buje  
frankovic.hr

**Vina Kabola**  
Buje  
kabola.hr

**Vina Prelac**  
Buje  
prelac.hr

**Vina Vorić**  
Buje

**Vino Veritas**  
Buje  
vinoveritas.hr

**Agapito vina**  
Buzet

**Dario Sirotić vina**  
Buzet

**Destilerija Aura**  
Buzet  
aura.hr

**OPG Jermaniš**  
Buzet

**Vina Černeka**  
Buzet

**Vina Grgor**  
Buzet

**Dvorac Belaj**  
Cerovlje  
castlebelaj.com

**Vina Marčeta**  
Fažana  
marceta.hr/

**Giacometti - Moscarda  
/ Wine B**  
Galižana  
vinababos.com

**Domaine Koquelicot**  
Gračišće  
domainekoquelicot.eu

**Vina Bažon**  
Gračišće  
vinabazon.com

**Vina Dešković**  
Grožnjan  
vina-deskovic.hr

**Vina Monticello**  
Grožnjan  
pincin-monticello.hr

**Vina Zigante**  
Grožnjan  
vina-zigante.hr

**Wine Monteistra**  
Grožnjan

**Zigante d.o.o.**  
Grožnjan  
zigantetartufi.com

**Brandystra**  
Kaštelir

**Cossetto vina**  
Kaštelir

**Legovina - obitelj  
Legović**  
Kaštelir  
legovina.com

**Vina Radoš**  
Kaštelir

**Vina Siljan**  
Krnica (Marčana)

**San Martino**  
Labin  
sanmartino.wine

**Vina Juričić**  
Labin  
vina-juricic.hr

**Živolić**  
Labin

**Benvenuti Vina**  
Motovun  
benvenutivina.com

**Bertoša wines**  
Motovun  
bertosawines.com

**Fakin**  
Motovun  
fakinwines.com

**Ipša**  
Motovun  
ipsa-maslinovaulja.com

**Valenta Family Wines**  
Motovun  
valentafamily.wine

**Vina Tomaz**  
Motovun  
vina-tomaz.hr

**Roxanich**  
Motovun  
roxanich.hr

**Vivoda Rakije**  
Motovun

**Srećko Kos**  
Nedešćina

**Vina Fuhtar**  
Nedešćina

**Vina Matiška**  
Nedešćina  
vino-matiska.com

**AB Vina - Anđelo Brčić**  
Nova Vas  
vina-brcic.com

**Rawino**  
Nova Vas

**Terzolo Wines**  
Nova Vas

**Vina DeValentinis**  
Nova Vas  
vina-devalentinis.hr

**Vinska kuća Pavlomir**  
Novi Vinodolski  
pavlomir.hr

**IBM Vina Ivančić**  
Novigrad  
ivancic-winery.com

**Palčić Leonardo**  
Novigrad

**Pervino**  
Novigrad  
pervino.eu

**Vina i ulje San Zvanini**  
Oprtalj

**Andelini vina**  
Pazin  
andjelini-vina.hr

**Vina Radanović**  
Pazin

**Baćac winery**  
Pićan  
vinabacac.hr

**Agrolaguna**  
Poreč  
agrolaguna.hr/

**Damjanić wines**  
Poreč  
damjanic.eu

**OPG Ivan Kadum**  
Poreč

**Sempervivum**  
Poreč  
sempervivum.hr

**Vina Mario Banko**  
Poreč  
vila-romana.info

**Vina Perun**  
Poreč

**Vina Benazić**  
Pula  
vinabenazic.com

**Vina Šegota**  
Rakalj

**Vina Pulin**  
Rijeka  
vinapulin.hr/#/

**Fameja Matošević**  
Rovinj

**San Tommaso**  
Rovinj  
santommaso.hr

**Stancija Collis**  
Rovinj  
stancija-collis.com

**Vina Dobravac**  
Rovinj  
villa-dobravac.com

**Vina Vivoda**  
Rovinj  
vina-vivoda.hr

**Degrassi Wines**  
Savudrija  
degrassi.hr

**Monte Rosso**  
Savudrija  
monterossoistra.com

**Vina Matošević /  
Matošević Win**  
Sv. Lovreč  
matosevic.com

**In Sylvis**  
Sv. Petar u Šumi  
insylvis.com

**Obrt Bibi**  
Svetvinčenat

**Cocolo vina**  
Tar

**Coronica**  
Umag  
coronica.eu

**Cuj**  
Umag  
cuj.hr

**Fiore vina**  
Umag  
fiore-vino.hr

**Vina Benčić**  
Umag

**Matić vina**  
Višnjan

**Misal**  
Višnjan  
misal.hr

**OPG Ivan Poleis**  
Višnjan

**OPG Peršurić Mario**  
Višnjan  
opg-persuric.hr/vina

**Radovan Vina**  
Višnjan  
vinaradovan.com

**Vina Bernobić**  
Višnjan  
vina-bernobic.hr

**Vina Cossetto Košeto**  
Višnjan

**Vina Dean**  
Višnjan  
vina-dean.hr

**Vina Denis Bernobić**  
Višnjan

**Vina Poletti**  
Višnjan  
vina-poletti.hr

**Vina Prodan**  
Višnjan  
vina-prodan.hr

**Vina Vicinim**  
Višnjan  
vina-vicinim.hr

**Arman Marijan Wines**  
Vižinada  
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**Franc Arman**  
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