

Josef

Refusing the idea of the single varietal wine

A new season is now on the way, the winter works of pruning and “adjusting” the vineyards have been completed: pulling wires, replacing some missing plants, consolidating banks, but to Josef, there are other “extinct” practices to be played. Cutting the trees in the rows, for example.

Just so, the vineyard should never be a specialized field, but a polyculture.

Those gorgeous rows that we know, which cover entirely some of the most famous modal wine regions: Valdobbiadone with Glera from Prosecco, Langhe with Nebbiolo, Champagne with Chardonnay and Pinot, etc... and soon, maybe, Lugana with the Turbiana, are actually huge monocultures that deceive the tradition and the history sedimented in hundreds of years of massal selections.

Once the nests were made “by hand”, or in the farmhouses, where was developed a true art to mount the vines on the ungrafted feet, and sometimes it was preferable not to graft, multiplying the plant by propagation, submerging a branch, this was a method locally called “Trattora”.

In other words, the vineyard was a living organism, a polyculture where fruit plants, often to support vineyards, “in marriage”, had arable crops useful to breeding, as well as to human food: wheat and vegetables.

The resulting crop competition is also beneficial for the grape quality, the plant will have to strive to find the nutrients needed in depth, without counting the

exchange of organic substances that, especially seasonal crops, bring to the ground.

Josef strives to keep this agricultural vision alive, beeches, almonds, peaches, willows and elms are essential along the rows, as the seasonality of the meadow is the cornerstone of the growing periods. Many dandelion blossoms, nettle, medical herb and malva are vital to attracting bees, which will also impregnate vines.

In Garda, the vineyards were never a mono vine, but sequences of four or five Rossanella plants alternated with Negrara, Schiava, Merlot (of various types), Rondinella, Rossetta di Montagna, Marzemino and Marzemino Padovano.

During the winemaking the various vines, having different characteristics and different harvesting periods, balancing each others, the elegant and tannic Negrara demanded the presence of the freshest and aromatic Schiava or Rossetta, which conferred the necessary malic acid. In other words, once together, many grapes that have been removed today, because are considered “weak”, transformed their individual limits into a powerful taste.

Today we have a higher oenological awareness, but we know that the great advantage of mixed vines is just that of the principle of “non-dominant varieties”, all in favor of the expression of the vintage.

With mixed grapes is the terroir that dominates into the wine.

All Josef’s wines are derived from mixed grapes, the result of separate vinification of the mono vine.

The cuvée, one time assembled takes place at the end of vinification.

From the vintage 2016 we created a second Rubino label: Isidro Agricola 2016, a true “creole” project,



Experimentation of Rossanella del Garda in mono-variety vintage 2015.

where no vines prevail over the others, we have put the morainic terroir at the center: we have re-given future to some vineyards with an average age of almost 80 years.

Rubino's reform, in 1991, marks an impoverishment of historical typologies, and especially a loss of local clones. Through the hills, and often the deep of the valley, they are filled with "better" varieties (so-called), because are more productive: Chardonnay, Cabernet, Merlot.

The producers of all Italian areas have increasingly opted for the mono variety, simple to realize and above all to communicate. Contrary to biodiversity, it is also a depauperating choice for the land: a centuries-old vineyard should not be removed, the resulting grape is far better, with more structured tannins and terpenes.

The mono-vines diffused throughout the area, whether it is a high-quality wine such as Brunello, Barbaresco, Barolo or Mosel, often also means monoclonal, exposing whole crops to phytopathogenic pandemics. Being the same plants, they are simultaneously exposed to the same problems and vegetable diseases.

It follows that Cru's logic is merely the result of the mono variety, depleting the wine variety of a region, is start a reflection on the role that individual fields, with suited sun exposition, could give to the wines.



Experimentation of Rossanella del Garda in mono-variety vintage 2016.

Much more logical and in line with history are the "appellation communal or village", which are the real genotypes of the barolo subzone (the only case in Italy). Mentioning the Barolo-Cannubi subdomain, does not mean identifying a wine in a field, but in an area of Barolo...

Just as in the most intense manner it was for Bardolino, Amarone, Chianti (in which is possible the use of white grapes), as well as all the great Northern Piedmont wines: Boca, Bramaterra, and many other areas, including the Rubino, son of ancient tradition of blending different grapes.

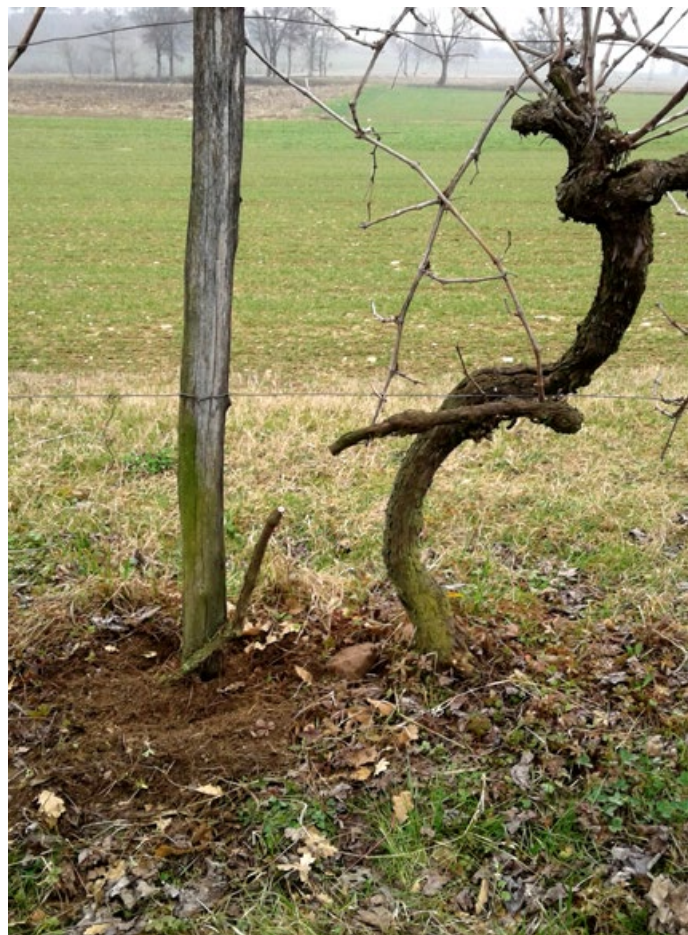
The DNA of the Gardesan varieties is certainly at risk, continually swinging to commercial siren calls. Josef has headed to play a modern wine, safeguarding ancient varieties.

Vines express the history of a vintage, unique and unrepeatable, once together save time and it talks about the land and its future.

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Beautiful bunches of Cabernet Sauvignon - on the branch a visitor of the vineyard. A single variety field inhibit the plurality of smaller living creatures, such as insects: at least, it is a monoculture. Josef manages only multi-variety fields, including the presence of many other types of trees beyond the vine.



One time the new grapes, or "young screws", are not grafted.

*The filoxera attack (*Daktulosphaira vitifoliae*) in Europe has been documented since 1856, but in Garda the first real damages are detected between 1900 and 1920.*

At that time it was a "zonal" problem, i.e. there were hit villages and untouched villages.

Until then, every vitis vinifera was not grafted, but on its own roots. Parts of plants were roasted in the water and then planted without rootstock. Josef manages some dozen of these, very rare examples of ungrafted lives.

In the photo we see, however, there is an example of "multiplication for propagation": by submerging a branch, rooting began.

After a few years, the burial branch was cut off, interrupting any communication with the mother-tree and giving rise to a new plant, genetically the same as the parent, but pure, on the free foot. In that time this way was called "Trattora".



Rondinella in drying on the tree - vintage 2015. The use of more vines allows multiple results, then them will join together in the bottle. The lymphatic streams of the Rondinella has been cut, allowing what, gergally - is called "drying on the plant". Josef however intends this technique to be a continuation of maturation, having a good part of his own lymph available in the branch to which the grape remains attached.

The ideal way to have the Botryte Noble: and in 2015, so it was!

Josef don't takes part in East Lombardy



Our activity on the social networks is known for to be as intense as possible. Those who do not realize their importance are out of date. The subject of this article has already been anticipated on our Facebook profiles.

Ecology and agriculture should be the main point of current affairs. Those who make agriculture make nutrition, and those who make nutrition play the highest role in all everything the human being has built over the millennia.

At Josef, we are aware of it, but at the same time we are rooted in the principle of non-contradiction. We can not "hold our foot in two shoes at the same time": "You can not serve God and Mammon"¹.

With a lot of simplicity, with no ambition, with the right reflection, we decided of not take part in any initiative linked to

"East Lombardy - European region of gastronomy" (site: www.eastlombardy.it).

We are perfectly aware about the value that the Bergamo, Brescia, Mantua and Cremona quadrants cover in the European agri-food culture, without mentioning the excellence that these ancient lands guard as a casket: however, we can not and do not want to be represented, coordinated or even just approached to the administrations of these provinces and cities.

Nothing staffing, there is no specific criticism for current administrators.

Our reasons are related to the level of pollution of this territory: it is too high, the administrations, as seems, don't want do nothing for solve this problem.

In the south of the province there are private incinerators, such as those of the Frati group in Romanore and Pomponesco, as well as those of the Saviola group in Viadana and Sustinente²

In the city of Mantova, just a few hundred meters from the Camera Picta del Mantegna and the Basilica of Leon Battista Alberti, a new incinerator, by Progest company³ is currently being planned.

In Brescia there is one very big, that alone produces the 10% of all the fine powders of the second Lombardy city⁴, which pollutes more than those of Milan and Bergamo⁵.

For what reason the Public Administrations could be able to represent and coordinate, good nutrition and environmental sustainability?

By browsing the wine list of a dear restaurant friend, with great pride, he grouped us inside all the wines from "east lombardy" territories, and we are proud of it. But our pride is above all his trust and support.



If we were to put all of this into the hands of operators, restaurant owners and agri-food producers then the thing - even in our small size - would have involved and interested us, but the political manage of the food and agriculture in this part of the Europe, is paying now for the mistakes of the past (and many politicians seem willing to repeat it), is likely to have no credibility. Of course it can not have our support.

How can we ensure greater protection of Creation in “east lombardy”?

1) End with livestock farming (especially pigs) exclusively in stall, or bred with flours: the pork in the wild would never eat grains. But it needs a varied, healthy and spontaneous feeding.

2) The total elimination of Glyphosate in agriculture. Complete ban of the herbicides.

3) Concrete reduction of micropollutants, gradually eliminating of any form of waste incineration. More modern recycle, for minimize the dumps, which need to be handled perfectly.

4) Stop with mono-grapes variety areas. It is difficult to protect biodiversity if we then overlook historic vineyards, replacing them with the usual three varieties (Chardonnay, Merlot and Cabernet), international and non-local, more versatile and productive. Also in Lombardy there are whole areas covered by a single variety. Is this innovation? Or do you have any traditions? Certainly not.

Few points, very concrete, would help to really improve the state of the Po Valley.

By browsing the site, we find among the goals: “Secondly, we want to stimulate greater sustainable integration of resources in the involved provinces through the implementation of information campaigns and awareness-raising towards conscious consumption and sustainable production of food, alongside which requires the activation of distribution and promotion systems that favor small producers so that they can be opened on the market while preserving their typical nature”⁶.

It is a shame, however, that among the ambassadors of the product, who should be people and companies perfectly in line with what has been stated above, we can find the president of a prominent conservation consortium of a cheese that - unlike Parmigiano Reggiano - is produced by feeding cows with corn or flour, always in the stall, without the freedom to walk freely in a field. Or a producer of pork salami, which his animals (tens of thousands), in the same way, have never been to pasture.

Concluding about a man, leader of a huge cellars group, strong in a territory such as Franciacorta, planted exclusively with three grape variety, all introduced, therefore allochthons (in fact almost all of the area is only chardonnay).

To avoid misunderstanding: these are great professionals, fine business men, but doing a completely different job from ours, so we do not pretend to be represented by them.

We are fortunate to operate on the Garda, a healthier area than the Po Valley (though fragile and to be protected), yet this does not mean closing our eyes on our region.

Daily work, respect for Nature, the preservation of old vineyards and ancient varieties is our constant and silent contribution to the improvement of our area.



Why we don't use herbicides? Maybe because we have few vineyards? Well, 3.5 hectares may seem like a few!

But when you have to cut the grass with the brush cutter out of 15-18,000 plants, here's everything gets a very different lap.

Today the mechanization allows also at the large companies to eliminate the use of herbicides and Glyphosate (this non-selective substance was an exclusive patent of Monsanto expired in 2001), hence the idea that herbicide is a necessity for solve the needs of a big cellar, or producer, is absolutely overcome.

New underframe mowers and other non-chemical methods allow the grass to be removed around the vine without adding phosphorus and other pollutants to the soil.

The health in the planet, is the health of the product: all this goes back to the consumer. East Lombardy, in our opinion should be an opportunity for a turning point in the health of local products and localities, obtaining lasting results for the consumers, restaurateurs and farms.

*Josef vineyard: no herbicide and no glyphosate, the grass is cut only manually.
Here is a concrete commitment that should be the goal of all farms in “East Lombardy”.*



Notes:

- (1) Jesus, in Mt 6,24 e nel Lc 16,13
- (2) <http://www.codiamsa.org/centrali.pdf>
- (3) <http://gazzettadimantova.gelocal.it/mantova/cronaca/2017/03/05/news/quattro-ricorsi-al-tar-1.14983131?ref=search>
- (4) http://brescia.corriere.it/notizie/cronaca/15_gennaio_15/polveri-nell-aria-10per cento-emesso-dall-inceneritore-fba64a2c-9ca0-11e4-8bf6-694fc7ea2d25.shtml
- (5) http://brescia.corriere.it/notizie/cronaca/15_gennaio_15/polveri-nell-aria-10per cento-emesso-dall-inceneritore-fba64a2c-9ca0-11e4-8bf6-694fc7ea2d25.shtml
- (6) <http://www.eastlombardy.it/it/18/>

Isidro Agricola 2016 is ready, the second Rubino of Josef

The “overturned perspective”, of which Pawel Florenskij told about Christianity, fits very well with wine. Particularly, it was this in the dichotomy between scenography and theater, between prospective, succulent, desperately descriptive of the Renaissance painting and oriental icons, two-dimensional and all focused on the eyes: on the eyes of the Saints.

Just so, wine is the result of the overturned prospect: the fruit of a tree with the branches projecting towards the sky, but at the same time visible part of a “double tree”, speculatively developed under the ground.

It would be better if that plant had the most lush part of herself under the soil, beneath our feet (in. the roots). According to Nicolas Joly, one of the salient points the of Biodynamics is precisely the division between the Dionysian and Apollinean sections, that is, between the roots of the tree, projecting to the depths of the ground, and its crown, tending to the sky.

These two points have drive me to create a “new” Rubino: tradition of the wine and the European Christian Culture, joined to the basical insights gained from Rudolf Steiner.

The importance of the roots system, and matericity in the glass, in short: a Rubino made by only old vines, even better, ancients.

Isidro Agricola is, as usually, a Rubino derivated by separated vinification of the grape variety and subsequent assembling of the cuvée, the vines have an average age of 77 years: 95 in Cavriana and more than sixty in Ponti sul Mincio.

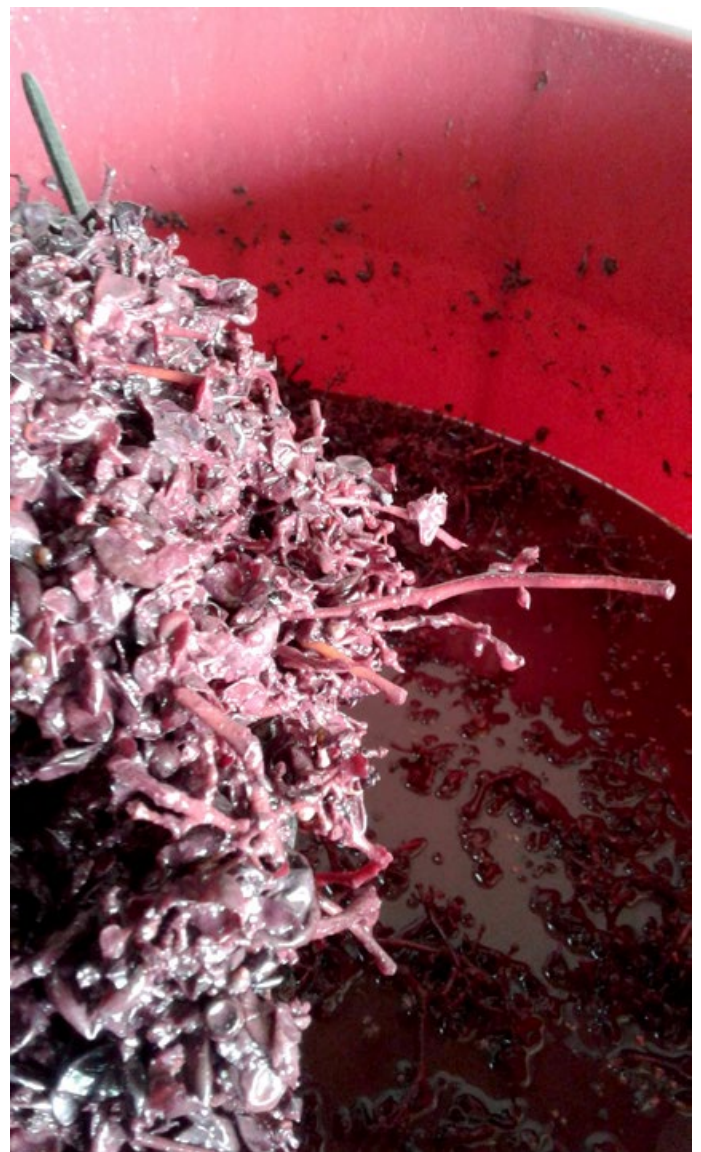
In addition to the necessary grapes indicated in the Garda Colli Mantovani Rubino, in the fields are present, although cataloged as Merlot (at the time they were planted it was just finished the First World War...) old clones also of Marzemino and Marzemino Padovano.

The blend was held however as impartial as possible, no grape varieties tends to be dominant, it is a real “Creole” wine without any axiom of varietal dominance.

The vintage 2016 has been hard , in addition to the usual green harvest, the reduction in yield per hectare, we had sacrifice a lot of other grapes, in cause of the downy mildew; the Merlot of Ponti sul Mincio, in particular, requested a “surgical” operations during

the harvest, obviously manual, the grape (botridized) was selected acin for acine, as well as it would been a German wine “trockenbeerenauslese”. The idea of giving up to the harvest was not even to thinkable, once this great effort has been accomplished, over maturation, covered with noble mold, selected almost each berry, the grapes come back of be a great product: from a difficult time is come out a material of great force and quality. We'll come back later on the concept of sacrifice in work...

The Ponti's Rondinella variety, was brought to harvest as late as possible, just before, until late October, the re-starting of the rains. Vinified in open wood tonneau. Three daily manual pressing on the skin grapes.



We chose not to remove the stalks of the Negrara for various reasons. The whole grape wine vinification gives to wine a great fineness, after a first moment when the rasp is felt in the drink its acids verticalize, making wine elegant.

Isidro Agricola is. at one time, therefore an archaic and modern Rubino.



Vineyard at Madonna della Selce in Cavriana from which comes the grapes for the Rubino Isidro Agricola. The plants are planted in 1922, many with their own foot.

The great “news” is a return to the past. With the insert of Negrara Trentina, we completed a first step that we had been pre-fessed at the beginning of our journey, when we decided to bet everything on the Rubino: to give birth to two red wines, the first to valorize the Rossanella del Garda (Josef Rosso) and the second one, the Negrara Trentina (Josef - Isidro Agricola). One time these were the two most varieties present in the area, now almost vanished: we started working again on them.

The grapes come from the vineyard planted in Cavriana in 1922; many plants are on their feet (franc de pied); Negrara Trentina, exposed to full south, height of 176 m/s, has been treated in integral: vinificated with with the stalks.

The characteristics of the hills in Cavallara road, like this field, are the salinity, and our product is no exception.

The Isidro Agricola 2016 required a complexity of non-indifferent passages, and 27 days of average contact with the skins. Non aged in wood, after some decant was bottled without filtration, like all Josef wines.

Now, I would not like to emphasize the exclusive use of indigenous yeasts and a very close to the declaration “without sulphites added”, i.e. 21 mg total.

I wanted a “wine-wine”, a wine that was Rubino’s expression, as it was conceived at the time of the 1976 production discipline, when it was thought to structure a “simple and important” thing, the result of some grapes historically present in morainic hills south of Garda.

Isidro is not a wine with precise odors, it does not have a dominant fruit, it is not a product to be inserted in a precise scale: it is an amalgam of mutable situations, such as the course of Life. They change, in the glass, minute after minute. Its dark purple color is the forerunner of a materic sensation in the mouth.

I have talked about tradition, but there is no compromise with rusticity, being all played in a vocabulary of salinity and finesse, sylvan notes and verticality, which place it on the precipice of a question which - I hope - the drinker can feel in the tasting: can an archaic wine be attraversed by force and elegance, at one time?

Are not contradictions?

In other words, “Can a wine perform in a traditional way, but elaborated, and express finesse in the same moment? Certainly, and this is a lyrical act, not dissimilar to certain simple gestures of nature: the salmon fading at the stream, the take off a swan, or the fishing of a fighting pike. Rustic, but poetic.

Why an “archaic wine” without presence (or almost) international varieties can be up to date? Clear! Because the absence of varietal dominance allow to the terroir to express herself, and win over all other hints: Isidro Agricola is just terroir, absent of any other “de cave” tool: no aging, only a great work in vineyard, and a right vinification.

The only premise is the total consecration of old vineyards and ancient clones.

Isidore was an illiterate farmer living around 1100, who became patron of all farmers and, above all, agricultural landlords. In 1662, Pope Gregory XV decided to sanctify it jointly with great intellectuals, philosophers, and doctors of the Church, putting humility as his main value. Josef tributes to this great saint an ancient Ruby, made only with vines of at least 60 years, in which there are many varieties that are disappearing like Negrara.

Finally a revolutionary Rubino, a wine that comes back from the past and looks at the sunrise of the day after tomorrow.



Spanish Colonial Art, about 1500.

In this play we can see the many moments of the life of the Saint, always tied to the earth.

Isidoro conquered holiness with the work of the fields, he could bear - as is still to be also today in agriculture - the envy and loyalty of the other farmers, overcoming the judgment of the people, drawing straight on their own way.

He is the patron of many municipalities in Italy, but the Latin American countries give him great worship. Protector of the farmers.

We wanted to dedicate to him our second Rubino, as an example for us and, above all, for wine, which can always be a mirror of simplicity and clear ideas.

Wine made only the expression of the ground: without prevalence of varietal, without refining in wood, long macerations.

Dedicating a wine to a Saint may seem like an old or overdue decision.

It does not matter, as we believe in the power of Nature and the planets expressed in the Biodynamic, for more reason we are confident that the expression of faith can not be anything outside life. A Rubino to homage history, but above all to homage morenic terroir.



Isidro Agricola 2016

Fermentation with indigenous yeasts.

A hand is holding a dark glass bottle of Isidro Agricola. The bottle has a white label with the name 'Josef' in a sans-serif font and 'Isidro Agricola' in a cursive script font. The bottle is sealed with a white cap. The background is a light blue gradient.

Josef

Isidro Agricola