

# Resurrecting Monferace Grignolino in Piedmont

Grignolino was once the darling of Piedmont but has all but faded into obscurity - now it's back. Aldo Fiordelli tastes the first wines from the producers of a new association dedicated to resurrecting the tradition of oak-aged Grignolino, under the banner of 'Monferace'...

Aldo Fiordelli July 5, 2019

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image: <https://keyassets.timeincuk.net/inspirewp/live/wp-content/uploads/sites/34/2018/01/UNESCO-sites-920x609.jpg>



Vineyards and small town of Treiso in Piedmont Credit: Rostislav Glinsky / Alamy Stock Photo

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It's quite rare to see a new wine emerge from such a traditional region as Piedmont, but this summer sees not only the release of the first wine from the [Barolo cru of Raviole](#), but also the first aged Grignolinos labelled as **Monferace**.

Monferace is the ancient name of the Monferrato region, where an association of ten Piedmontese producers has rediscovered the intriguing concept of ageing the red Grignolino variety, holding it back for at least 40 months, 24 of which are in oak. Historically, Grignolino was as important as Nebbiolo. In 1861, exhibitions in London and Paris boasted eight-year-old bottles of the variety, but by the end of the 1970s the practice of ageing Grignolino for the long haul had disappeared. According to Mario

Ronco, leading winemaker in Monferrato, ‘at that time, nobody wanted to drink old bottles’.

The reason for this was that the countryside was emptying, handed over to the industrial labour force, and everything ascribable to the past was out of trend. Elio Altare bitterly remembers offering Barolo for free while selling his Dolcetto. Grignolino became a commodity wine, worsened by huge yields.

‘Where today we plant 5,000 vines per hectare capable of producing 1.5 kilos of grapes, in the past there were 2,500 vines per hectare with significantly higher yields, but Fiat needed to sell tractors,’ adds Ronco.

Today, the old traditions of maturing Grignolino are beginning to return in a perfect example of post-modern winemaking.

‘There’s an enormous difference between classic Grignolino and Monferace’ says [Robin Kick MW](#), leading the presentation and tasting of the wines for the first time, in Ponzano Monferrato.

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The first vintage of Monferace Grignolino is the 2015.

It will be exciting to see how it develops in bottle, and what the next few vintages bring...

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## Tasting Monferace Grignolino – First thoughts

image: <https://decanter-prod-aws1-timeincuk-net.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/media/images/angelini-paolo-golden-arbian-grignolino-del-monferrato-casalese-2015-5d1e0bba668a3.jpeg>



## Angelini Paolo, Golden Arbian, Grignolino del Monferrato

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The Angelini brothers made this Monferace from their best vineyards; Bricco Robiano and Prevostura where the soils are mostly clay with limestone and planted with ...

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## Vicara, Uccelletta, Grignolino del Monferrato Casalese, 2015

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Giuseppe Visconti is one of the most passionate champions of Monferace. This aged Grignolino comes from the limestone dominant Bricco dell'Uccelletta vineyard at at 320

...

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## Castello di Uviglie, San Bastiano, Grignolino del Monferrato

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As debated in Barolo, the use of big oak vessels instead of French barriques, is more obvious in Monferace where the delicacy of Grignolino is ...

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## Accornero, Bricco del Bosco, Grignolino del Monferrato

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This Monferace is restrained, focused on rose, dried flowers, potpourri and of course strawberry, yet it's charming. A bit of volatile acidity is perceived, but ...

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## Tenuta Santa Caterina, Monferace, Grignolino d'Asti, 2015

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The lawyer Guido Alleva, owner of Santa Caterina, respects the noble origin of Grignolino especially when its rebel tannin was considered more a problem than ...

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## Tenuta Tenaglia, Monferrato, Grignolino del Monferrato

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This estate is at the highest altitude, between 400 and 450 metres above sea level, with a great south-east exposition on marl soils. The wine ...

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## Azienda Vitivinicola Fratelli Natta, Monferace, Grignolino

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Fratelli Natta is a strictly family-run winery that focuses on indigenous grapes such as Grignolino but also Freisa, Moscato and Barbera. Their Monferace has one ...

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## [Agricola Sulin, Monferrate Brasal, Piemonte Grignolino, 2015](#)

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Agricola Sulin is located in Grazzano Badoglio, within the Piemonte Grignolino DOC, with a south exposition. The style is light-handed with fermentation temperatures of 26°C ...

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## Tenuta La Fiammenga, Fiamengh, Grignolino d'Asti, 2015

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Despite the warm 2015 vintage, this is one of the lightest Monferace wines with a texture that is more supple than firm. It has good, ...

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## Alemat, Monferace, Grignolino del Monferrato Casalese, 2015

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According to Mario Ronco, winemaker and vice president of the Monferace association, 2015 was a vintage with elevated levels of sugar, relatively low acidity (mostly ...

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Read more at <https://www.decanter.com/premium/monferace-grignolino-419982/#ueISRWsDctcZt0Hc.99>