

MO DI GLIA NA

*Tales of people, wine,
and the Apennines.*



Curators

GIORGIO MELANDRI
RENZO MARIA MORRESI

Photographer

MAURIZIO GJIVOVICH

Curators

First, Italian edition (2023): Giorgio Melandri
Second (expanded and updated), International edition (2026):
Giorgio Melandri and Renzo Maria Morresi

Photographer

Maurizio Gjivovich

Texts

Åsa Johansson, Gian Matteo Baldi, Antonio Boco, Francesco Bordini,
Giuseppe Carrus, Gianni Fabrizio, Francesco Falcone, Giampaolo Gravina,
Alessandro Liverani, Giorgio Melandri, Renzo Maria Morresi, Federica Randazzo,
Lorenzo Ruggeri, Francesco Saverio Russo, Leila Salimbeni, Walter Speller,
Marco Tonelli, Paolo Trimani, Riccardo Viscardi, Simone Zoli.

Cartography

Consuelo Zondini for Alessandro Liverani Studio

Mapping and zoning project

Francesco Bordini, Giorgio Melandri and Renzo Maria Morresi

Geology text review

Ilaria Melandri

English translation

Renzo Maria Morresi

Graphic design

Laura Staderini

Printed by

Litografia Fabbri (i.e. Fabbri Litography), Modigliana (FC), Italy

Finished printing in September 2026

Published by the Association *Modigliana, Stella dell’Appennino* in
collaboration with the *Accademia degli Incamminati*, Modigliana, Italy.

All translation rights are expressly reserved by the Association.
© Giorgio Melandri & Renzo Maria Morresi - Creative Commons (“CC”)
licenses “BY-NC-ND 4.0” - <https://www.stellappennino-italy.com> -
<https://www.morresi.com>

SUMMARY

<i>Foreword</i>	4
Vineyards, wine, and winemakers are the backbone of the Apennines	6
A well kept secret	8
A rising star, introduction to a “terroir”	14

MODIGLIANA

The beauty	22
Modigliana’s history in a nutshell	26
The monks of Vallombrosa, Tuscany	28
Wine in Modigliana	34
The invention of Modigliana	38
Community: the concept of terroir	44
Altitude, forest, sandstone	50
The fragile Apennines	60
Modigliana rosso	66
Modigliana bianco	72

THE PORTRAITS

Il Pratello	78
Il Teatro	82
La Casetta dei Frati	86
Menta & Romarino	90
Mutiliana	94
Pian di Stantino	98
Rochi di Castelluccio	102
Villa Papiano	106

THE MAPS

Three valleys, five souls	111
---------------------------	-----

THE LABELS

The wineries’ map	121
<i>Afterword</i>	130
Endnotes	135

Foreword

Modigliana is a small mountain village in the Italian Upper Apennines, north of Tuscany, that has become increasingly famous for its wines. Association Modigliana, Stella Dell'appennino—Modigliana, (Wine) Star of the Apennines—is a conglomeration of vine growers and winemakers that was named Vine Tenderer of the Year in James Suckling and Luciano Ferraro's Corriere della Sera wine guide The Best Italian 100 Wines and Vine Tenderers 2024. Originally published as MODIGLIANA: Storie di gente, Appennino, vini (MODIGLIANA: A Story of People, Apennines, Wines) in the summer of 2023, this book was produced by Giorgio Melandri, a wine journalist and producer, also on behalf of his colleagues, members of the Association.

For this internationally oriented English-language edition, I felt the need to enrich the Italian publication by incorporating this foreword, an afterword, and a series of brief notes introducing Giorgio Melandri and the other contributors, and offering an overview of the Apennines and Tuscan Romagna, the historical region bridging Tuscany and Romagna that encompasses Modigliana. I take

full responsibility for these parts of the book, as well as for the English translations of the original material.

In addition to making several contributions of his own, Giorgio invited 19 other Italian and international wine journalists and experts to write a small piece about Modigliana, its terroir, its wines, and its associated wineries. Perhaps most importantly, Giorgio also involved photographer Maurizio Gjivovich as a co-author from the very beginning of this project.

That is to say, this is a photography book: images convey at least as much as words—if not more. This owes much to Maurizio's narrative talent, which betrays his eminence in the wine scene, a reputation cultivated for many years from his portraits of Aubert de Villaine, head of the Domaine de la Romanée-Conti in Burgundy. Although his skill with the camera means that little, if anything, needs to be added to his photos, it is worth mentioning that during this project, Modigliana was hit by two extremely heavy rainstorms that caused hundreds of landslides. The first, on May 2–3, 2023, was an event that occurs every 200 years; the second, on May 16–17, every 500 years. For several days, the village remained completely isolated with no roads, water, electricity,



gas, television, or sewage. However, Maurizio felt a moral obligation to travel 250 miles from his home in Ivrea and walk the last few miles in the rain to reach Modigliana and report what had happened to his work in progress. Some of his photos from those days are included in this book. We are all very grateful to Maurizio for this commitment and for putting his artistic talent at the service of this project. A final word of thanks must go to Giorgio. As his partners in this 'stellar' venture, we are all indebted

to him not only for the book, but for the very existence of the project: first for convincing us of the value of Modigliana wines, then for his most generous efforts to try and convince everyone else.

Which brings me to the first order of business: it is not possible to read and understand this book without tasting a glass of wine from Modigliana. "Salute!"

Renzo Maria Morresi ¹

VINEYARDS, WINE, AND WINEMAKERS ARE THE BACKBONE OF THE APENNINES

The Italian Apennines are not only a mountain range—they are a melting pot of cultural and geographic identities that have shaped the history and life of the communities living there for thousands of years. A bounty of traditions, customs, and values that have withstood the inexorable passage of time has produced a cultural richness reflected in the extraordinary variety of distinctive artistic, literary, and folkloric features of the local communities.

Geographically, the Apennines are Italy's true backbone, with wonderful landscapes ranging from snow-capped peaks to green and fertile valleys, from chestnut and beech forests to hillsides

cultivated with complex geometries of vineyards and olive groves.

This biodiversity has fostered the development of agricultural, pastoral, and tourism activities, contributing to the economic sustainability of those who live there.

Today, however, the Apennines are also facing serious challenges: depopulation of rural areas, loss of ancient traditions and crafts, and inadequate services and infrastructure. To preserve and enhance the identity of the Apennines, it is essential to promote sustainable development initiatives that safeguard the area's natural and cultural resources, support

traditional activities, and foster social inclusion.

For this reason, winemaking is fundamental: vine growers have become guardians of territorial outposts, capable of putting down roots (for vines and for people) and allowing them to spread, using wine as a means of translating and transmitting the singularity of the Apennines. In this way, the wine-producing communities of the area—seemingly as small, sparse, and isolated as they are numerous—find in the making of vineyards and wine not only a way to reflect on a common past, but also to look forward with greater openness and awareness toward a more promising future. In the face of climate change, this perspective sees many of the higher areas of the Apennines in less distress than the vulnerable lower areas: greater “freedom” in the choice of cultivation methods and a holistic view of the concept of *terroir* can offer considerable advantages in these testing times.

In conclusion, the cultural identity of the Apennines is characterized by the confluences of rural, artisanal, linguistic, folkloric, and environmental elements that combine with natural and bio-

diverse contexts to create a rich and varied social fabric along its length and breadth. It is here that the vine growers and winemakers, with deep respect and great effort, intertwine themselves with the territories they inhabit, enriching their wines with the intrinsic values of their land, breaking their isolation, and becoming the spokespeople of the uniqueness they have the burden and the honor to cultivate.

Francesco Saverio Russo ^{II}

A WELL KEPT SECRET

Modigliana¹ in high Romagna, “tiny Rome,” a northern Italian subregion 200 miles from the eternal city: a well-kept secret under your nose.

Modigliana is a mountain village of 4,500 inhabitants in the highlands of Romagna² (from “*Romandìola*,” literally, “Tiny Rome”³), a northern Italian subregion. It is nestled between the Adriatic Sea to the east, the Apennines to the south, the Sillaro River to the west, and the Po River to the north. Romagna, despite its name hinting at a Roman connection, sits over 200 miles away, north-east of the Eternal City. With its 1.2 million

inhabitants active in industry, services, and specialized agriculture (particularly fruit), Romagna sits in the south-eastern quarter of northern Italy. For those unfamiliar with European geography: Italy is a boot-shaped peninsula that is 745 miles long from north-west to south-east, three-quarters the length of California, in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea. Italy has an aging population of over 60 million, with a life expectancy

of 82 years; this figure is close to that of Japan (84), which is the highest in the world. Tradition has divided Italy into three parts: a northern region with Milan as its main city, a central region built around Rome, and a southern region centered on Naples. Food and wine rank among Italy’s most prized treasures. Romagna is no exception—it is located a stone’s throw east of Bologna (also known as “*la grassa*” or “the fat one”), in Emilia, the western portion of Emilia-Romagna (Romagna occupies the east). The backbone of Romagna is the Roman *Via Aemilia* (“Aemilian Way”), hence the name of the region: Emilia-Romagna. The *Via Aemilia*, a military trunk road built

in 187 BC by and named after Roman Consul *Marcus Aemilius Lepidus*, stretches 160 straight miles from south-east to north-west parallel to the Apennines’ ridge. It connects Rìmini (*Ariminum*), on the south-eastern angle of Romagna on the shores of the Adriatic, to Piacenza (*Placentia*⁴) on the Emilian north-western border with Lombardy. It runs along the slightly elevated southern edge of the Po River embankment, at the foothills of the Apennines, on the southern limit of the largest Italian flatland, which, in 187 BC, was an inhospitable marshland⁵. Modigliana, on the higher hills south of the *Via Aemilia*, on the road between Faïence and Florence, south of the Apennines,

¹ For UK and US English speakers, it is pronounced (in the International Phonetic Alphabet, or IPA) “modiʌʎjana.” In this case, the “glia” (or “ʌʎja” sound) portion of “Modigliana” is pronounced similarly to the three final letters of the Spanish word “tortilla.”

² For UK and US English speakers, this is pronounced (in IPA) “roʊ'mɑ:njə” or “rəʊ'mɑ:njə” or, for those who speak some Italian, “ro'maɲja,” the “gna” (or “ɲjə” sound) portion of “Romagna” to be pronounced much as the central syllable of the Spanish word “mañana.” Additionally, Romagna appears as follows in Arabic: رومانيا ; in Chinese: 罗马涅; and in Japanese: ミリア*ロマーニャ州の.

³ The name “Romagna” comes from Medieval Latin and suggests the historical evolution of this Italian subregion (part of Emilia-Romagna) from the second half of the 5th century AD, as opposed to the rest of the region, *Aemilia* (now Emilia). *Aemilia* eventually drifted away from *Romandìola* to become part of *Langobàrdia*, land of the Langbard (i.e., Langobardic or Lombard), a barbarian population of German origin that occupied

large parts of Italy in the last quarter of the 5th century AD, after the end of the Western Roman Empire in Italy, which centered on *Mediolanum*, now Milan, and Pavia, rather than Rome.

⁴ It then extends from Piacenza to Milan, Italy’s industrial capital, 40-odd miles further.

⁵ *Via Aemilia* was built 33 years after the completion of the *Via Flaminia*, which was finished in 220 BC and connected Rìmini with Rome. In 132 BC, this road system was completed by the *Via Popilia* along the Adriatic coast, which connected Rìmini to Ravenna. Roman trunk roads were designed to allow the rapid movement of troops and to facilitate Roman expansion, in this case from the Po valley, then called Cisalpine Gaul (*Gallia Cisalpina*), to Transalpine Gaul (*Gallia Transalpina*), encompassing what is now France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, southern Germany, Czechia, and Austria. The Gauls on both sides of the Alps were named after their inhabitants, the Celts or Gauls, a fierce northern European people who ventured as far south as Rome, which they sacked under their warlord, Brennus, in the summer of 387 BC. Rome had never been sacked before and

has only 3% of Romagna’s vineyards but accounts for 25% of the bottles claiming such origin: *Romagna DOC Sangiovese Modigliana* for red wines and *Romagna DOC Bianco Modigliana* for white wines. Today, most, if not all, Romagna vineyards south of *Via Aemilia* produce higher quality wines, while those north of it are praised more for their abundance than for their quality. Suffice it to say that the vineyards south of the *Via Aemilia* account for 100% of

the Romagna DOC/DOP⁶ wines that claim their subzone⁷ on the bottle. Thus, it may be said that all the higher quality wines of Romagna originate south of the *Via Aemilia*. That being said, Romagna does not have nearly the wine reputation enjoyed by Piedmont or Tuscany. Yet Modigliana’s wines have been found on a par with Brunellos (a Tuscan Sangiovese wine) and Piedmont’s Nebbiolos (the grape variety of Barolo and

Barbaresco). The reason behind this connection can be traced back to Modigliana’s 500-year history as an integral part of Tuscany since the second half of the 15th century. This came to an end in 1923, when *Tuscan Romagna*, the part of Tuscany historically located north of the Apennines, was reduced in size, with Modigliana and other Tuscan mountain villages annexed by Mussolini as part of his idea of a “Roman” Romagna⁸.

This history brings us back to Romagna, *Romandiola*: a little mystery that certainly deserves an explanation, if only because Romagna is the DOC on most, if not all, Modigliana wine bottles. Believe it or not, this region, with Ravenna at its northern border, was at the heart of the late Western Roman Empire for several centuries, well into the Middle Ages, beginning in 402 AD when Ravenna became the capital of that part of the empire.

would not be sacked again for nearly eight centuries, until 410 AD, when it was on the verge of its final fall.

⁶ DOC (“*Denominazione di Origine Controllata*” or “Controlled Denomination of Origin”) and DOP (“*Denominazione di Origine Protetta*” or “Protected Designation of Origin”) represent a European public system of wine certification similar to the French AOC (“*Appellation d’origine controlée*”) system and somewhat similar to the AVA (“American Viticultural Areas”) established in 1980 by the US Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau.

⁷ The Italian DOC/DOP system provides for the following somewhat complicated hierarchy, whereby the more valuable wines are those which can be traced back to the exact area or even vineyard where they originate (similar to French “crus”), using an inverted telescope scheme; the telescope, top-down, is organized as follows:

- At the very top are the wines that claim their original subzones of DOCG (*Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita*) or Controlled and Guaranteed Denomination of Origin (for example: *DOCG Barolo Cannubi*; a step down are the wines that claim their UGA (*Unità Geografiche Aggiuntive* or Additional Geographical Unit) of the DOCG (UGAs include the subzones, but they do not have, per se, specific production regulation governing wine production as do the subzones. It is worth noting that *Chianti Classico* was originally a subzone of the DOCG Chianti, which in 1996 became a DOCG in its own right and, from 2021, was granted the possibility of claiming its own UGAs, such as in the *DOCG Chianti Classico Radda*). The term DOCG is somewhat misleading, as all of Italy’s denominations of origin are certified and guaranteed by government regulations, but, in any case, the DOCG has the most stringent regulations.
- One step down are the wines solely claiming a DOCG (without claiming any subzone;

for example: *DOCG Chianti*; another example: *DOCG Romagna Albana*, with wines that, up to now, cannot claim any subzone).

- A further step down are the wines claiming their original DOC/DOP subzones (for example: *DOC Romagna Sangiovese Modigliana* and *DOC Romagna Bianco Modigliana*; note that Romagna has only one DOCG, *DOCG Romagna Albana*, and only DOC+subzone and lesser claims are viable).
- A further step down are the DOC/DOP marked “superiore” (or Superior, without the possibility of claiming any subzone or UGA; for example: DOC/DOP Romagna Sangiovese Superiore).
- A further step down are the wines claiming a DOC/DOP (without the possibility of claiming any subzone or the lesser “superiore” claim; for example: DOC/DOP Romagna Sangiovese).
- Down a further, final level are the wines claiming their IGT/IGP, Indicazione Geografica Tipica or Typical Geographical Indication, or IGP, an equivalent of IGT for wines that is also used for other products (without the possibility of claiming any subzone nor the lesser “superiore” claim; for example: IGT/IGP Rubicone); here again, the wording may be somewhat misleading, but suffice it to say that IGT/IGP wines are those with the least stringent regulations in the Italian denomination of origin system.

⁸ All this was meant so that the Tiber, Rome’s river *par excellence*, would have its source not in Tuscany, but in Romagna, Mussolini’s homeland and part of his “Roman” fascist mythology.

⁹ Mediolanum (Milan) had about 25,000 inhabitants in the 1st century AD, but between the 3rd and 4th centuries AD, its population multiplied to a peak of 130,000 souls. This was due to Diocletian, the Roman emperor at the end of the 3rd century, who divided

In the 4th and 5th centuries AD, Milan⁹ and Ravenna were much smaller than Rome¹⁰. However, for military reasons, the Roman emperors and their successors moved their quarters from Rome to Milan (286 AD) and, finally, to Ravenna¹¹ (402 AD) while fighting the barbarian hordes. Ravenna served as the capital for three and a half centuries of what was left of the Western part of the Roman Empire in Italy, remaining “Roman” even later. After the fall of Rome, traditionally dated 476 AD¹², successive waves of

barbarians plundered the Italian peninsula, imposing new masters on what had once been the great Western Roman Empire, with its center and Senate in Rome, even when the Roman emperors resided elsewhere. Ravenna was spared all this until 751 AD, when it fell to the Langobards. Yet, this would not last long: in 756 AD, Ravenna would return to a kind of Roman sphere of influence when Pepin the Short (Charlemagne’s father) and his Franks reconquered it from the Langobards and donated it to the Pope, thus establishing the first

legal basis for the Papal States in the Middle Ages. Centuries of deep-rooted Roman history are embodied in the toponym Romagna and its use in reference to Ravenna and the surrounding area. The Romans were first soldiers, then farmers, as Rome’s policy was to reward veterans with enough land to raise a family and to intermarry with the locals to extend Roman citizenship. The Romans brought vines and olive trees as far north as they could grow, so it is not surprising that Romagna is still a land of

vineyards and olive groves, close to the Adriatic Sea, which tempers its climate, but otherwise open to the north Siberian winds with their heavy winter snowfalls (at least, until the arrival of global warming). It is a land of wine that accompanies the traditional meats and cheese of goat and sheep, rather than of the cows, as in Lombardy. Mystery solved!

Renzo Maria Morresi

the Roman Empire into four more manageable units (286 AD). Of the two western parts, the southern one had Mediolanum as its capital, a city much more strategic and barycentric than Rome in those years of recurrent fights with the barbarian hordes on the peripheral borders. Milan remained a capital until Ravenna took its place in 402 AD—it was much easier to defend and accessible from the sea and the Orient. Meanwhile, before his death in 395 AD, the Roman Emperor Theodosius formally divided the Roman Empire into two parts: an Eastern Roman Empire under his son Arcadius, with Constantinople as its capital, and a Western Roman Empire under his son Honorius, with Milan as its capital, followed by Ravenna from 402 AD.

¹⁰ According to Arnold H. M. Jones in *The Decline of the Ancient World* (London: Lonmans, Green and Co. Ltd, 1966), at the time of the fall of the Western Roman Empire (5th century), Rome might still have had more than two-thirds of a million inhabitants. However, a century later, after the war between the Byzantines and the Goths, the population in Rome was down to 40,000, according to several historians.

¹¹ Ravenna had become the main Roman military port at the end of the 1st century BC (27 BC) under the first Roman emperor Octavian Augustus, and had since increased in population and importance, especially as the crisis of the Eastern Roman Empire progressed. In 402 AD, Alaric and his Visigoth horde invaded Italy and laid siege to Mediolanum (Milan), then the capital of the Western Roman Empire. The Roman general Stilicho hastened back from what is now Austria to break the siege, rescued Emperor Honorius, and advised him to move the capital of his empire to the military seaport of Ravenna, which was much easier to defend than Milan and had immediate sea access to the

stronger Eastern Roman Empire in Constantinople. From 402 AD, Ravenna functioned as the capital of the Western Roman Empire until it collapsed (476 AD), and then it continued as the capital of the Roman-Barbarian kingdom of Odoacer, who had deposed the last Western Roman emperor (see Note 12). It remained so throughout Odoacer’s first Roman-Barbarian reign (476–493 AD). When Odoacer was defeated and succeeded by Theodoric the Great, an Ostrogoth and the second Roman-Barbarian king, Ravenna remained the capital of the Ostrogothic kingdom even after his death (Ravenna, 526 AD), when he was succeeded by his grandson Athalaric, then a child, represented by his mother Amalasuntha. Ravenna’s destiny survived the fall of the Ostrogoths in 540 AD, when Belisarius conquered Ravenna for Justinian, the Eastern Roman Emperor at the head of the Byzantine Empire (from Byzantium, the ancient Greek name of the city that Constantin the Great renamed Constantinople, 330 AD). Throughout this period, until 751 AD, Ravenna remained the capital of the then Byzantine “*praefectura*,” successively “*exarchatus*,” that is, the capital of Byzantine Italy, the Italian remnants of the Roman Empire.

¹² In 476 AD, Odoacer, at the head of a barbarian horde from the middle Danube, deposed the child emperor Romulus Augustulus, the last of the Western Roman Empire, and pretended to rule not only as king (“*rex*”), but also, at the same time, with the support of the Roman Senate, as appointee (“*dux*”) of the Eastern Roman Emperor Zeno, to whom the Roman Senate had sent the imperial insignia in Constantinople, today’s Istanbul. It was there that the (Eastern) Roman Empire would stand for another millennium, until 1453, when it fell to the Ottomans, finally ending the last vestiges of the Roman Empire less than 40 years before Columbus landed in the Americas in 1492.

A RISING STAR

Introduction to a “terroir”.

The book you are holding in your hands is not simply about wine, wineries, or vineyards. Sure, there are labels, wineries, rows, and vine varieties. But there is much more. First, there are the people, then the land imbued with their will: men and women whose eyes, whose expressions, whose looks we see; we interpret their thoughts through their photographs. They are winegrowers, farmers, producers, and winemakers. For some time now, they have been meeting, comparing, discussing, and searching for a common way to improve the culture, economy, and prestige of an entire wine-producing area.

For many of us, until a few years ago, Modigliana was just a small village of over 4,000 inhabitants in the province of Forlì-Cesena. Now it is a true wine source, one of the symbols of Romagna that is slowly making a name for itself inside and outside Italy. It is becoming an example for the whole region and for many areas of Italy: a physical and ideal space that recalls the values of a community that seeks to bring beauty and wealth through wine, creating a territorial marketing lever and combining it with creativity, vision, and experience.

Without a doubt, a star has been born. This star illuminates the Apennines; its

*Helichrysum, its
spicy scent lingering
between curry and
licorice, symbolizes
the originality of
Modigliana wines.
It grows abundantly
on south-facing
rock walls.*

*On the next double
page, note the
perfectly managed
chestnut grove.
These groves appear
across the landscape,
often next to the
vineyards.*







light penetrates the ridge of its mountains and the dense foliage of its forest. That light reaches into the vineyard to shine on the grapes that will become Modigliana *bianco* and *rosso*. According to the *Institut National des Appellations d'Origine*, a *terroir* is first and foremost a delimited geographical space within which a human community has built up, over the course of its history, a collective knowledge based on a system of interactions between a physical and biological medium and a series of human factors. In Modigliana, all this was born and created by people who truly feel a sense of place. This true love is expressed across the following pages.

Giuseppe Carrus^{III}

Franco Lecca, a shepherd established on the Trebbio hill, is the heir of one of the Sardinian families that moved from their homeland to the Apennines in the 20th century. We owe them for the best cheese production in Romagna.

MODIGLIANA

THE BEAUTY

As in the case of wine tasting, and God knows how topical this subject is, personal taste inevitably enters into the definition of beauty, or rather of what we consider to be beautiful. This understandable but slippery conditioning makes it virtually impossible to use universal parameters and shareable, if not common, aesthetic coordinates. Even in the attempt to circumscribe an “objective” beauty, space-time relativity necessarily comes into play. The boundaries of the underlying harmony on which the concept is based are modified by the passage of time and geographical location, with their consequent cultural references. A man, a woman, a wine, an object, and a piece of clothing are judged by changing parameters that make the present dynamic and, in some cases, elusive. The beauty of the landscape fits into this pattern, along with others, albeit with much slower rates of evolution. What we hastily call nature, at least as far as our agricultural world is concerned, is nothing more than the fruit of the more or less successful relationship between the environmental conditions of a given historical period (which are not immutable either, of course) and human intervention. This ongoing dialectic contributes to the beauty or otherwise of a territory, making us appreciate,





for example, a sinuous hillside, terracing, or the balance between forest and vineyard, and, conversely, giving us dystopian sensations in the face of monoculture, wild anthropization, or simple carelessness. I have tasted excellent wines even in the latter cases; it is not a cause-and-effect relationship between beauty and goodness. However, it seems to me that the beauty of the context, combined with the exquisiteness of the gestures of those who live in it, creates the conditions that multiply the possibilities of obtaining great wines, a path that can go from individual and isolated to collective and shared.

Antonio Boco ^{IV}

On the previous page, “La Roccaccia”: the ruins of the castle of Modigliana, as seen from the Monte Trebbio hill road. The castle was built between 920 AD and 967 AD and stands as a symbol of the Conti Guidi dynasty.

On this page, a peasant woman works with a hoe in a field adjacent to the Morana, Modigliana country road.

MODIGLIANA'S HISTORY IN A NUTSHELL

The name “Modigliana” comes from Titus Livy’s *Castrum Mutilum* (“Destroyed Military Encampment,” later *Mutliana*), recalling its fall before 202 BC. On top of the Capuchin Hill, in its cloister, a Roman well reaches the water table a good 36 meters (almost 120 feet) below. Located 100 meters from confluent rivers, Tramazzo and Acereta, it represents a considerable engineering feat in an encampment built to resist Gaul sieges. In Modigliana, Romans grew wheat, olives, and vines; from the Middle Ages, Christian monks added Sangiovese grapes. For five hundred years, beginning in the 10th century, Modigliana was a fief of the Conti Guidi (hosting the Emperor Barbarossa in 1165). According to historian Rosella Rinaldi, “Modigliana assumed a strategic and political role, wedged, with its own specificity as a lordly stronghold, between the valleys-corridors that joined Romània (i.e., Romagna) to Tuscia (i.e., Tuscany).” The Guidi, in decline, were driven out by the people in arms (Durante Doni, 1377), and Modigliana gave itself in *accomandigia* (dedication-protection) to Florence, already led by the Medici. It was the capital of the part of Tuscany north of the Apennines, “High Mugello” for the Tuscans, and “Tuscan Romagna” for the Romagnoli, the people of Romagna. It lost its role when the Tuscan road system favored other mountain passes, the *Colla* (Lamone valley) and the *Muraglione* (Montone valley, 1836). For the following two centuries, Modigliana remained secluded, accessible only from Romagna, despite remaining part of Tuscany. However, in 1923, Mussolini enlarged “his” province, Forlì, and Modigliana, from being an island of Romagna in Tuscany, became an island of Tuscany in Romagna. The evolving identities of borderline lands make these unique syntheses unrepeatable.

Renzo Maria Morresi

The “Tribuna” (Piazza Don Minzoni, Modigliana) served as the castle’s main entrance. It consisted of two bell towers—the one on the left was added in the 1700s to create symmetry with the other side—and a shrine with a statue of the Madonna by the Bolognese sculptor Clemente Molli (1678). The second circle of walls surrounded the settlement on the bank of the Tramazzo River, across from the old Modigliana village. The donjon entrance was completed in 1534. Note the Florentine Medici coat of arms above the arch.



THE MONKS OF VALLOMBROSA, TUSCANY

On November 19, 1372, braving bad weather, the abbot general of the Vallombrosa monastery, Simone Bencini, arrived at the monastery of Santa Reparata, on the Romagna side of the Tuscan-Romagna Apennines, accompanied by a monk, two Florentine converts, and a notary. It was an inspection, one of many that the abbot made to the various Vallombrosan abbeys scattered between Romagna and Tuscany, the minutes of which mention wine among the monastery's agricultural products. It is the pretext for today's fascinating insight, which also serves as the cornerstone of the Sangiovese narrative. The idea that the history of this grape variety might be traced back to these abbeys was recently proposed by a Romagna scholar, Beppe Sangiorgi, who in 2014 published a small book on the history of Sangiovese. A document from 1672, a lease contract, mentions the Sangiovese vine variety for the first time, "three rows of Sangiovese placed toward the house" (Ravenna state archives, Faenza section, notarial archives of Casola Valsenio, Notary Antonio Ungania, volume 154, pages 200–201), with the name

*From
Modigliana,
looking north,
toward the
Via Emilia,
one glimpses
the gullies that
mark the end
of the marly
arenaceous
massif and
an outcrop
of spungone
(organic
calcarenite)
near the
valley of the
Samoggia
stream.*



subsequently becoming established in the Italian language. Curiously, the Romagna version of the grape variety prevailed—perhaps an early testimony to the vine’s shared origin between Romagna and Tuscany. Various hypotheses about the name’s origin abound, with the most widely credited dating to 1978, when the foremost scholar of the Romagna language, Austrian Friedrich Schürr, working backward from the Romagna word “*zuv*,” meaning “yoke” in English. “*Ven de zuv*,” or wine of the yokes, aligning in meaning with the archaic Tuscan “*sangiogheto*.” The mystery of the prefix “*san*” remains to be solved, but beyond that, the yokes may point us to an origin of Sangiovese that is more mountainous than hilly. Indeed, yokes are, as the Treccani Italian Encyclopedia states, long, rounded mountain peaks or passes, as witnessed in several Apennine place names (e.g., “*Giogo di Scarperia*”). This hypothesis—yet to be verified, but plausible in many ways—purports the role of Vallombrosan monks in the spreading of Sangiovese, which we now know to be a cross between Ciliegiolo and another grape variety, probably the Calabrian Negrodolce (Le Scienze No. 554, October 2014). This variety may very well have originated in a monastery before being exploited by the network of

Vallombrosan abbeys to spread on the two slopes of the Apennines. Indeed, well-known examples of monasteries in Tuscany trace the culture of the vine, and probably of Sangiovese wine, such as Badia a Coltibuono and Badia a Passignano. In Romagna, the presence of the Benedictine Vallombrosan monasteries is less well known but equally important: several monastic complexes sit along the stretch between the upper Santerno Valley and Modigliana: Badia di Moscheta, Badia di Susinana, Badia di Santa Reparata, and Badia di S. Maria in Crespino. To these must be added the Abbey of S. Paolo in Razuolo, which is on the Tuscan side of the Apennines but very close to Romagna. This formidable network exchanged knowledge and people, which might help explain the contemporary spread of Sangiovese on the two Apennine slopes. It remains unclear how a late-ripening grape variety like Sangiovese could have found a home at the higher elevations, but this may be explained by the climatic optimum recorded around the year 1000. The presence of monks at Badia a Coltibuono, for example, is documented as early as 1070. For now, it is only a hypothesis. Still, Professor Francesco Salvestrini, professor of medieval history at

the University of Florence and a leading expert on the history of the Vallombrosan order, demonstrated its plausibility in a lecture held in Modigliana on September 9, 2018: *I immediately looked into this hypothesis with interest, and I must say that for a number of reasons, I find it well-founded and, with the caution demanded of my role, even probable. Let us first see why. The Benedictine monks combined several elements that were fundamental to this diffusion. First, they had the theoretical knowledge and the libraries where the few agricultural texts were kept; the reformed orders, like the Vallombrosan order, could lend them the texts that were consulted and often copied. The network of monasteries that was created became essential for allowing the circulation of knowledge and laborers, and if this is well documented in architecture, it can be assumed that it happened for agriculture as well. Once the Roman Empire fell, monks were the sole custodians of culture, and outside the monasteries, widespread ignorance prevailed. It should not be forgotten that monks spoke a common language, Latin, and therefore could understand each other even if they came from different regions and even different countries. This was a very rare privilege in those days. In addition, the monasteries, depending hierarchically on a “mother house,” effectively removed themselves from the power of the local bishops and thus entered a different*

dimension, less local and less bound by the corruption that characterized the church around the year 1000. A second element was practice: the Benedictines were proprietary orders, meaning they had land where they could put their agricultural practices into practice. During the early Middle Ages, they began to inherit land and cultivate it. The great feudal lords, such as the Conti Guidi in Modigliana, were generally ignorant: they only knew how to make war and were not interested in improving agricultural production. The monks, unlike the nobles and lords, were not ashamed to be farmers as well, as evidenced by the abundant iconography depicting them at work in the fields. Agriculture, among other things, had become the symbol of monasticism, as evidenced by the constant references to it by Abbot Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153 AD), a most important figure in medieval christianity. Another fundamental element is the importance of wine in the life of the monks: it was indeed necessary for delivering mass and was part of their daily life. It must be remembered that in the Middle Ages, wine—which was much lighter and more fragile than today’s wine and therefore sometimes laced with herbs and honey—was the drink that guaranteed safety and provided valuable calories. It was generally popular and was the only safe drink, so important that it revived trade after the year 1000. One can

identify another bookend to this historical period: the circulation of masters and monks (and books, seeds, and plants) worked well until the end of the 14th century, because then, after the formation and consolidation of regional states, such as the Republic of Florence, and the consolidation of the borders of the Papal States, it became unwelcome and was hindered. Agriculture slowly returned to the hands of the laity, often more urban dwellers, and its progress came to a halt.

Recall also that in the 14th century, the climate hardened and the population declined significantly due to the plague.

We can therefore assume that the Vallombrosan monks “invented” and spread Sangiovese between the 12th and early 14th centuries.

From then on, it was the laity, merchants in particular, who sanctioned the ranks of the territories and left traces, this time commercially interesting, with an activity (and philosophy) far removed from that of the monks.

This is the case, for example, of Francesco di Marco Datini, the merchant of Prato, a great protagonist of the late 14th century whose name is still linked to the wine of Carmignano.

Giorgio Melandri ^v



WINE IN MODIGLIANA

A wonderful and transparent provincial story: “the stone discarded by builders has become a cornerstone.”

The tale of Modigliana wine is rooted in more than a thousand years of well-documented history that connects several sheer coincidences with the deliberate insights from the rulers, clergy, and local entrepreneurs who have imbued this territory with their knowledge and ambitions.

Wine production is documented here as early as the year 1000. In 2005, historian Chiara Molducci wrote:

Between the 9th and 10th centuries in the territory of Santo Stefano in Juvignano and San Giovanni in Octavo, included in the upper valley of the Marzeno and of the Lamone [rivers], numerous vineyards are documented in the small Insaria valley, while the fundus Puellano was rich with fruit trees and chestnut groves, broad beans, spelt, legumes, flax, and especially vineyards. [...] It was then necessary to obtain a leave, “licentiam,” of the bishop and his officials, in order to be enabled to harvest and grind grapes for the production of wine and grain, the distribution and marketing of which was a prerogative of the Ravenna episcopate.

In particular, this was the case of some settlers who in 994 AD were to bring to the “curte domnica” (the master’s court) of San Prospero the wine placed in the “vasa domnica” (the master’s vases), subsequently to be loaded in the “carra domnicae” (the master’s wagons) and transported to San Donato where, most likely, were a collection center and production facilities of the Ravenna Bishop. San Donato is to be identified with the church of the same name documented in Modigliana in 1060 and with the hermitage of Gamogna [now in Tuscany]. The structures of the ancient church are not visible in the present-day town of Modigliana due to recent demolitions

Emilio Placci’s experience is paramount in understanding the longevity potential of Modigliana.

In 1991, Placci planted vines that seemed like a fit of madness, at 600 meters, within chestnut groves, on the shallow soils concealing the local marl and sandstone. The first vintage bottled by Emilio, 1998, still wins the challenge against time, releasing the balsamic scents that are the signature of Modigliana’s “terroir”.

Game animals represent an ongoing struggle for those who cultivate vineyards surrounded by forest as far as the eye can see (see the local signs regulating hunting on page 37).



for housing construction, but it is still possible to locate its area north of the present Cathedral.

In 1671, Sangiovese was first mentioned in the book of receipts and expenditures of the church of San Bernardo in Modigliana, an important sign of the role of the Apennines in the selection and genetic preservation of this extraordinary grape variety. Beginning with the reforms of the late 1700s that affected the entire Tuscan Grand Duchy, Modigliana, as in the rest of the Tuscan strip beyond the Apennines (on their northern side), took advantage of the agricultural and administrative progress, entailing considerably better living and working conditions than in the rest of Romagna, then part of the territory of the Papal State. Modigliana gradually became an important center of silk and timber production, highly profitable activities that fostered the growth of an enlightened bourgeoisie, which played an important role in the unification of Italy by protecting the wounded Garibaldi as he fled northward. The 20th century marked the redefinition of an area that came to be considered provincial and peripheral: reclamation works and the construction of major roadways on the valley floor shifted attention and the center of economic activity to the plains, initiating the process of depopulation of the hills and mountain ridges. In a few short years, Modigliana was demoted

from a regional center to a marginal locale—noteworthy especially given its glorious agricultural role in previous centuries—putting it at risk of isolation and abandonment. If Modigliana’s winegrowing community survived the depopulation of the mountains, an essential role must be credited to the cooperative movement: first, the establishment of the Consorzi Agrari (the agricultural consortia); then, the creation of the PROVIT social winery in 1974, which enshrined a technical and economic outpost in these territories. Before recent climate change, Modigliana was a rather cold place, consisting of small fields—often shaded by surrounding forests—where grapes ripen very slowly, and it was not uncommon for the harvesting of later varieties, such as Sangiovese, to take place in November with the arrival of the first snows. The cooperative movement (including the aforementioned PROVIT co-op, which later became part of the Faenza-based PAF group and is now AGRINTESA) had the great intuition to take advantage of such freshness to create an avant-garde project of white sparkling winemaking, later joined by specific projects involving Sangiovese. The world lives by static paradigms and is interrupted by impromptu discoveries and sudden changes that overturn them. As with evolutionary processes, the province may play a very important role: natural isolation is a treasure chest that

protects biodiversity and serves as a necessary tool for driving evolution and breaking the stranglehold of stasis. Change does not simply accompany the passage of time but is concentrated at specific times and places. Thus, when difficulties undermine a community’s survival, the community is driven to evolve and find new paths; when these paths are revealed as opportunities, it is vital to pursue them rapidly, leading to enormous changes in a short time span. Evolution does not proceed linearly but alternates between long periods of stasis and short but very intense periods of change, which is revealed in how Modigliana returned to prominence. The “germ of evolution” may be found in most relevant new projects: the birth of

Ronchi di Castelluccio, 1974; La Casetta dei Frati, as the first winery in Modigliana, becoming a member of the Ente Tutela Vini di Romagna in Faenza, 1988; the birth of Il Pratello winery, 2000; Villa Papiano, 2001; Torre San Martino, 2002; Balia di Zola, 2004; Mutiliana, 2015; Il Teatro, 2015; and Menta e Rosmarino, 2017. Recent years have also seen the first leases of vineyards in Modigliana to be vinified as single cru by wineries with vineyards in other areas (Pian di Stantino, established in 2018).
Francesco Bordini

Francesco Bordini ^{VI}



THE “INVENTION” OF MODIGLIANA

In the 1970s, the Romagna wine scene was very different from what we know today. There were mainly, as in all of Italy, bottlers and small cooperative wineries. Few vintners directly bottled their own production, and Romagna had no wineries known outside its borders. A bottle of good Sangiovese cost around 1,500 lire [about Euros 0.77 or USD 0.80], and the Ente Vini Romagna, engaged in its promotion, fought battles that might seem naïve—even unbelievable—to us today. In Modigliana, the most important winery was the social cooperative PROVIT, which exploited the *terroir* as an excellent base for sparkling wine. In the list of Romagna DOC approvals of the year 1975, several names remain in production today: Flli Conti, Geminiani in Marzeno, Spalletti, and Fattoria Paradiso.

To set the scene, the region was moving and improving, but it had no winery capable of a real leap in quality. Then, in 1975, a Roman intellectual, the movie director and producer Gian Vittorio Baldi, arrived in Modigliana with a most challenging project: to produce great wines in a territory that had never done so. A conceptual challenge first and foremost, this venture had the potential to draw the boundaries of a new Romagna, placing it

The “Roccaccia” as seen from Via dei Frati. The current state is due to an earthquake in 1918 that resulted in the partial collapse of the structure, which was already weakened by centuries of neglect.





“It is good to know that the old Castelluccio project has become a source of inspiration for a new generation of Modigliana winemakers. More than a son, I followed my father for many years as a student, and I have been happy to witness his growing admiration from the wine world. When we arrived in Romagna, he was “the filmmaker”—that is, an eccentric divorced from agriculture; now, he is a visionary. His way of thinking about wine has made a difference: wine is also (perhaps above all) an intellectual gesture, not just a technical one. Aesthetics, style, storytelling, research, experimentation, and the coherence of ideas amplify the number of causes and, in turn, the effects themselves. It is a vision that transcends explanations limited to agronomy, winemaking methods, communication techniques, etc. Instead, it incorporates them into a general, intuitive, and creative vision that aspires to a higher goal. At the time, the goal was to make a great wine in the beautiful Modigliana landscape with a talented grape variety, Sangiovese, swaggering, as if we were in a Burgundy “climat,” in the continuous search for truth and in balance with nature”.

Gian Matteo Baldi ^{VII}

Gian Matteo Baldi. In 1997, in an interview, he said, “There is one wine that I have more in my heart than others: the Ronco della Simia ‘90. I think it is an important wine for the history of Romagna Sangiovese.” The wine was produced with Attilio Pagli in the first vintage made in Castelluccio.

on the map of quality wines. It all began by sheer chance when Baldi chose Brisighella, his family's hometown, to bury his father. He fell in love with the village and made a film there: *The Last Day of School Before Christmas Vacation*. He arrived in Castelluccio, in the municipality of Modigliana, and bought two neighboring farms. He planted vines there with a young agronomist, Remigio Bordini, an immensely talented young man who had collected Sangiovese biotypes around Romagna for the Tebano experimental field. For Castelluccio, the least productive biotypes were chosen—those discarded by a supply chain that demanded quantity and not quality. It was Bordini's intuition that led him to square the vineyards, orienting the rows as had never been seen in Romagna. When another young talent, winemaker Vittorio Fiore, arrived at Castelluccio, he found extraordinary grapes waiting for him. His first harvest was in 1979. At the suggestion of Luigi Veronelli, the project made wines from grapes from each of the single *Ronchi* (vineyards). The Veronellian idea of cru—a new, sophisticated winemaking language—and the ability to make a project outside the box were the

basis of these legendary *Ronchi*, the wines that became a myth in those years. The labels were wonderful, with portraits of the different Ronchi appearing in line drawings by the painter Domenico Dalmonte. For the first time, some Romagna wines were sold at high prices and achieved national success. The winery's first price list quoted the *Ronchi* at 8,500 lire [about Euros 4.50 or USD 4.75], exceeding even the price of Fattoria Paradiso's legendary Vigna delle Lepri. Castelluccio's was an unprecedented and original tale that brought forth wines that were subtle and austere, with an unmistakable style and a longevity that at the time could only be guessed at but has since surpassed expectations.

This period also marked the broader world's discovery of the Apennines, which stretch between Romagna and Tuscany: today Modigliana is an area of great reputation, but back then it was just a high-altitude village of men who used billhooks to wrest land from the forest to feed a stunted agriculture. Baldi's son, Gian Matteo, was the winery's driving force and true soul; he traveled everywhere to publicize those wines, the progeny of the marl and sandstone soils that give elegance

and flavor. The Baldi family sold a dream, and all the important restaurateurs of the time put those wines on their lists, enamored with a challenge that seemed impossible. "It was not easy; the village rejected us. We were outsiders attempting a feat they had never seen before, and everyone's eyes were on us. Beyond all the practical difficulties of farming," narrates Gian Matteo Baldi, "Bordini was also important in the relationship with the farmers; there was a need for someone they felt was closer, who was theirs, who also spoke the Romagnolo dialect. At first, they struggled to understand; in fact, they thought it was all a fit of madness. Then they saw the results, and in the end, everyone who came through had the gratification of feeling part of a project that had gone far."

In Modigliana, bottling had begun in the early 1970s with Romano Maglioni's La Casetta dei Frati, the first winery in Modigliana to register with the Ente tutela, now Consorzio Vini di Romagna, but the story of Castelluccio had opened a new horizon. This vision expanded the boundaries of the world as it was known from Romagna. In the 1990s, that story inspired another of Modigliana's founding experiences—Emilio

Placci's Il Pratello, with vineyards planted at 500 meters above sea level, which produced some of the most exciting wines in the entire region. He worked against the tide, with the sensitivity and talent of a great craftsman, and even today, his Sangiovese defies time and excites. There are fathers, always.

Giorgio Melandri

COMMUNITY: THE CONCEPT OF TERROIR

Wine does not “reflect” a damn thing; we had better understand that right away. Because if there is an annoying (though most often *bona fide*) statement among the many we hear constantly uttered by contemporary wine artisans, emphatically invoked by even the most conscientious and accurate winemakers, it is this: wine is the supposed “reflection” of a *terroir*. It is as if the sacrosanct purpose of downsizing interventions in the vineyard and cellar, of banishing chemistry, of accompanying the wine’s journey by limiting additives and manipulations to the indispensable minimum could ensure, ipso facto, some guarantee of transparency, of fidelity to the roots, of identity correspondence. But it does not. Things are not like that. The concept of roots is a trap; identity is often like a questionable cocktail to be found at any “Papeete beach club” [TN: an Italian derogatory expression]. Wine is another story—and the idea of *terroir*, the first codification of its meaning in relation to wine, is there to remind us. To come close to grasping its meaning, we must necessarily dismantle some of the most insidious clichés that distort our understanding of it. The first is commonplace: the dry alternative between demiurge producer and non-interventionist winemaker is a false dilemma or, if you prefer, a pseudo-truth. To eradicate its equivocal nature and neutralize its most

“To understand a wine, one must walk the vineyards,” so wrote Luigi Veronelli in a time now long gone.

This sentence inspired the film Walking Modigliana: People, vineyards, stories, produced by our association in 2021 and available for free on YouTube.

The idea of community, again, has always guided our work. Pictured is a moment of discussion during a dinner, April 20, 2023.





deforming repercussions, one needs only return with a modicum of humility to that definition, read the text, and listen to its arguments.

Terroir is a bounded geographic space in which a human community builds a collective knowledge of production throughout its history. This system is based on a series of interactions between a physical, biological place and a set of human factors. It is the work of a community that claims a leading role here, not the creative ambitions of the individual winemaker, let alone their scruples as a spectator, respectfully but passively watching events unfold. It is the process of forming collective knowledge of production, understood as a kind of know-how that demands continually reinventing methods and tools. The presence of wine as a factor of civilization in the most evolved human communities should thus be inscribed, yes, within a primarily cultural horizon, but in the bluntly anti-dogmatic sense of material culture. A mobile, therefore provisional, horizon through which to explore the relationship with the genius loci in search of balances perpetually threatened by the insurmountable precariousness of the human condition experienced by peasants.

And here we have already encountered a second commonplace idea, on closer inspection no less insidious than the first. The human community possesses such a precarious relationship with the places of its production that the “system of interactions” it is working out cannot afford the complacent luxury of crystallizing into a decalogue of technical skills to be assimilated, or protocols to be followed, more or less slavishly. Indeed, slavish is the exact opposite of original—that system of interactions claims a necessary and permanent search for originality, in the exploratory sense suggested by the relationship with an origin, by the necessities of adaptation to a time and place, by the plasticity of intelligence.

Thus, we return to wine: just as the delusion of omnipotence professed by the most tractable and predatory enology, so, too, does non-interventionist rhetoric that,



with all the hands-off bearing witnessed by the word's earliest recurrences, often ends up being equally inadequate and unserviceable to the cause of *terroir*. Here, *Modigliana docet* ["Modigliana teaches," in Latin]—what better example? If we have declared war on nature (we have not, mind you), what is the point of going it alone? In an ideal world, we would all be pacifists devoted to participatory observation, gently respectful interpretations, and so on. But in the real world, when we get our feet back on the ground and decide to get our hands dirty, if we have caused the weather to go crazy, the sun to burn our crops, the hail to stone us, and the water to pour down in rivers to flood our communities, there is little need to be picky. On the other hand, it is only through organizing with the resources of a community trained to foreshadow scenarios that it becomes possible to continually reinvent its traditions, leveraging the processual elaboration of shared knowledge. *Modigliana docet*, in the sense that it teaches us how to learn together. That is a "set of human factors" that no genuinely territorial wine can ever renounce.

Giampaolo Gravina ^{VIII}

*Giuseppe Valli photographed
in his shoemaker's shop in
Piazza Don Minzoni in
Modigliana, April 20, 2023.*

ALTITUDE, FOREST, SANDSTONE

Of the many elements that characterize the *terroir* of Modigliana, three stand out as common and recurring: altitude, woods, and sandstone. Despite their apparent simplicity, these three elements create the complex and original language of Modigliana through a synergistic interaction that enhances their individual effects and stabilizes their recognizability in different vintages.

Altitude, woods, and sandstone are products of the Apennines and their history, which began over 100 million years ago in the depths of ancient seas. Their story continued with the emergence of the central part of the Apennine ridge between 23 and 5 million years ago, and it culminated with the colonization of the present-day slopes by animals and plants. Like marls, sandstones are sedimentary rocks formed on the seabed by the accumulation of debris carried to the sea by rivers and compacted by pressure, time, and materials known as cements. Sandstones are rocks in which sand particles prevail, while marls are rocks in which clay particles prevail.

The most common cement is calcium carbonate (limestone of organic origin derived from the accumulation of shells), and less commonly, calcium sulfate (gypsum

"It is difficult to separate Modigliana from its interpretive grape variety, Sangiovese. Modigliana is a border, a limit, a place of mixing and experimentation, of new interpretations of Sangiovese, which determines its uniqueness. Watercolors always, oil tempera never; but among the watercolors we have Impressionist shaded areas, where the Sangiovese is blurred almost to change its appearance like Paul Klee (Ibola), then re-entering the pastel colors of Albrecht Dürer, finding again its identity and definition (Tramazzo), and finally back to the more canonical ones, like Egon Schiele's nudes (Acerreta), without forgetting that the mountainous borderlands are always as angular, mysterious and elusive as the woods that define them."

Riccardo Viscardi ^{IX}





derived from the evaporation of water).

In Modigliana, the predominant soils are calcareous sandstones, which are often alternated with thinner layers of calcareous marl and, sporadically, chalky marl. The sandstone gives Sangiovese soft yet bright colors and light tannins, giving the wines a marine quality: an iodized aroma and a salty taste. Modigliana, like few other Italian areas, has a precious heritage of vineyards at high altitudes. Viticulture in Modigliana develops from the bottom of the town valley (180 meters above sea level) to the higher end of narrow valleys that often exceed 500 meters above sea level. The difference in temperature between day and night is caused by the altitude, which cools the air, drives out the humidity, and lets in the sunshine. The altitude gives the grapes energy and brilliance, slows down the vine's phenological phases, favors fragrances, and enhances citrus notes in the wines: blood orange in the Sangiovese, cedar and tangerine in the white wines.

About half of Modigliana is covered by woods. Agricultural land is generally in close proximity to woods and is often interspersed with them in the form of clearings or strips, typically found in the middle and upper parts of slopes. In the eastern and southern parts of Modigliana, the forest is taller, while in the western and northern parts, it is shorter with strong hints of scrubland. Forests increase biodiversity, produce noble organic matter, and create complex ecosystems. With continuous evapotranspiration, forests cool summers and increase the benefits of altitude. Therefore, it may be said that the spicy and balsamic notes of the wines and their tannic and salty scents are owed to the forest.

Francesco Bordini

Sandstone is a sedimentary rock composed of grains of calcified sand, cemented together. Its disintegration by weathering gives rise to the sand that characterizes the soils of the Modigliana area.

On the next double page, the wonder of the high-rise banks of the Rio Paglia, or Paglia Creek.







THE FRAGILE APENNINES

“We, those condemned to excellence.”

May 2023 was a month we will remember for a lifetime. After days of heavy rain and 500 millimeters or more of water, on the evening of Tuesday, May 17, the land in Modigliana began to slide, and for hours, until the next evening, there was a crackling of broken logs and the sound of terrible thumps. Masses of earth dragged everything along, often tearing up the rocks on either side of the landslide. Roads were obliterated, vineyards made inaccessible, houses suddenly dark and floating, telephones silenced, and more water fell from the sky, seemingly without end. In just a few hours, the Modigliana area changed dramatically. The same marl and sandstone soils that give the wines their elegance and spiciness showed their full fragility. We all knew their treasures, but their weaknesses remained hidden for dozens of years, only to be suddenly revealed. The municipality of Modigliana is the worst affected in Romagna, and the 350 hectares of vines that have been the talk of the world in recent years are largely inaccessible. In agriculture, a year's work can go up in smoke; it is part of the game, but this situation demands deeper reflection. The agricultural model in the Apennines often resembles that of the plains: mass production and economies of scale. The events of May 2023 return us to the reality that the mountains cannot be directed toward generic agricultural

Via Casale, Via dei Frati, Via della Costa, Via Monte Trebbio, and Via Ibola are among the country roads most affected by the May 2023, Modigliana floods. The impact of landslides is impressive everywhere.

On page 65, the large landslide adjacent to Via Monte Trebbio, Modigliana, at the height of the Risano farm.



production; detail and quality must be at the center of all considerations:

We work with great craftsmanship, starting with the small vineyards, among the tongues of woods and overhangs, where every ditch, every bank, every path must be familiar. Each vine is tended by hand, at an exorbitant cost, but the result is unforgettable. Wine has the chance to take this very high place in the world; unfortunately, other agricultural products do not. We need to rethink the whole model. The words of Francesco Bordini, agronomist and producer, along with his brothers and sisters, at Villa Papiano, are clear: the agricultural model of the Apennines needs to be reimagined.

Together with Francesco, I am part of the association of wine producers of Modigliana, and the work we do together to tell the story of the uniqueness of our territory—hard work, but also with extraordinary results—is the only way to think about a future among these mountains that we love. We are condemned to excellence, and this awareness drives every decision we make. Over the years, we have traveled the world, and if today we can look at a devastated territory without despair, it is because of the recognition that the market has given us. We produce “fine wines” even in the perception

REDESIGNING THE FOREST

The floods of May 2023 and the weather and climatic extremes that followed, including unprecedented storms, posed a new problem in the Modigliana hills: how to manage its forests? Driving along the country roads, or what is left of them, and observing the slopes ravaged by hundreds of landslides, one is struck by the “scratches” that now furrow the woods. These are landslides that have swept away everything in their path: infrastructure, olive groves, cereal fields, pastures, and vineyards. Whole sections of woodland, this latter representing 60 to 65% of the surface area of the municipality of Modigliana, have been swept downstream. They have caused a phenomenon of hydrogeological instability that, at the moment, seems insurmountable because it is so vast, so widespread, and appears so “far away” from the prospects of any possible intervention for the recovery and “reconstruction” of productive agricultural areas. But do we really think that we can restore landslide-damaged vineyards and the infrastructure needed to manage them without intervening in the forests? Had the forests that collapsed been managed? What about the

hydraulic restoration works made during the great reforestation efforts of the second half of the last century? Were they still working? Or were they in a state of neglect and disrepair for decades? Landslide forests are, in the vast majority of cases, unmanaged, left to their own devices, or underutilized, with no defined governance. Over the past 40 years, they have often been the subject of flawed technical and operational interventions. Our forests are “fragile” structures, often newly formed, born and grown on abandoned farmland or former pastures, where a system of surface hydraulic regulation was maintained until 60–70 years ago and then neglected. They are not natural forests, which are more stable structures. They need the care and attention of forestry management in order to be able to carry out their hydrogeological defensive action on our soils, which have seen the illuvial layer give way and slide, the very layer where forest plants act with their root systems. Today, it is necessary to overcome the negligence of public authorities and owners. We need to manage the forests as well as the planning and construction of new hydraulic works within them. Further, we need forest management plans that are not just on paper but are implemented and monitored. Regulations are not enough; actual planning and forest management are badly needed. A new requirement is now needed 100 years after the approval of the law that established the protection of the

hydrogeological status of the territory (“vincolo idrogeologico”): that of forest management. Today, it is necessary to work together at the technical level: geologists, pedologists, agronomists, and foresters must collaborate to redesign a model of forest management that is first and foremost an active hydrogeological defense of the land and, in particular, of top-quality viticulture. The forest, if correctly managed, can fulfill this role. The technical and economic aspects must be reconciled and, once the problems caused by the disturbances have been resolved, the forestry measures must be implemented. Winegrowers who have seen their vineyards damaged or destroyed, often by the very trees that have fallen down the valley, will have to approach the forests that surround the vineyards and are “associated” with the vines with the same technical expertise, attention, and care that they apply to the cultivation of their precious vines. Forests must not only be “thought about”; they also need to be managed.

Alessandro Liverani ^x
Doctor of Forestry

of others, and this environment, however challenging, is the key factor for their originality. It has never been easy to produce here, between very low yields and long seasons, extreme slopes, summers spent between droughts and super storms, and we have to see 2023 as an opportunity to make another quantum leap, a transition that happens first and foremost in our minds.

The 20th century left us with a depopulated Apennines, unsuitable for the mass agriculture that saved Italy—destroyed after the war—from famine. In our own small way, we have been able to see these increasingly hegemonic forests and lands in a new light, and we believe this experience can serve as a model for many villages scattered throughout Italy. The idea of excellence is dangerous; it is a form of homogenization that feeds on an exhausted rhetoric, but it is also an opportunity to understand that agriculture is heterogeneous, that it features different territories and offers different models.

The biggest challenge is to tell the story of the life behind each wine bottle, to make people understand that the price is right, that wine is a way of looking at the world, that consuming food is a political act. Today, we have to accept destruction, understand that it is part of our history, and

that we may be able to return to a “strenuous normalcy” if we roll up our sleeves and work really hard. The eternal tug-of-war between water and rock is an age-old story. In Modigliana, there are marble slabs high up on the walls of houses that bear witness to a terrible flood in 1634 (*Hinc unda pervenit*—The water reached this height—, 1634) and again in 1939 and 2014. We are the guardians of all this, and we need to tell you now more than ever that we are fully aware of a balance that is always precarious. You do not win or lose; you work hard, and, fortunately, the result is often wonderful.

At this moment, it is important to continue talking about wine, about the unique range of aromas that Sangiovese expresses here, the balsamic spiciness, the elegance, and the longevity of the wines. In every great history, there are defeats, revolutions, and rebirths. What I can testify to is the desire to talk about the future, to rediscover the magic I feel every time I drive along the roads that climb the three valleys of Modigliana, to relate to the marl and sandstone walls without fear, to bring back to the center of everything the challenge that has been our passion for years.

Giorgio Melandri



MODIGLIANA *Rosso*

Modigliana, instructions for use.

For wine lovers, there is always magic in discovery, and from the very beginning, Modigliana has appeared as the most important novelty in the panorama of areas traditionally devoted to Sangiovese. Over time, the vintages have shown expression and character traceable to precise original elements that represent a common heritage capable of overcoming an emergency such as that triggered by the water and mud catastrophe of late spring 2023.

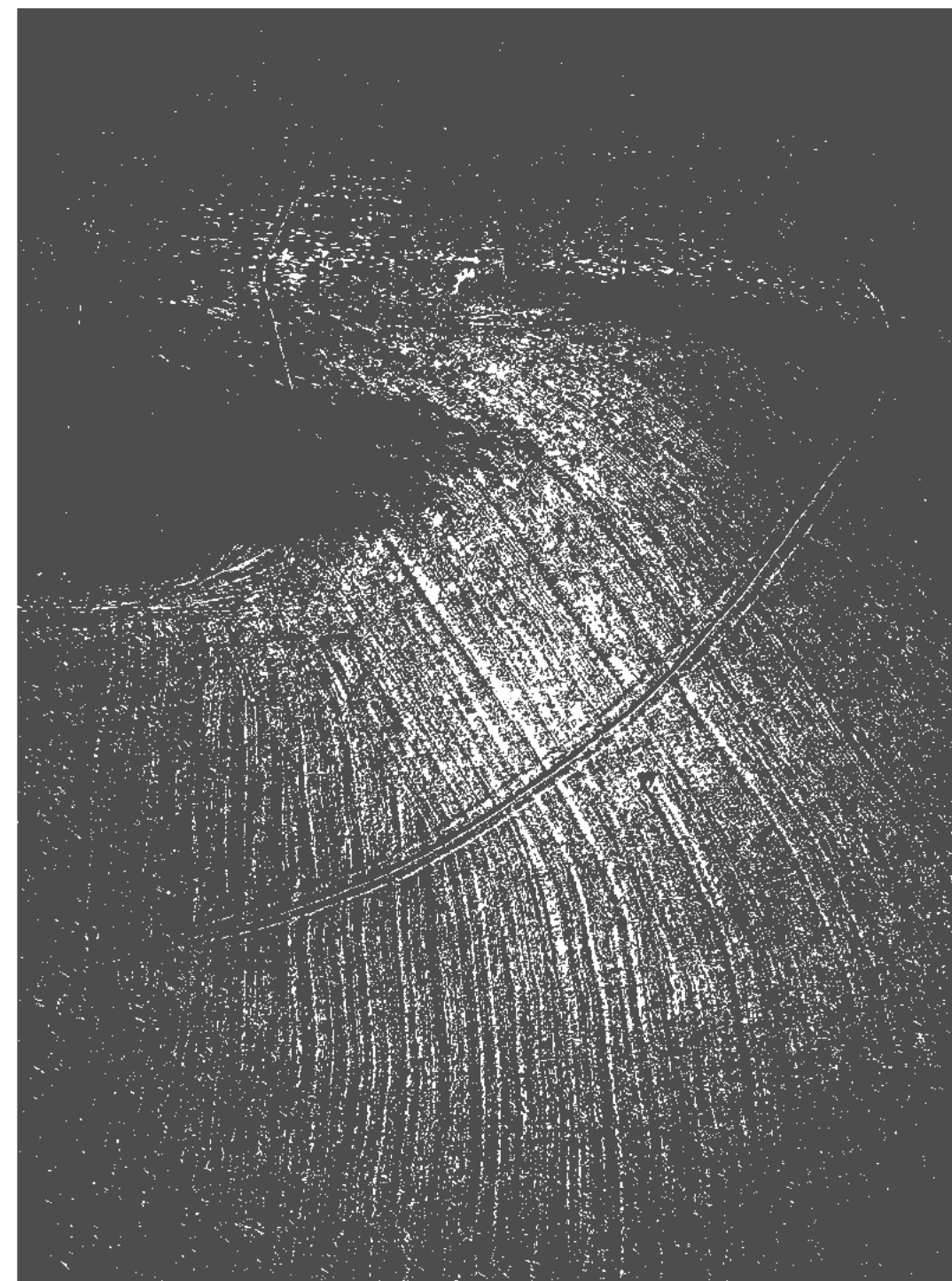
I first visited the Ibòla Valley and Modigliana at the beginning of 2016 and have returned at least once a year since: it was love at first sight, cemented by Elsa¹³ Fregnani's amazing *cappelletti*. Wine is an important part of daily life here, and it is futile to try to isolate it from the community that gave birth to it.

Acerreta, Tramazzo, and Ibòla are the three valleys in which five areas are identified, further defined by the matrix of soils that encapsulate the specificity of Modigliana, where Sangiovese expresses its distinctive character with precision,

¹³ Elsa Fregnani is a local "sfoglina" or *pasta*-maker; the eggs-and-cheese-stuffed *pasta* "cappelletti" are a local specialty for which Elsa is known well beyond the village's borders. Her "bottega" *Antichi Sapori*—Ancient Flavours—, where the villagers buy her hand-made pasta to cook at home or eat right there on the spot "fatta, cotta e mangiata"—made, cooked and eaten—, can be found 50 yards from the only streetlight at the center of the village (she is now retired but her successors are keeping up with her tradition).

*Opposite, the
Acereta Valley
landscape.*

*On the next
page, butcher
Stefano Gentilini
in his store in the
historic center
of the village.*



developing over time a complexity as fascinating as it is rich in personality. It is precisely the complex and fruitful interaction between the land and the grape variety that has allowed the wines of the three valleys to emerge with brilliant clarity and immediate recognizability, proving also capable of completing the expressive range of Sangiovese along the Florence–Faenza railway line: after the austere Rufina and before the red clays of Brisighella and Marzeno, these wines are born in vineyards nestled in the great forests and rooted in rocky, gnarled soils to the limits of the hills that become the Apennines. For this reason, Modigliana is a special place, its wines expressing themselves with truly unique spices and nuances: the grape variety becomes a tool to give voice to the small differences of a wonderful *vin de terroir*, yet to be discovered and mapped in all its details. Uncorking a Modigliana is a joyful and splendid habit, even if the bottles bearing this precious indication are rather rare and are regularly found only in the selections of the most sensitive wine bars, wine merchants, and restaurateurs—but you already know that.

Paolo Trimani ^{XI}

“I have always appreciated the unpredictability of Modigliana’s wines. In the glass, there is something that goes far beyond what one would expect from Sangiovese, beyond the influence of the high altitude and the rich marl and sandstone soils. The best reds produced on these hills have a dual character that strikes me: they are always rich in light, distinct in profile, and darker in undertone. On the one hand, there is aromatic finesse, floral nuances, and the fragrance of fruit: Modigliana’s gentle smile. On the other hand, a contemplative profile emerges, shaped by spices, sharp acidity, and unexpected earthy notes. In the glass, these two aspects constantly switch places, and often, just when you think you have figured them out, they have already changed, tricking you yet again. They are hard to pin down to a single pattern. They can be lean and flavorful or more concentrated, yet progressive and vertical. They can fool you into thinking there is oak when there is not. Evolution is their hallmark. They are a mystery and a constant source of fascination, even for those who find themselves tasting them frequently—and with great pleasure—at fine dining tables throughout Italy and beyond.”

Lorenzo Ruggeri ^{XII}





MODIGLIANA BIANCO

As you go up the Marzeno stream, the world changes dramatically. In just a few kilometers, you can reach altitudes of up to 1,000 meters at the highest points. Here, in the foothills of the Tuscan Romagna Apennines, Modigliana's vine growers work under extreme conditions that result in reds and whites with strong personalities. Clays have given way to marls and sandstones, the climate is cooler, and the forest that covers most of the territory is a great ally, guaranteeing freshness even in the hottest years. The vineyards, extending into the three valleys of Acerreta, Tramazzo, and Ibòla, are smaller than in the rest of Romagna and are characterized by steep slopes and a wide range of temperature excursions. The Modigliana producers all claim the subzone on their labels, sending a strong message: the territory is the protagonist, and the grape variety is only a tool to express it, whether in making red or white wine. The latter has recently been granted its own recognition, with the *Romagna DOC Bianco Modigliana* appearing on labels as of 2022.

As in the rest of Romagna, Trebbiano Romagnolo has always been predominant in Modigliana, flanked here by Chardonnay and used for sparkling wine bases valued for their high acidity, a consequence of the altitude. Today, these same vines are resisting climatic

There is an iconic wine that opened the "white season" in Modigliana, the "Ronco del Re" produced by Castelluccio back in the 1980s. It was a legendary wine, served to Gorbachev (General Secretary of the Communist Party –later President– of the Soviet Union) at the gala dinner during his 1989 visit to the Quirinale¹⁴. Another icon is "Le Campore" from Emilio Placci's Il Pratello winery, a wine of impressive longevity built on the Chardonnay-Sauvignon Blanc pairing.

The 2002 is still an incredible wine. The narrative is made of this story and a unique environment; it is the soul of the mountain brought into the glass.

On the next page, marls and sandstones disintegrate in response to rain, sunshine, and ice.

¹⁴ The Quirinale palace is the official residence of the President of the Italian Republic, in Rome.



changes and expressing themselves in the glass as territorial wines of extreme elegance. They share traits independent of vintage and producer: austerity, freshness, finesse, sapidity, and great longevity. Three grape varieties are allowed: Trebbiano Romagnolo, with its austerity and freshness, Chardonnay, with its delicate fruitiness, and Sauvignon Blanc, which here breaks away from its more obvious aromatic themes and travels through time with a repertoire of herbaceous and woody scents. These are vines that have a history in Modigliana and are great interpreters of local themes. The new DOC regulation requires at least 60% Trebbiano Romagnolo. The remainder (40%) can be any combination of the other two varieties. For the new DOC, the ministry required a dominant variety identified as Trebbiano Romagnolo. Unfortunately, this choice left out two of the most iconic white wines in all of Romagna: Castelluccio's Ronco del Re, made with 100% Sauvignon Blanc, and Le Campore of Pratello, a wine made with a blend of Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay. These two wines confirm the longevity of the white wines of Modigliana and will hopefully one day be included in the DOC. It would be quite a success because the territory of Modigliana, through the winemakers who care for it and interpret it, gives life to white wines with a free spirit and a marked finesse that goes beyond the grape variety itself.

Åsa Johansson ^{xiii}



THE PORTRAITS

IL PRATELLO



Emilio Placci lives in the middle of the woods of the Ibòla Valley, and it is here that he has produced some of the most exciting wines in Romagna, immersed in the beauty of a landscape that alternates between rocks and woods, mountain profiles and the flight paths of birds.

Emilio's wines are dark and dense, as long-lived as the cypress trees that stand in front of his stone house, full of details and twists, of scents that come in bursts and change relentlessly.

In 1991, Emilio Placci planted vines at an altitude of 600 meters, elbow to elbow with chestnut trees, in the shallow soils that hide the marl and sandstone rocks. The first vintage bottled, 1998, still wins the challenge of time, exhaling the balsamic scents that are the signature of the Modigliana *terroir*.

From there, a series of memorable vintages, with wines that have always been an authentic testimony, full of the poetry of life in the mountains, between wood-burning stoves and clear, frosty nights in winter, dawn and evenings full of wind and forest scents in summer.

Emilio Placci's challenge was visionary: to interpret a high altitude considered almost impossible with the weapons of patience and respect, and with winemaking guided by a unique sensitivity and great experience.

In 2018, Placci left the old Pratelto house, moved a few hundred meters away, and entered a new season, in which he would face an old obsession of his, Albana, ushering in a second



chapter of a beautiful story that is having another moment of great success as it involves more and more young people and enthusiasts.

Gianni Fabrizio ^{XIV}

Il Pratello is also a site for agrotourism, where you can live an extraordinary Apennines experience: wild herbs, mushrooms, game, pastries made with ancient local grains and farm eggs, all accompanied by wines from the winery's historical cellar. By reservation only.

Il Pratello
Via Morana, 14
47015 Modigliana (FC)
Phone +39 (0)546 942038
Cell. +39 335 1358728
info@ilpratello.net
www.ilpratello.net

IL TEATRO



I met Luca and Stefania on a winter's day at the beginning of their winemaking careers. Their refuge is a vertical enchantment between the Ibòla Valley and the sky. That early afternoon, there was a light breeze, as is often the case in Modigliana, and the sun was shining. I remember a long hillock of hanging olive trees, unusual in Romagna, on the slope leading up to the company's headquarters: through the foliage, between the waving branches, panoramic views of the Apennines took in the farmhouses and vineyards cloistered along the mountains. I liked Luca from the start: I liked his clear ideas, his willingness to dialogue, his easygoing manner, his talent for hospitality, his passion for cooking and for *Fiorentina* (Florence's football team), his love for Stefania and their children, and I liked the wines, which I had always admired. They tell the story of the woods, the hills, and the rocks of Modigliana. The restless and unpredictable nature, the spontaneous reluctance, the dark timber, the agile dynamics, the acidity that, instead of offending the palate, colors it: this is the landscape that heartens me about the Sangioveses conceived by Luca and Stefania—Violano, La Roncia, Atto II—and even the Trebbiano: I Vespri. Where so many bottles on the market are purged of any specific character to the point of becoming harmless, stateless, Luca and Stefania choose



the path of originality, temperament, of their own earth—pure luck. Lucky is Romagna—lucky are we—to be able to count on Luca Monduzzi and Stefania Montanari, leading actors on the theatrical stage of Modigliana, and, at the same time, among the most appreciated winemakers in the entire region. They deserve every success because they make wines that carry in themselves everything that cannot be reproduced on the table, for which it takes courage: the rare beauty of places, the scars and shadows of ancient valleys, the gaps filled with dreams that are the poetry of life.

Francesco Falcone ^{xv}

Il Teatro is also an agrotourism-based country estate where you can dine by reservation. Here, the tales of the wine come across the table.

Il Teatro
Via Monte Trebbio, 17
Modigliana (FC)
Tel. +39 335 1358688
ilteatrodivino@icloud.com
Facebook: @ilteatromodigliana

LA CASETTA DEI FRATI



Maria Adele and Renzo's paths crossed in 1970. Although they would never leave each other again, it was only in 2005 that they set foot in the vines in Renzo's hometown of Modigliana, when Renzo returned home to Casetta, a farm that derives its name from an ancient water easement brought to a nearby monastery. Hence, "Casetta dei Frati," the "friars' little home."

Thanks to its marl and sandstone soils, Modigliana can produce subtle, mineral, and refined wines provided it finds people who can put the territory before their own oenological and taste preferences. This select group includes not only Maria Adele and Renzo as re-founders of La Casetta dei Frati, but also Remigio and Francesco Bordini, grape and wine technical experts by trade but, first and foremost, close friends of Maria Adele and Renzo, as well as Rollin Soles, a Texas winemaker and friend of the couple who opened Renzo's eyes to Stelvin screw caps—new, state-of-the-art lids for wine bottles. Opening the screw cap of a La Casetta dei Frati bottle, especially if it has been given time to age, tells of a land capable of producing something different in Romagna: unloaded colors, precious little urge to please, wines "filled" with truth and by that nimble leanness, obtained from local and international varieties, old vineyards (up to 50–60 years), a monastic vinification, perhaps inspired by the name, in steel, cement, and exceptionally, wood, however, only in large barrels, never new. An ancient dimension, a voice as different from the generality as it is well embedded in a chorus of wine artisans: ever more in tune, ever more necessary.

Marco Tonelli ^{XVI}



The edge of the Capuchin monastery on the steep bank overlooking the Acereta stream.

La Casetta dei Frati towers over the 16th-century Capuchin monastery, 800 meters above the village of Modigliana, on the slopes of Mount San Bartolo. At the bottom right, for those watching, a cross-section of the “factory” of the Casetta grapes: the Apennine Marly Arenaceous Massif, superimposable, by composition, on the land of Burgundy and Champagne, washed, precisely, by the Marne River (“marne” happens to be the French translation of the English word “marl” identifying the sedimentary rock formed on ancient sea bottoms by marine turbidity currents over millions and millions of years, as in the soils of Modigliana). The Modiglianesi white and red wines, with all humility, hint at the famous Côteaux Champenois AOC wines, firm and very noble, from this marly French region, if only because of the soil composition. La Casetta desires this for itself and for those who believe in its wines.

La Casetta dei Frati
Via dei Frati, 8 - 47015 Modigliana (FC)
renzomaria.morresi@morresi.com
Tel. +39 (0)546 940628
+39 (0)51 399 822
Cell. +39 348 2200167

MENTA & ROSMARINO



It almost sounds like a nursery rhyme, the name, which is also the title of the sweetest of Zuccherò's¹⁵ songs, chosen by Luciano's daughter, Valentina, to christen her father's company when Luciano, with his friend Francesco, adopted the first rows of vines along Via San Casciano in 2017. Cheerful and friendly, the former, a carpenter by profession, and the latter, a thoughtful and sharp surveyor, are the combination that inhabits, animates, and moves the wines (as well as the honey and olive oil) of Menta & Rosmarino. This company promises, and with good reason, nothing but the most accurate reading of the Ibòla Valley and Acereta Valley territories.

At different altitudes (260–290 meters above sea level on one side and 400–440 meters on the other), every single vine acquired, extricated with blood, sweat, and tears from the brambles of the forest, is the voice of the land. This voice expresses itself every year in the notes of a lyrical Trebbiano, in the rhythms of a Ciliegiole, and in the pitches of a Sangiovese. Then, of course, there is the vintage year, but, regardless of the year, Francesco and Luciano have always chosen without hesitation, both in the vineyard and in the cellar, to limit their intervention to zero to ensure that the territorial color may be recognizable, never too rustic, even if proudly vernacular. Thus, from vineyards that are 20

¹⁵ "Zuccherò" is a rather popular Italian musician and singer.



and 50 years old comes a youthful but not juvenile winery, the daughter of a model as simple as it is ambitious that comes to them from their cousins in France and Piedmont and enlivens the bottles, right from the labels, with their primitivist style, of a wine whose precise territorial essence corresponds to a manifest universal value.

Leila Salimbeni ^{XVII}

Francesco and Luciano, here with Luciano's daughter, Valentina, cultivate vines on two sets of vineyards: one in Oltreibòla and the other in Acereta. The partners have recovered old vineyards with patient work in the countryside. The valorization of this heritage is an asset for the whole territory, restoring the quality of vineyards that are up to 60–70 years old.

Menta & Rosmarino
Via San Casciano - 47015 Modigliana (FC)
Tel. +39 335 1227105
francesco@mentaerosmarinovini.it

MUTILIANA



It is not easy to write about Giorgio Melandri, a man who is many things at once and who does everything well, with rigor and care.

However, I must write about him, so I will start with what is a fixed point for me: Giorgio is endowed with a special talent, his vision. He is able to grasp what surrounds him and transform it into reality.

Here, then, if it is normally said that good wine is made in the vineyard, in the particular case of Giorgio Melandri, good wine, his good wine, is born in his head before it is made in the field. After years of working as a journalist and communicator, Giorgio decided in 2013 to leave the world of words, at least occasionally, in favor of winemaking, which for him is the highest expression of the relationship between humankind and nature.

He does this with his Mutiliana project, built on the intuition that the Acereta, Tramazzo, and Ibòla valleys are three solo singers defined by fascinating and clear-cut differences. The first vintage was made in 2015.

Today, Giorgio is redrawing the canons of Modigliana, detailing the history of these Apennine places in an original and fruitful way, as perhaps no one has ever done before. But this is not just an abstract operation; Giorgio's thoughtful gaze also attends to pragmatic matters, such as the careful selection of small, ideal plots across the three *terroirs*, minimalist winemaking in cement, and the meticulous selection of corks.

Nothing is left to chance; nothing is left unloved.

In this way, his labels manage to sketch a precise geography of the different moods of the valleys and deliver exciting tastes. Last but not least, Giorgio Melandri must be acknowledged for the merit of having succeeded, thanks to his ability to combine



practicality with intellect and emotion, in transforming his personal vision into a collective one. Thus, he has become an indispensable point of reference for deepening and sharing the Modigliana territory as a whole.

Federica Randazzo ^{XVIII}

Mutiliana
Phone +39 329 5433483
giorgiomelandri65@gmail.com
www.mutiliana.it

PIAN DI STANTINO



Andrea Peradotto loves art in all its forms. He loves the breath of the blues that comes from his harmonica when he plays in the villages of the valleys where he was born and grew up.

He loves getting lost and stopping to contemplate the infinite colors of nature as he travels every day along white roads and mule tracks to his place of work: the Apennines.

His vineyards are several kilometers apart, hidden by woods, wedged between valleys, and furrowed by the Montone and Tramazzo rivers. Andrea is an artisan, so the result of his work, his wine, is the child of the effort of his hands and his creative thinking.

He reclaims abandoned vineyards to restore the dignity of mountain agriculture.

In his wines, he seeks not only the expression of grape variety, but above all the complexity of the Apennine soil.

Simone Zoli ^{XIX}



Andrea Peradotto has identified a collection of ancient vineyards scattered between the valleys of the Montone and Tramazzo rivers, amid the woods of the Apennines, which climb to significant heights. His experience is original and fascinating, and he could be called a globetrotting winemaker, committed to traveling between rows, immersed in the beauty of places now almost uninhabited.

Az. Agr. Pian di Stantino
Via Isola, 23
47019 Tredozio (FC)
Phone +39 320 7979506
www.piandistantino.it

RONCHI DI CASTELLUCCIO



Ronchi di Castelluccio was, unquestionably, a pioneer of winemaking excellence in Romagna. A bold vision conceived by founder Gian Vittorio Baldi, who envisioned creating an ambitious winery with strong roots in the territory. It is impossible not to be impressed by the integrity and biodiversity of the hills between Brisighella and Modigliana, straddling the provinces of Forlì and Ravenna, at altitudes of 253 to 411 meters, with a gradient of nearly 40 percent that makes the vintner's work hard but rewarding.

These conditions seemed as visionary at the time as they are futuristic today, because of their intrinsic ability to hold their own against the effects of climate change. Moreover, this mesoclimatic and pedological context allows production in line with contemporary taste criteria, more oriented toward elegance, finesse, drinkability, and agility, without being slender or banal, while firmly maintaining zonal affluence.

Baldi's visionary insights underpin the contemporary revitalization project conducted by brothers Aldo Mario and Paolo Giovanni Rametta, who, supported by agronomist Francesco Bordini (son of Remigio, who, together with winemaker Vittorio Fiore, contributed to the company's original rise), have returned to bring prestige to this important winemaking entity in Romagna. They have achieved this by re-vinifying each parcel individually: the historic "crus"



of Ronco dei Ciliegi, Ronco della Simia, Ronco Casone, and Ronco del Re, and the “new” of Sottovento and Buco Del Prete. The renewed goal of the Ronchi di Castelluccio winery is to enhance the peculiarities of the *terroir* and the different varieties, respecting tradition, adopting a sustainable approach, and explicitly enhancing the identity of the land and grapes, with personality but without excesses or distortions of any kind. A piece of Romagna’s oenological history is returning to tell its story through new interpreters of the lands and labels that have elevated the perception of wine from this area in earlier times when both the wines and the micro-region were wholly unknown, and that can give further momentum to an area that is growing in quality but also needs to evolve in terms of product positioning.

Francesco Saverio Russo

Castelluccio borders the village of Brisighella, only 7 kilometers away, which always remains in view as one walks through the vineyards.

Ronchi di Castelluccio
Via Tramonto, 15
47015 Modigliana (FC)
Phone +39 (0)546 942486
www.ronchidicastelluccio.com
info.ronchidicastelluccio@rdcpdd.com

VILLA PAPIANO



The Bordini Dynasty

To speak of Sangiovese is to speak of the testimony of the Bordini family. No other family has such a strong bond with this exceptional grape variety, with decades of experience in its cultivation. Remigio Bordini laid the foundations for quality Sangiovese in Modigliana, playing a key role in the founding of the epic Ronchi di Castelluccio estate, 500 meters above sea level in the Apennines, on the Tuscan border, which has received rave reviews for its 100% single-vineyard Sangiovese wines since the early 1980s. Villa Papiano, founded in 2001 by Remigio's children, Francesco, Enrica, Giampaolo, and Maria Rosa, shares Castelluccio's crown.

With biodynamically farmed vineyards in Modigliana, Villa Papiano's wines, including a complex white made from local Trebbiano and the astonishing Vigna Probi, a single-vineyard Sangiovese from vines more than 60 years old, represent the pinnacle of Romagna and are among the best wines currently made in Italy. Lovers of Italian wine should keep a close eye on this winery.

Walter Speller ^{XX}



Villa Papiano is located at the top of the Ibòla Valley, just a stone's throw from the Montebello Forest, 320 hectares of pristine land at 700 meters above sea level, planted in the mid-20th century as an experiment with new species: conifers and deciduous trees, including cedars from all continents; several species of pine, including Pinus Brutia; Lawson's cypress; and in some, singled out groups, the Japanese larch. Montebello is still a forest where forestry research and experimentation take place, and it is a training site for the Forestry faculty of the University of Florence.

Villa Papiano
Via Ibòla, 24
47015 Modigliana (FC)
Tel. +39 338 1041271
info@villapapiano.it
www.villapapiano.it

THE MAPS

¹⁶ Definition of UGA (synonymous with MGA or Additional Geographical Mentions), necessarily included in Controlled or Protected Designation of Origin “zones” (DOC, PDO; synonyms), in Article 29 paragraph 4 of the Testo Unico della Vite e del Vino, i.e., Law of the Grape and Wine (Law 238 of 12/12/2016, revised and updated in 2020): *For PDO wines, reference may be made to “additional geographical units” smaller than the production area of the designation, located within the same production area and included in a list, provided that the product is vinified separately and specifically mentioned in the annual grape production declaration [...] These geographical units must be expressly delimited and may correspond to municipalities, hamlets, administrative areas, or defined local geographical areas. The list of additional geographical units and their delimitation shall be set out in an annex to the product specification regulation.*

¹⁷ Definition of “subzones” necessarily included in “zones” of Controlled or Protected Designation of Origin (DOC, PDO; synonyms), in Article 29 paragraph 2 of the Testo Unico del Vino (Law 238 of 12/12/2016, revised and updated in 2020): “expressly delimited areas [...] which must have environmental or traditionally known characteristics, be designated by a specific geographical, historical-geographical or administrative name, be expressly provided for in the production specification regulation and be more strictly regulated.” In other words, subzones such as MODIGLIANA, in order to be such, must be “more strictly regulated” in the PDO/DOC/DOCG production specification regulation, where the same “must [...] be expressly provided for”; moreover, they cannot refer only to geographical areas (like UGAs), but “must have environmental or traditionally known peculiarities, be designated by a specific [...] historical-geographical or administrative name.”

The following is a map of the municipality of Modigliana, offered as a proposal for the possible future inclusion of UGAs¹⁶ (Additional Geographical Units) in the specification of the DOC/PDO “Romagna Modigliana” (where Modigliana is a subzone¹⁷ of the Romagna DOC/DOP zone). The UGAs proposed by the Association Modigliana, Stella dell’Appennino, have been identified based on the following criteria:

VALTRAMAZZO

The part of the water catchment area of the Tramazzo stream, including all its tributaries, within the administrative territory of the municipality of Modigliana.

ACERETA VALLEY

The part of the water catchment area of the Acereta stream, including all its tributaries, within the administrative territory of the municipality of Modigliana.

OLTREACERETA

The residual part of the administrative territory of the municipality of Modigliana, adjacent to the Acereta Valley up to the course of the hydrographic left side of the axis of the Tramazzo-Marzeno stream, downstream and north of the confluence of the Acereta stream within the same Tramazzo-Marzeno axis.

IBÒLA VALLEY

The part of the water catchment area of the Ibòla stream, including all its tributaries, within the administrative boundaries of the Modigliana municipality.

OLTREIBÒLA

The residual part of the administrative territory of the municipality of Modigliana, adjacent to the Ibòla Valley up to the course of the hydrographic left side of the axis of the Tramazzo-Marzeno stream, downstream and north of the confluence of the Ibòla stream within the same Tramazzo-Marzeno axis.

The above additional proposed/potential subdivisions of the UGA have been identified by the Association Modigliana, Stella dell’Appennino, based on the water catchment areas of the respective valleys (e.g., Rio Albonello) and mini-valleys (e.g., Riomonte) and their slopes (e.g., Rio Paglia, whose right-hand water catchment slope alone is located in the municipality of Modigliana, and Torrente Samoggia, whose upstream basin and hydrographic left-hand slope further downstream are located in the municipality of Modigliana), except for two toponyms: Rivatella, the part of the water catchment area of the Marzeno stream situated in the municipality of Modigliana, limited to its hydrographic left side (named for a historical locality situated there); and Tossino, the part of the water catchment area of the Marzeno stream in the municipality of Modigliana, limited to its hydrographic right side (named for a historical Roman temple and locality located there).

THREE VALLEYS, FIVE SOULS

The Modigliana subzone of the Romagna DOC and DOP zone covers the entire administrative territory of the municipality of Modigliana. It was established in 2011 (with the production specification of September 22, 2011) for the Sangiovese and Sangiovese Riserva types of wine, and, in 2022 (with the production specification of May 26, 2022), the possibility of producing a subzone DOC/DOP white wine was added. The history of the Modigliana subzone is that of a homogeneous, pre-Apenne area, developed within a “bowl” that is closed and protected upstream by the Acquacheta Valley, and organized in a series of small valleys oriented from south (mountain) to north (valley), characterized by steep ridges alternating with watercourses. The general elements that characterize the Modigliana subzone are altitude, extensive forests, and loose soils with a marly arenaceous matrix. The geological history of Modigliana is entirely due to the Apenne Marly Arenaceous Formation (FMA), which dates to the Miocene epoch between 5 million and 23 million years ago. More specifically, the Modigliana soils are characterized by sedimentary layers ranging from the Serravallian epoch (11–13 million years ago) in its higher parts to the Tortonian (7–11 million years ago) in the “core” of the vineyards of the subzone, and minimally to the Messinian (5–7 million years ago) near the downstream boundary of the municipality. The three most characteristic valleys of the Modigliana subzone are located upstream of the town center, carved out by three streams (shown clockwise from east to west): Ibòla, Tramazzo, and Acereta. These three valleys, and the areas pertaining to each, produce three viticulture archetypes:

- In the Ibòla Valley and in Oltreibòla, the wines express themselves through spicy notes: pepper, cloves, cardamom, and cumin, incense, and citrus (blood-orange in the Sangiovese, tangerine and citron in the Modigliana white wines). This turns out wines that are vertical, austere, savory, and dark.

- In Valtramazzo, the wines express themselves mainly through balsamic notes—juniper, helichrysum, cypress, eucalyptus, and sage—with great freshness and elegant tannins experienced on the palate.
- In the Acereta and Oltreacereta Valleys, the wines often tend to express themselves in fruity notes (with strong hints of pomegranate and small berries), and they are more likely to be concentrated in matter and color. The tannins are tight, and over time, the wines show earthy notes reminiscent of gentian.

The entire municipal territory can be described by dividing it into five areas: the “souls” of Modigliana.

Ibòla and Oltreibòla

The soul of the **Ibòla Valley**: The narrowest and coldest of Modigliana’s valleys stretches from the center of the town toward the north-east, upstream, covered with vineyards up to 580 meters above sea level. It is characterized by stumps and high trunks of mixed oak, ash, and pine. The most prominent geological units are the Galeata and Collina members on the highest slopes; the Monte Bassana member in the central part; and the Castel del Rio member near the village, where cultivated land is limited due to the valley’s narrowness.

The soul of **Oltreibòla**: Making up the rest of the eastern quadrant of the municipality of Modigliana, Oltreibòla comprises three main areas: (i) the **Senzano Valley**, which is mainly east-facing toward the south, with little vine-growing, reaches considerable heights, and then descends toward Rocca San Casciano. The most widespread geological unit is the Galeata member and, to a lesser extent, the Civitella and Dovadola members; (ii) the **Samoggia Valley**, which descends rapidly with altitude, on very loose soils, often fresh and deep. The most widespread geological units are the Modigliana and Castel del Rio members; (iii) the wide

Albonello Valley, rich in small tributaries that form characteristic geographical units. The forest grows sparse, and downy oak appears, especially in the more calcareous areas. The most widespread geological units are the Modigliana member (the most extensive) and the Dovadola member (in the center of the proposed geographical unit).

Valtramazzo

The soul of **Valtramazzo**: The rather long valley starts, upstream, from the municipality of Modigliana and increases in altitude in the municipality of Tredozio, moving in a southerly (mountainous) direction. It is a medium-sized valley with increasing woodland density with altitude, where hornbeam and ash woods alternate with downy oak woods. The vineyards are widespread between 250 and 400 meters above sea level, but reach up to about 600 meters. The most widespread geological units are the Galeata and Collina members on the highest slopes, which are heavily wooded and host few vineyards; the Civitella member in the central part of the proposed UGA; and the Modigliana member near the village.

Acereta and Oltreacereta

The soul of the **Acereta Valley**: The longest of the three main valleys of Modigliana. Its stream has its source in Tuscany (in the province of Florence) at a considerable altitude. It enters the municipality of Modigliana flowing downstream near the tiny village of Santa Reparata, from the village of Lutirano, in the municipality of Marradi, Florence. The

vineyards are located between 200 and 500 meters above sea level. Forests are widespread and become more intense with increasing altitude. The most extensive geological units are the Galeata member on the highest slopes, the Mount Bassana and Civitella members in the central part, and the Modigliana member near the village.

The soul of **Oltreacereta**: Completing the western part of the municipality of Modigliana, the final soul of Modigliana comprises four main smaller valleys: (i) the **valley of the Rio Paglia**, which is very narrow near the border with the municipality of Brisighella and whose geological unit is the Modigliana member; (ii) the **valley of the Rio Vitisano** with its tributary, the **Rio Rivola**; and (iii) the valley of the torrent **Ebòla** with its tributaries. In these valleys, broad fields alternate with steep slopes, but the altitude remains high, and vine cultivation is widespread between 200 and 500 meters above sea level where vineyards are characterized by the Modigliana member geological units on the southernmost slopes and the Castel del Rio member in its looser variant (arenaceous rather than pelitic); (iv) the **Riomonte Valley**, at medium altitude (180–400 meters) and with significant slopes, where cultivated areas alternate with oak woods and Mediterranean scrub and where the most widespread geological units are the Castel del Rio member, which is present in its looser variant (arenaceous rather than pelitic) in the western quadrant and at higher altitudes, and those of Modigliana and Dovadola on the easternmost slopes¹⁸.

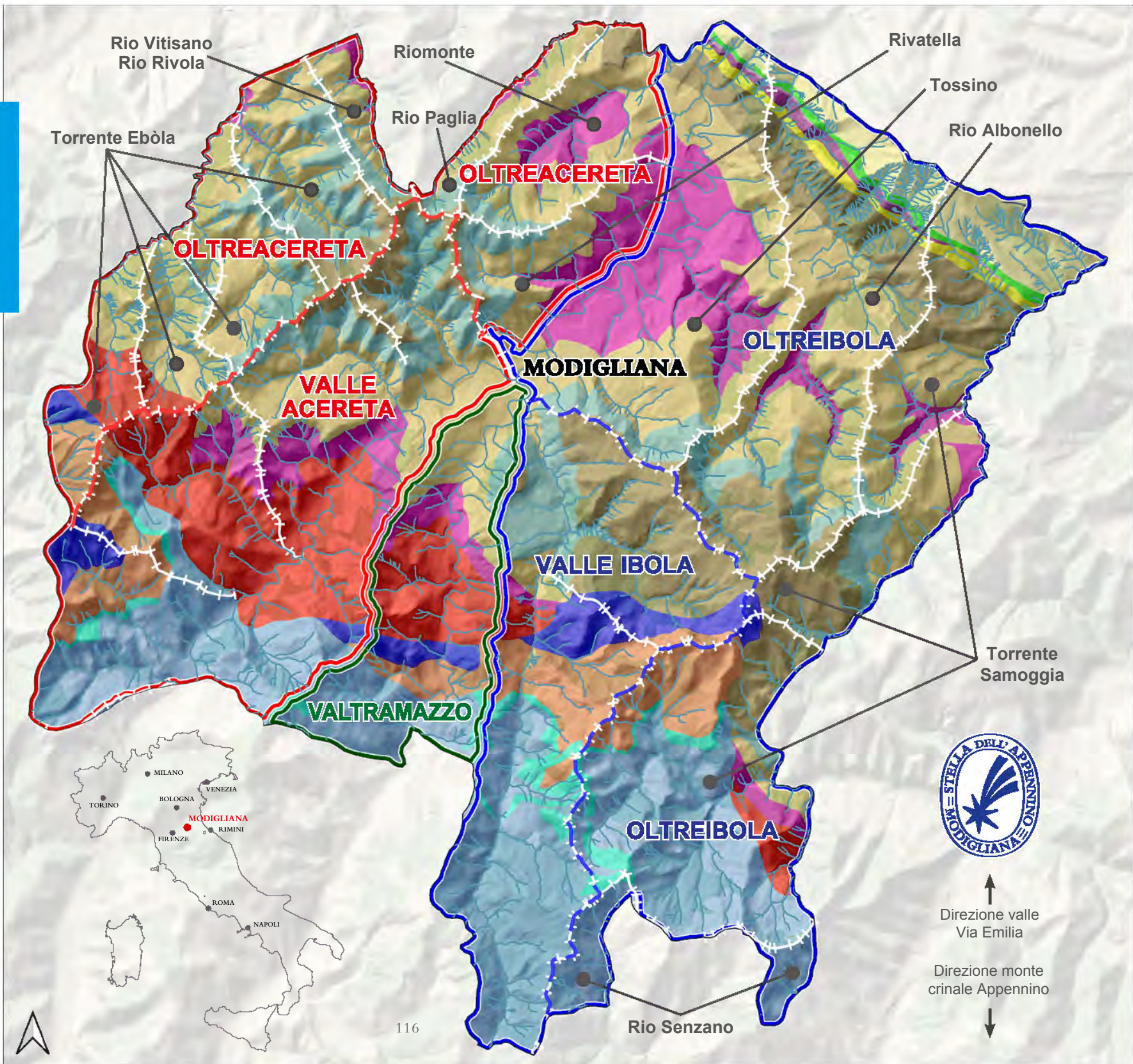
¹⁸ The most frequent geological units in the municipality of Modigliana are the following:
 - Modigliana member: predominantly marl (1:2), thin, subordinately medium, sandstone beds;
 - Dovadola member: alternate sandstones and silty marls (1:1). - Galeata member: marly arenaceous alternation with predominantly marly intervals and predominantly sandstone intervals (1:1.1) - Civitella member: marls dominate (1:2 -1:3) medium to fine sandstones
 - Bassana member: marls predominate (1:1.8 to 1:2.5) - Castel del Rio member: dominantly sandstones, alternately sandstones and silty marls (2:1, sometimes 4.5:1) - Fontanelice member: predominant sandstones, often in laminated, amalgamated beds up to 10 meters thick.



LITHOLOGICAL¹⁹ MAP

The lithological map of the Modigliana subzone shows a high degree of homogeneity in the cultivated surface areas: it consists entirely of marine sediments, as befits its origin. Almost the entire territory is characterized by the alternation of pelitic levels (ancient clay and mud deposits) and stony levels, consisting of marls and sandstones. The disintegration of these rocks produces loose soils with medium and high limestone content. Sporadic occurrences of non-calcareous rocks of pelitic origin: their decomposition produces soils with a low lime content. Only in a narrow strip to the north-east, near the municipal boundary, are there clay rocks (clays, marls, and silty clays) and a very thin band of chalk, components that indicate the presence of limestone and the chalky marls that are clearly visible in this one municipal area only, which is also not planted with vines. The decomposition of these rocks produces soils that tend to be heavier. The map shows the boundaries of the five areas into which the municipality has been divided in order to better describe the wine production of the Modigliana subzone.

¹⁹ A map showing the composition of the soil at the surface-level.



GEOLOGICAL²⁰ MAP

The map of the Modigliana subzone shows a high degree of homogeneity among the geological units, all of which can be traced to the Apennine Marly Arenaceous Massif. The entire territory of Modigliana is therefore composed of sedimentary rocks of marine origin, with alternating layers of sandy and marnous sediments of different ages, and limestones of different colors and hardness. The most widespread geological units are the arenaceous marls of the Modigliana, Galeata, and Civitella members.

There are also two geological units on the map that are predominantly sandstone and therefore feature sandier soils (the Castel del Rio member, near the north-eastern border of the municipality, and the Fontanelice member, on the ridges of the central-western belt of the municipality), as well as more clayey (Cella marl) and calcareous ("spungone") geological units.

²⁰ Map showing the in-depth composition of the soil

THE LABELS

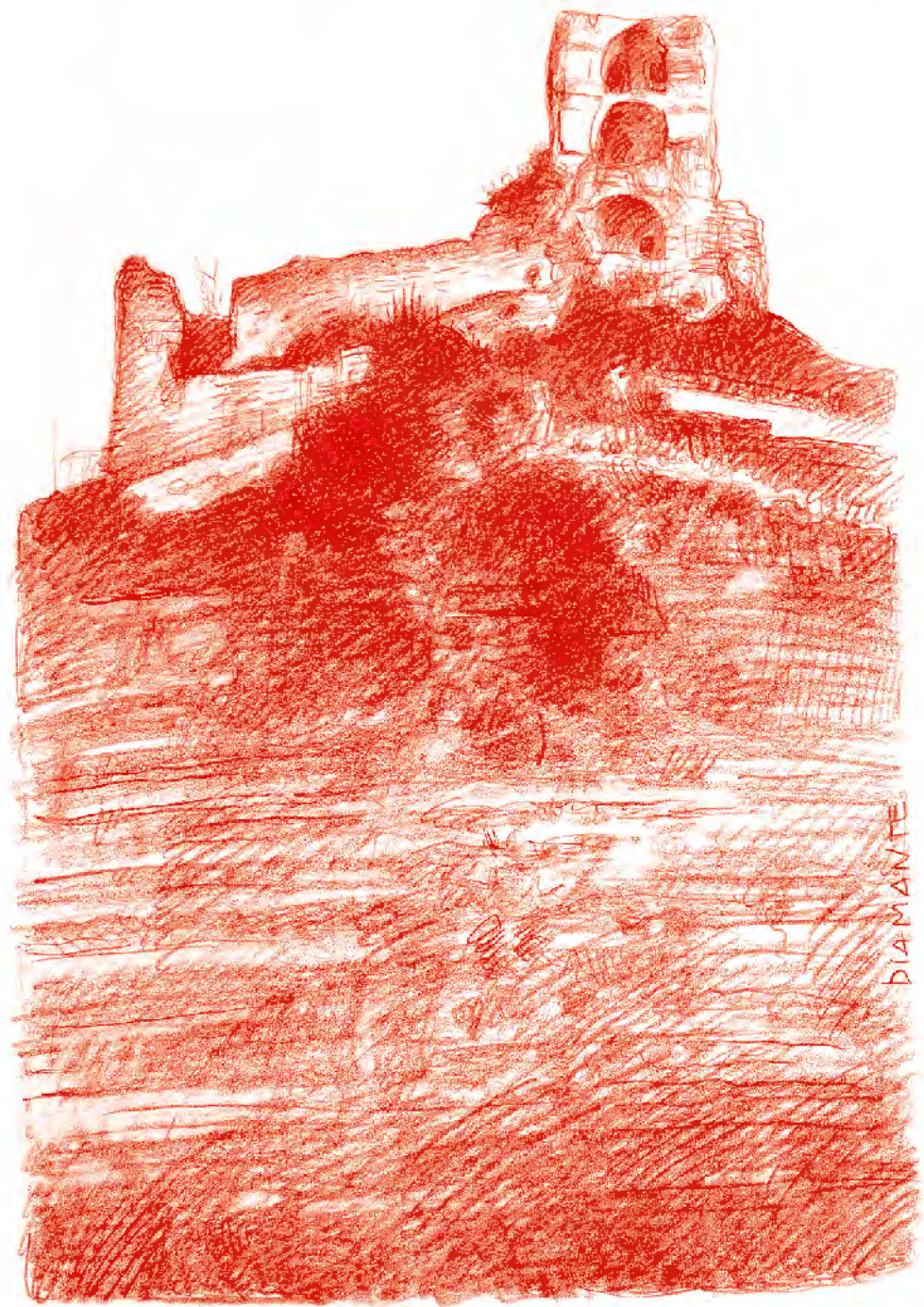
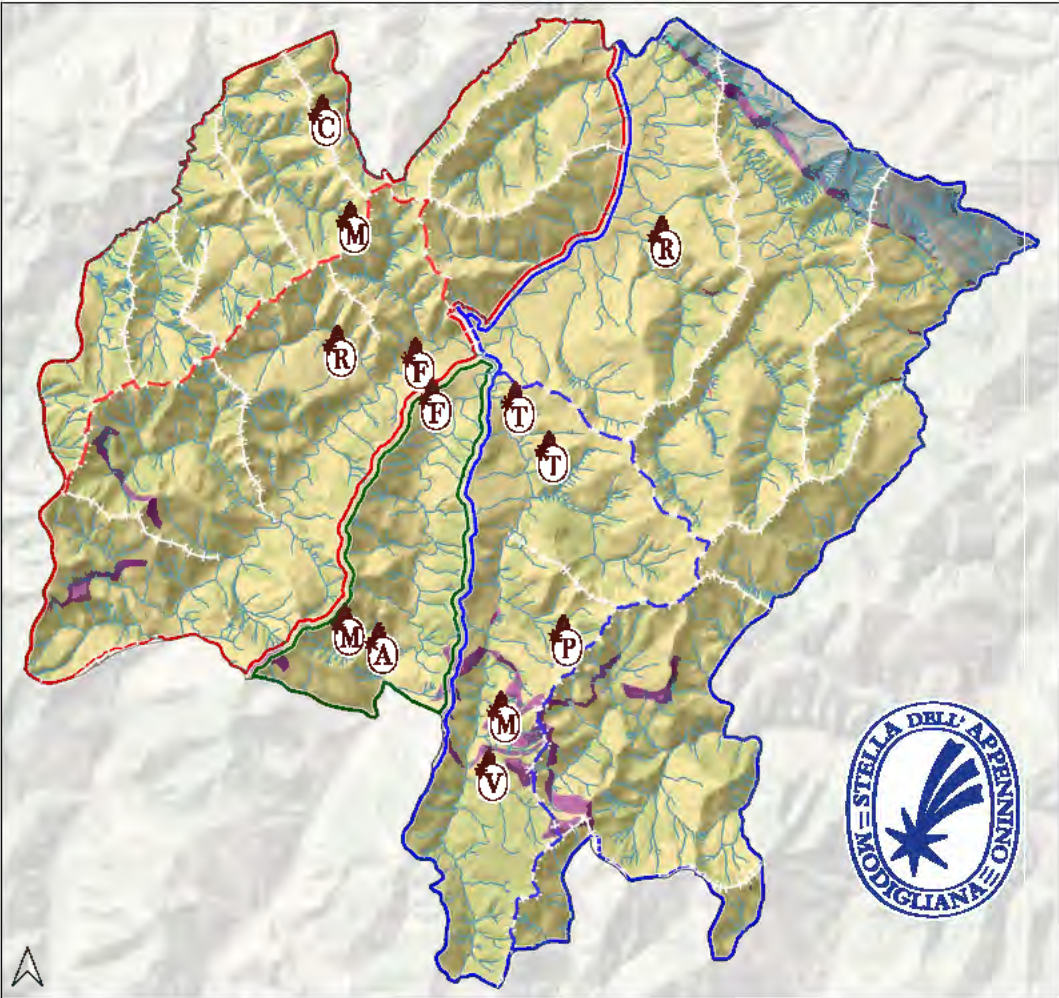


Illustration by Patrizia Diamante

THE WINERIES' MAP



-  Il Pratello
-  Il Teatro
-  Menta & Rosmarino
-  Casetta dei Frati
-  Mutiliana
-  Pian di Stantino
-  Ronchi di Castelluccio
-  Villa Papiano

IL PRATELLO

Emilio Placci's wines are the offspring of artisanal winemaking that respects the territorial character and the very slow pace of wine maturation. Sangiovese plays a leading role in its production, and the winery's two historic wines, Mantignano and Badia Raustignolo, have shaped the history of their *terroir*, capable of extraordinary longevity and evolutionary potential. Since 2018, the winery's history has changed, and with its new location, two new projects have emerged: a Sangiovese from a very old vineyard and an austere, elegant Albana, fully in the character of a mountain wine. A collection of "single barrel" wines bottled from a selection of the last barrels in the old cellar, before the move, also appeared in 2023.



Via Morana, 14 - Modigliana (FC), Italy
Phone +39 (0)546 942038
Cell. +39 335 1358728
info@ilpratello.net - www.ilpratello.net

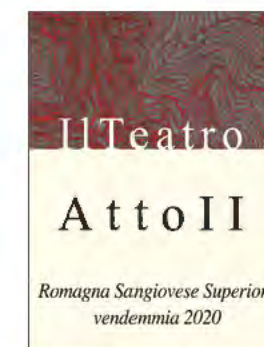


IL TEATRO

"Atto II" is a pure Sangiovese, son of the vinification of the vineyard in the lowest part of the Modigliana estate on the Trebbio hill (320 meters above sea level) and that of the Tazzano, a secondary valley that opens into the Ibòla Valley. The vines are gifted with warm textures thanks to good south-west exposure and the presence of clay, which enriches their structure. "Violano" is a pure Sangiovese, the fruit of the highest and oldest vineyard on the Monte Trebbio, Modigliana. It is located 350 meters above sea level and was planted in 1960. Facing south-west, it is usually the last harvest of the year, often in late October. "I Vespri" is a Trebbiano; the vineyard is located on Monte Trebbio, at 320 meters above sea level, on classic Modigliana soil, resting on sandstone.



Via Monte Trebbio, 17 - 47015 Modigliana (FC)
Phone. +39 335 1358688
ilteatrodivino@icloud.com
Facebook: @ilteatromodigliana



LA Casetta dei Frati

A selection of grapes on 7 hectares, now 7,000–8,000 bottles, one-quarter of its potential production, vinified vineyard by vineyard since the 1970s, accounts, in the glass, for the marly arenaceous massif of the Apennines, over 300 meters above sea level, facing north; in absolute continuity between whites and red wines and their varieties, as a testimony to an immanence of the territory that will never be tamed. Delicate aromas, fruit always fresh, if not icy-cold in taste, a green woodland note, a true Ariadne's thread, with the natural elegance of poor, loose soils. Salty mouths from the very ancient seabed, raised in steep hills; minerality from fossil microorganisms; spiciness from blue clay marls; austerity from recomposed sandstones; and extraordinary longevity.

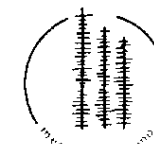


Via dei Frati 8 - 47015 Modigliana (FC), Italy
renzomaria.morresi@morresi.com
Phone +39 (0)546 940628 / +39 051 399822
Cell. +39 348 2200167



Menta & Rosmarino

Two valleys in the Modigliana Apennines, Ibòla and Acereta, are compared, both with vineyards surrounded by forest. Plots of sandy limestone matrix soils, marl, and sandstone; others are located at an altitude ranging from 260 to 440 meters above sea level. Vinification and aging in steel or cement, depending on the vintage and type of wine, with an average production of about 10,000–20,000 bottles per year depending on the quality of the year's vintage. It is in these places that Francis and Luciano produce their wines: each plot generates its own wine, wines that differ either by *terroir*, by clone, or by the age of the vines; however, wines with distinct territorial identity are always obtained with full respect for the naturalness of cultivation. Thus were born the two Sangiovese Modigliana wines, Area 8 and Area 66, and the pure Trebbiano that comes out as Modigliana Bianco Area 88.



Via San Casciano
47015 Modigliana (FC), Italy
Phone +39 335 1227105
francesco@mentaerosmarinovini.it



MUTILIANA

Giorgio Melandri selected vineyards in all three valleys that rise from Modigliana in the Apennines to produce three Sangiovese wines, one for each of the valleys, that tell the diversity of this territory without any compromise. It is a unique project in Italy, of extreme territorial reading, made using long macerations and only cement in the refinements. The result is three very different wines, capable of producing aromas and details of great originality, united simply by intense elegance and freshness. Each year, the winery produces 8,000 bottles of Modigliana Sangiovese, a pinot noir (Ecce Draco), and a white wine—a blend of different grape varieties—released as Modigliana white since 2022.



Phone +39 329 5433483
giorgiomelandri65@gmail.com
www.mutiliana.it



PIAN DI STANTINO

I started making wine in 2017, initially recovering abandoned vineyards in the high valleys of the Montone and Tramazzo, on the Tuscan-Romagna Apennines. I currently cultivate a dozen or so vineyards, mostly Sangiovese, totaling less than 3 hectares, located at altitudes between 300 and 700 m.a.s.l., aged 20 to 70 years, from which I obtain wines from spontaneous fermentations and long macerations in steel and cement containers. I produce three Sangiovese wines: one from a single vineyard in the upper Tramazzo valley in Modigliana, another from a vineyard in Monte Busca at 700 meters above sea level, and the third from small vineyards scattered between the towns of Portico and Rocca San Casciano. In 2020, I started making white wines from non-native grape varieties, located in the sandstones of Modigliana, which give the wine the salinity and minerality typical of these areas. In fact, it is precisely the geographies of these places that I try to bring out in my wines, seeking in verticality and salty mouths the story of an often impervious territory surrounded by woods.

PIANDISTANTINO

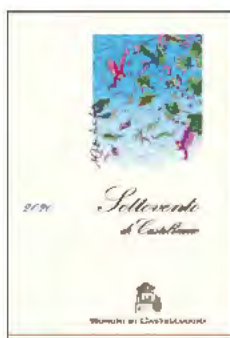
Via Isola, 23 - 47019 Tredozio (FC), Italy
Phone +39 320 7979506
www.piandistantino.it



RONCHI DI CASTELLUCCIO

The history of Castelluccio, founded by the Baldi family in the mid-1970s, allows Modigliana to demonstrate a longevity that is rare in Italy. The Ronchi actually brought to Romagna the idea of cru and an interpretation that recognized place—rather than grape variety—tells the thematic story of wine. The legendary Ronchi—Ronco del Re, Ronco Casone, Ronco Ciliegi, and Ronco della Simia—changed the identity of Romagna wine forever and are still a reference today. Since taking over the winery, the Rametta brothers have been committed to continually improving the production quality in the wake of this incredible history.

Via Tramonto, 15
47015 Modigliana (FC), Italy
Phone +39 (0)546 942486
info.ronchidicastelluccio@rdcpdd.com
www.ronchidicastelluccio.com



VILLA PAPIANO

Villa Papiano is located at the top of the Ibòla Valley, at 530 meters above sea level, immersed in forests and on loose, arenaceous, slightly calcareous soils. Our wines are vertical and long-lived, expressing lightness, flowers, and underbrush. The fine structure of our wines is the backbone of Modigliana, and salt is our marine memory. We produce wines from a single vineyard, practicing organic and biodynamic farming. We dedicate three crus to Sangiovese: Vigna Probi, Vigna Papesse, and Vigna Beccaccia, as well as three white wines: Trebbiano Strada Corniolo, Terra!, an Albana with long aging on the skins, and our Sauvignon Bianco Tresche. Our first vintage was in 2001.



VILLA PAPIANO

Via Ibola, 24 - 47015 Modigliana (FC), Italy
Phone +39 338 1041271
info@villapapiano.it - www.villapapiano.it



Afterword

(The tale of Maria Stella Petronilla, Lady Newborough, Freifrau von Ungern-Sternberg, née Chiappini, the mysterious Modiglianese from whom the Association took its name)

Before leaving you to go about your business, if you have had the patience to read this book, we owe you an explanation of the name of the Association (Modigliana, Stella dell'Appennino, or Modigliana the (Wine) Star of the Apennines). Stella, the Italian word for “star,” is also a woman’s name. The name of the Association refers to Maria Stella Petronilla, Lady Newborough, Freifrau von Ungern-Sternberg, née Chiappini (Modigliana, April 16, 1773; † Paris, December 28, 1843). Her father, Lorenzo Chiappini, was a country watchman; her mother, Vincenza Diligenti, was a maid to Countess Camilla Borghi, a Faïence aristocrat whose palace still stands in Modigliana. At the time of Maria Stella’s birth, Countess Borghi hosted in Modigliana a French couple traveling under the name of “the Comtes de Joinville.” The Comtesse de Joinville was pregnant at the same time as Vincenza, and the two women gave birth to their children

simultaneously. The Comtes de Joinville then left Modigliana with a male child, while Maria Stella Chiappini remained in Modigliana, at least for some time. A little later, Lorenzo Chiappini, until then a pauper, inexplicably applied to the city to be relieved of his post, offering to pay for a replacement himself. In 1777, he moved his family to Florence, where he was appointed commander of an archers’ platoon. As if she were an aristocrat, Maria Stella enrolled in the best private schools in Florence, where she studied drama, music, and dance. At the age of 12, she was noticed by a Welsh knight, Thomas Wynn, Lord Newborough, a 50-year-old widower who was then doing the Grand Tour in Italy with his only son, John. Lord Newborough proposed to Maria Stella, and they married at Santa Maria Novella in Florence on October 10, 1786. They lived in Florence for several years, with Maria Stella and her family receiving extravagant gifts from her wealthy husband: a Botticelli Portrait of a Young Man Holding a Roundel for her, and a villa in Fiesole with two adjoining farms for her family. In 1792, the couple moved back to Lord Newborough’s home castle in Wales, Glynllifon, and other

properties, including Bardsey Island. They spent time in London, where Maria Stella was well accepted socially, received British citizenship, and was enrolled in the Peerage of Ireland. A portrait of Maria Stella by Sarah Carpenter, now in the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, shows a beautiful young lady, self-assured, with bare shoulders and rather vivid eyes. A marble bust by Joseph Nollekens, now in the Stockholm Museum of Modern Art, shows her in 1797–1798 as a smiling, neoclassical, more mature woman, dressed “à la paysanne,” in traditional peasant style, with an uncovered breast and a confident smile. John Wynn died in 1800. However, Maria Stella bore Lord Newborough two more children: Thomas (1802) and Spencer (1803). When her husband died in 1807, Maria Stella, then 34, was left with a handsome stipend that enabled her to easily maintain her lifestyle while overseeing the wealth of her children, the heirs of Lord Newborough.

In 1810, while on vacation, Maria Stella met and fell in love with the Russian Estonian Baron Edward von Ungern-Sternberg, a cousin of the Russian tsar who was nine years her junior. They soon

married, settled in St. Petersburg, and participated in the social life of the tsar’s court. Because of this remarriage, Maria Stella was forced to relinquish her parental authority over her British children, following a specific clause in her late first husband’s will. However, she maintained a good relationship with them until Thomas died in 1832 and with Spencer until her own death.

In 1811, Maria Stella gave birth to Edward Jr., her third child and the Baron’s first. However, her second marriage was not as happy as she might have hoped, and when she received a letter in 1818 from her father, who was ill in Florence, she hurried there with Edward Jr. to assist Lorenzo until his death in 1821, three years later. Subsequently, a Florentine notary gave her a letter from her father, to be read after his death, informing her that she was not Lorenzo and Vincenza’s daughter: she had been “exchanged” with money for their male child. The letter said no more.

The letter upset Maria Stella for the rest of her life. She became obsessed, returned to Modigliana, and spoke with everyone who was still alive from her childhood. She learned about the hospitality of the

Countess Borghi to the Comtes de Joinville at the time of her birth, that they were none other than Louis Philippe d'Orléans and Louise Marie Adelaide de Bourbon-Penthièvre, traveling incognito under a title belonging to the d'Orléans family. Maria Stella decided to use all her money and influence to regain her “d'Orléans” name and title. First, she obtained a ruling from the ecclesiastical court of Faïence (May 29, 1824), which changed her birth certificate to that of “de Joinville”; then she moved to Paris to try and obtain recognition as a “d'Orléans,” which meant exposing the King of France, “Re Chiappini,” as the anti-royal press put it. In 1830, she published *Maria Stella, Ou, Échange Criminel D'une Demoiselle Du Plus Haut Rang Contre Un Garçon De La Condition La Plus Vile: Mémoires Écrits Par Maria Stella Elle-même*, which Louis Philippe, newly crowned King of France, made sure was confiscated throughout the country. However, an English translation appeared in the United States and the UK, and Italian and other translations were published, causing the scandal to reverberate throughout the Western world! Maria Stella's second husband traveled to Paris to retrieve their

son, Edward Jr., and bring him back to Estonia and Russia. Neither of them was ever seen again. The only family member who supported Maria Stella was her son Spencer, but he could not stop her from dissolving all her assets to be recognized as an 'Orléans. She died a mad, lonely pauper at the Hotel de Bath, 52 rue de Rivoli, Paris, on December 28, 1843. Spencer, who had traveled from England for her funeral, found her quarters empty: all the documents she had painstakingly collected were gone. The mystery of her birth remains unsolved, although the documents are plentiful and descendants of those involved are still alive, meaning a conclusive DNA analysis could be carried out if desired. Nonetheless, her name itself is a small mystery: why on earth would a poor child from Modigliana be called “Maria Stella Petronilla”? It sounds so French, almost “Marie-Étoile Pétronille,” recalling “Sainte Pétronille” (a Roman martyr from the 1st century, said to be the daughter of Saint Peter, hardly known in Italy at that time), none other than the patroness of the kings of the Franks, from Charlemagne (9th century) on, and later of France. Moreover, by all reports, Maria Stella should have been too rich

and famous to waste her time blackmailing the King of France. She must have believed deep in her heart, like Don Quixote in his fight against the windmills, that she was being robbed of her name, Marie-Etoile d'Orléans, and of her role within the French aristocracy. She wrote, her spirit untamed, “Far be it from me to make any shameful capitulation; let me perish by my own hand rather than consent to any abominable composition! I have said it, I repeat it, and I shall say it again: win or die as I have.”

We, the members of the Association of Winegrowers and Winemakers of Modigliana, decided that Stella would be a good omen for our efforts to seek and obtain recognition for Modigliana among the original “terroirs” of wine. So the Association chose a star, a three-tailed comet, as its emblem, symbolizing the three valleys, from east to south and west: Ibòla, Tramazzo, Acereta. Each valley has its own wines, its characteristic aromas, colors, flavors, and mineral taste, and yet all are children of a single, wonderfully recognizable *terroir*.

Renzo Maria Morresi

P.S. If any of you is interested in fact-checking, please read https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maria_Stella; and, in Italian, http://www.historiafaentina.it/Storia%20Attuale/baratto_modigliana.html. Also, if you have enough time and curiosity, you should delve into The Project Gutenberg eBook of The Memoirs of Maria Stella (Lady Newborough), by Herself, found at <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/56643/56643-h/56643-h.htm>; in Italian: “Chiappini Maria Stella Petronilla, Maria Stella ovvero cambio criminoso di una bambina del più alto rango con un fanciullo della più vile condizione”, Italia, 1833, republished in anastatic form by Tipolitografia Fabbri, Modigliana, 2017; see also: “Renato Zanelli, La Storia di Re Chiappini e di Maria Stella Newborough, Rivista Araldica, Roma 1930.” Contra, in French: Maurice Vitrac, Philippe-Egalité et M. Chiappini (Paris, 1907).



**Endnotes – Contributors,
in order of appearance of their
respective contributions**

I – Renzo Maria Morresi, a native of Modigliana, is a member and past president (for two terms) of the Association Modigliana, Stella dell’Appennino, which represents the municipality’s wine and olive producers. He is an international lawyer by profession. He has never forgotten his roots in Modigliana, home to the FraWines olive groves and vineyards at La Casetta dei Frati, the family business that was the first in the valley to bottle its own wines. When he and Maria Adele found themselves with an “empty nest,” their daughters all grown up (one a pediatrician and the other a university Latin professor), he immersed himself in the history and geography of Modigliana, as well as in wine. He first discovered wine in California, USA, in 1969, rediscovering it in 1980 (and drinking very well ever since!) thanks to Nerio Raccagni, patron of La Grotta in Brisighella, which held one Michelin star at the time. After Gianfranco Bolognesi’s La Frasca in Castrocaro, another Michelin-starred restaurant, La Grotta was perhaps the second-largest customer of Ronchi dei Baldi di Castelluccio, a cornerstone of Modigliana’s winemaking tradition.

II – Francesco Saverio Russo is a young Italian writer whose expertise stems not only from his studies, but also from the hundreds of thousands of kilometers he has traveled across the peninsula to explore regions and visit producers. Over the years, his experiences—documented in a newsletter and on the Wine Blog Roll portal—have allowed him to draw an incredible portrait of Italian wine. His eclectic and versatile nature has led him to branch out in many directions. He has engaged in various research, outreach, and educational collaborations. He is frequently sought out for his expertise in selecting producers and designing content for wine-related events. He has also designed a beautiful line of hand-blown glasses called Arché (<https://www.archeglass.com>).

III – Giuseppe Carrus is a native of Sardinia and a leading journalist for Gambero Rosso, editor of the Vini d’Italia/Tre Bicchieri guide, and a familiar face on the Gambero Rosso channel. He writes, travels to explore Italy’s wine regions, and actively participates in Gambero Rosso’s Vini d’Italia road show, leading tastings and events. Giuseppe, who completed a Master’s degree in food and wine journalism at Gambero Rosso after earning his Bachelor’s degree, is one of the most authoritative voices

in Italian wine. In his youth, he was a master sommelier at Cristina Bowerman’s Glass Hostaria in Rome and the creator and founder of cucina. eat in Cagliari.

IV – Antonio Boco, born in Perugia, is a native of Umbria. A food and wine journalist trained in the famous “stable” of Gambero Rosso, he began as a wine enthusiast. From there, it was a very short step to the first Master’s program in food and wine communication and journalism (2002), organized by Gambero Rosso at the newly established Città del Gusto. From that moment on, his experience has been enriched by travels, encounters, and unique occasions—what he himself calls “magical experiences.” His own words capture it well: “...a foggy afternoon in Bartolo Mascarello’s studio chatting about wine and life, the meeting with Veronelli at Critical Wine, the day with Franco Biondi Santi and the intoxicating opening of the Brunello barrels, a “bread and salami” snack with Gianni Mura. And then there were plenty of chefs and restaurants, conversations and friends, flavors I never knew existed. In short, the discovery of a whole new world. Ever since then, I’ve tried to visit every patch of land where wine is made and dine at restaurants I absolutely can’t afford.” In 2010, at the age of

36, the Grandi Cru d’Italia association awarded him the title of “Best Young Italian Wine Journalist,” which joined the one he received in February 2007, during the celebrations for the 20th anniversary of the Città del Vino, “for helping to transform the way the agri-food sector, wine, and local products are communicated into a tool for understanding and promoting Italy’s many diversities.” Antonio is eclectic and brilliant, and he leads a series of independent initiatives, most notably the magazine *Tipicamente*, edited together with his friend Paolo De Cristofaro, and *Cucinamare*, a digital guide and app curated with Fabio Starnini and dedicated to the best restaurants, beach clubs, and kiosks in Italy where one can enjoy high-quality seafood by the sea. It features nearly 200 locations along all of Italy’s coastlines, focusing on excellence, tradition, and innovation in the sector.

V – Giorgio Melandri is, to use the Anglo-Saxon term, a “wine writer” who launched his own wine production in Modigliana in 2015. His interpretation of the three valleys that rise from the village toward the Apennines’ main ridge has effectively defined the narrative of Modigliana wine and shaped its destiny forever. The Mutiliana wines—the name derives from the town’s ancient name—have brought a contemporary

interpretation of this exceptionally talented *terroir* to Italy and the world. Giorgio’s career has been long and multifaceted. He worked as a wine critic for *Slow Food Editore* and *Gambero Rosso* for 25 years, emerging as a figure of great personality and originality. He also contributed for many years to the guides *Oli d’Italia* and *Ristoranti d’Italia*. From 2007 to 2017, he served as editor of *Enologica* (the Emilia-Romagna Wine and Food Fair), publishing eleven catalogs that together remain the most comprehensive work ever written on the subject.

VI – Francesco Bordini, a native of Romagna with a degree in agriculture and a PhD in enology from the University of Bologna, works as an agronomist and is a highly regarded winemaker at various wineries in his region, as well as in Umbria, Tuscany, and Abruzzo. Together with his brothers, he founded and manages the Villa Papiano winery in Modigliana, where he has produced some of the best wines of the appellation. He has been a “game changer” for the style of Romagna wines in general, elevating them to unprecedented levels. His expertise is frequently sought after for tastings, conferences, and written contributions. He

is the president pro-tempore of the Association Modigliana, Stella dell’Appennino.

VII – Gian Matteo Baldi is the son of intellectual, producer, and film director Gian Vittorio Baldi, a “man of wine.” At a very young age, in the mid-1970s, he founded, together with his father, Ronchi dei Baldi di Castelluccio—the first winery in Romagna (or, more accurately, in Modigliana) to challenge the national market with its ambition and success. The history of Ronchi dei Baldi is one of the most prestigious stories in Italian wine, and the experience he gained in Romagna later led him to Bertani, where he served as commercial director, as well as to Feudi di San Gregorio and Sella e Mosca. Today, he is a highly regarded consultant for several Italian wineries.

VIII – Giampaolo Gravina, who passed away prematurely in 2025, was a much-loved figure in the world of Italian wine—a highly regarded storyteller-philosopher and a “reluctant” critic. He earned a degree in philosophy under Emilio Garroni at La Sapienza University in Rome and was a long-time collaborator of Prof. Edoardo Ferrario in the Aesthetics department at the same university. He hosted a program on Rai Radio 3 (*Puri spiriti*) and worked for fifteen

years as deputy editor of l’Espresso’s Guida I Vini d’Italia, until 2015. He has taught “Wine Aesthetics” in the Master’s program in wine culture at the University of Gastronomic Sciences in Pollenzo (Cuneo) and in the Master’s program in philosophy of food and wine at the Vita & Salute University in Milan. Together with Camillo Favaro, he authored the two editions of Vini e terre di Borgogna (ArteVino); with Armando Castagno and Fabio Rizzari, after publishing the books Vini da scoprire and La riscossa dei vini leggeri (Giunti), he published a small compendium of Vini Artigianali Italiani (Paolo Buongiorno Editore).

IX – Riccardo Viscardi is deputy editor of the Essential Guide to the Wines of Italy and one of the leading columnists for DoctorWine by Daniele Cernilli, a leading Italian wine publication (<https://www.doctorwine.wine/>). Of Riccardo Viscardi, we can say that he has “two arms stolen from chemistry.” That is, in fact, his real job. However, he is a great taster, primarily of Sangiovese (he is also known as Mr. Brunello) and red wines in general, though he is also quite knowledgeable about whites. Frequenting the wine world for more than 30 years, he is a deep connoisseur of the industry and its history and dynamics. His

scientific skills, moreover, make him a “technical” taster of rare competence.

X – Alessandro Liverani—a native of Modigliana, he holds a degree in forestry from the University of Florence and works as a forest expert nationally, internationally and in his local area, where he is in charge of the Montebello Forest, a unique natural site where the University of Florence organizes educational field trips. Alessandro combines his extensive practical experience with his academic expertise and a rare capacity for observation. If the “Modigliana—Stella dell’Appennino” Association has recognized the forest’s important role in the story of the region, it is thanks precisely to him and to the support he has always shown toward these “mountain” producers, to use his own words.

XI – Paolo Trimani is one of the heirs of the Trimani dynasty, winemakers in Rome since 1821. His family’s history boasts such a wealth of firsts as to put anyone to shame, most notably the publication in the 1960s of a small magazine distributed to customers—a move that predated any similar publishing initiative. Today, Paolo can be considered the living memory of Italian wine, and not a single producer fails to make their first stop in Rome on Via Goito,

where they can pass the first major test granting entry into the Italian wine community. Paolo also runs a historic venue on Via di Ripetta, Buccone, which has become his home away from home and where it is easy to meet both major and smaller Italian producers who come to discuss the new vintages. Paolo has contributed to Gambero Rosso’s Vini d’Italia guide and has always combined his work at the wine shop with that of a wine educator. He is one of the most influential and critical voices in the wine world and was among the very first to believe in Modigliana as a promising region for Italian wine.

XII – Lorenzo Ruggeri, a native of Rome, is a journalist who trained within the editorial staff of Gambero Rosso after completing the Master’s program in food and wine journalism offered by Gambero Rosso itself. He has long contributed to the Vini d’Italia/Tre Bicchieri guide, becoming the editor responsible for key wine regions, and boasts significant international experience in the restaurant industry, having served as the lead contributor to the guide dedicated to that sector. Lorenzo, a columnist and long-time editor of the monthly magazine, has served as Gambero Rosso’s editorial director since June 2024—a milestone he reached at just 36 years old thanks

to his extensive experience and his ability to analyze market trends.

XIII – Åsa Johansson is a Swedish native now living in Italy; she is a freelance journalist who writes about food and wine, serving as a true “cultural bridge” between Italy and the Scandinavian countries in the world of wine. Åsa writes, organizes events, and produces the podcast Italienpodden.se, the first Swedish-language podcast entirely dedicated to Italian wines. She also contributes to <https://starwinelist.com>. For several years, she has been producing extra virgin olive oil at her small estate in Tuscany, Collina Blu.

XIV – Gianni Fabrizio, Swiss by birth but from a family originally from Irpinia and now living in Turin, has been involved in the wine industry since he was very young. He has collaborated with Slow Food since the very first edition of the wine guide published with Gambero Rosso and served as its editor for several years. He is one of the most authoritative journalists on Italian and international wine, with an encyclopedic knowledge that has become legendary in the industry. He is an expert on Piedmont in particular (he authored most of the text for the first book on the Langhe published by Slow Food in the early 1990s, a

book that made history) and, thanks to a personal wine collection that is incredible in both variety and depth, is able to organize unique and one-of-a-kind educational tastings.

XV – Francesco Falcone, a native of Puglia who grew up in Romagna, is one of the most highly regarded chroniclers of Italian wine, celebrated for his literary talents. Through his tastings and writing, he draws people into a narrative dimension of wine—one filled with humanity and stories, captivating and always rooted in a sensibility that uses places and wines as a starting point. Francesco has been a long-time contributor to the magazines *Enogea* (published by Alessandro Masnaghetti Editore) and *Wine Surf* (published by GoWINE) and the wine guide published by *L'Espresso*. He has published several books, most notably *Intorno al vino. Diario di un degustatore sentimentale* (Around Wine: Diary of a Sentimental Taster), published by Quinto Quarto.

XVI – Marco Tonelli, a native of Bologna, is a long-time wine taster and journalist. He writes about wine primarily for print publications such as *Spirito Divino*, *Corriere della Sera*, *Gazzetta dello Sport*, *Arbiter*, *Ferrari Magazine*, and *La Madia Travel Food*. He founded and edits the digital

publishing project *Bordeauxgraphy*, which focuses on the great wines of Bordeaux. In 2025, he published the book of the same name together with Andrea Vincenzi. He works as a critic for various restaurant guides and boasts a long-standing collaboration with the *Guida Ristoranti de l'Espresso* and *Gambero Rosso*. He is a key contributor to *Excellence*, the company that brings together over 20 Italian importers and distributors, and regularly writes content published on the company's website, as well as leading training and tasting sessions. He has always had a great passion for cigars and, as Italy's first habano sommelier, he writes about them regularly in the magazine *Arbiter*, as well as in his contributions to *Toscana Magazine*.

XVII – Leila Salimbeni is editor-in-chief of *Spirito diVino*, the only print magazine dedicated to wine currently published in Italy. After earning a degree in linguistic and philological studies (with a specialization in semiotics) from the University of Bologna, she began writing about wine and working as a wine educator and judge in international wine competitions. She contributes to *Passione Gourmet* and, in the past, to the *L'Espresso* Group. She was named Food Writer of the Year for the Guide to

Restaurants in Italy, Europe, and the World by *Identità Golose* 2021 and awarded the title of Communicator 2025 for *Bollicine del Mondo*. She frequently serves as a speaker and moderator at major wine events.

XVIII – Federica Randazzo, born and raised in Bolzano, Alto-Adige/Süd-Tyrol, the German speaking region of norther Italy, is a well-known wine writer in Italy and co-editor of the *SLOW WINE/SLOWINE* guide published by Slow Food Editore. Thanks to her approach, which links wine, culture, and community, she is often invited by various publications to offer insights on wine that go beyond mere technical details. She is active as a speaker at conferences and meetings and as a host of tastings and events dedicated to wine.

XIX – Simone Zoli started out as a server at his restaurant in Forlì, Don Abbondio, where he became a wine taster for the Slow Food Editore wine guide thanks to his strong passion for wine. In 2022, together with his friend Simone Marzocchi, he founded a small winery, Monte Mirabello, which produces wines from old vineyards in the Tuscan-Romagnolo Apennines, specifically in Romagna between the Rabbi and Montone Valleys.

XX – Walter Speller is a Dutchman who has lived in Italy for several years. An authoritative wine critic and international journalist, widely recognized as one of the world's leading experts on Italian wine, he entered the professional wine world in the 1990s in Berlin, and later curated the monumental wine list at the restaurant *Le Pont de la Tour* in London. Since 2008, he has written for the prestigious Jancis Robinson website as the editor for Italian wines, for *Decanter* magazine, and, more recently, for *Club Oenologique* magazine. He contributes to definitive reference works such as *The World Atlas of Wine* and *The Oxford Companion to Wine*. Given his undisputed expertise in Italian wine, he is a frequent speaker at conferences and tastings. He has organized several editions of the Barolo Day and Sangiovese Reset events in London.



MODIGLIANA, STELLA DELL'APPENNINO.

The not-for-profit association established for the promotion of territorial oil and wine, MODIGLIANA, STELLA DELL'APPENNINO, Italian Tax Code No. 91416690377, was formally incorporated by a deed dated January 24, 2019, registered with the Italian Internal Revenue Service on 03/28/2019.

It is administered by a Board of Directors composed of Francesco Bordini (President and legal representative), Francesco Vandi (Vice-President), and Andrea Peradotto (Secretary and Treasurer). The association is widely representative of the vast majority of wine/olive-growing operators in the municipality of Modigliana, coinciding with the subzone-MGA of the same name of the DOP ROMAGNA, being made up of the following, associates as of December 31st, 2025: Casetta dei Frati, Menta e Rosmarino, Mutiliana (Giorgio Melandri), Il Pratello (Emilio Placci), Il Teatro, Pian di Stantino, Ronchi di Castelluccio, Villa Papiano.

The association owns the trademark of the same name "MODIGLIANA, STELLA DELL'APPENNINO™," which can be temporarily granted for free use to those who request it, having the right to do so on the basis of the regulations filed together with the articles of incorporation.

For more information:

*+39 (0)51 399822 - Renzo Maria Morresi
renzomariamorresi@morresi.com*

*+39 329 5433483 - Giorgio Melandri
giorgiomelandri65@gmail.com*

*Modigliana - Stella Dell'appennino
presso Francesco Bordini Presidente
Via Belfiore 21, 48020 Sant'Agata sul Santerno (RA)
Codice fiscale n. 91416690377
Italian Bank account (IBAN): "IT79O0854267870000000307126"*



ACCADEMIA DEGLI INCAMMINATI
Fondata nel 1660

*Sponsors of the Association
MODIGLIANA, STELLA DELL'APPENNINO
in 2023-2025:*

