

Biodynamic: a practice used in small farms although lately also undertaken big wineries.

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Not only the small farms choose to undergo biodynamic farming: nowadays also the big wineries follow the teachings of Rudolf Steiner.

Italian biodynamics has changed a lot in recent years, both internally and in the perception it manages to convey; it is no longer a mysterious object, with esoteric slips, but rather a more and more recognized discipline, capable of a clear agronomic picture. The proof is given by the number of farms that have decided to implement the turning point, with the world of wine as protagonist. A quantitative fact that crosses that of the type of cellars: if once it was the small ones, sometimes the very small ones, who chose this production method, today there are a number of examples of large companies, with historical and established brands determined to take the path traced by Rudolf Steiner.

Biodynamics in wine: Ceretto chooses it but is not certified. Just think of the sensational decision of Avignonesi in Montepulciano (about 200 hectares in a single body), today among the major wineries managed in biodynamics, to that of Ceretto, one of the most significant brands of the Langhe . The latter case, in reality, not yet certified by one of the relevant bodies, but the substance does not change. "I personally came to know this world in 2009" says Alessandro Ceretto "the spark immediately struck me, convincing me to start the first experiments; first only on the crus of Barolo and Barbaresco, today in 100% of our vineyards which occupy about 130 hectares. Not exactly an easy job to organize "

he continues, " but the result is extraordinary in terms of quality and health of the soil, microorganisms and organic matter. All issues arguments that were not considered, up to twenty years ago.

No certification, however: "I am not certified because at the moment the brand does not bring us particular benefits, moreover, I find certain positions excessively dogmatic. For us biodynamics is a means, not the end: the wine we are able to produce counts. I don't care about the rest, I don't want to prove anything. I'm not even interested in scientifically justifying things; I read the numbers but it's not what counts. The vitality of the soils can be seen vitality, as well as the quality of the

wines, this is what really matters. Plus I'm ethically happy. I do not pollute and this is already a lot. "

Biodynamics in the Tuscany of great wines.

In short, the movement in Italy is not only the prerogative of hyper "alternative" companies, a little hippy, with a light-hearted and irreverent image but has also attracted proselytes in, let's say, "bourgeois" environments. With its Château physiognomy, **Tenuta di Valgiano**, on the Lucca hills, is an example of how prestige and global breathing can be combined with a holistic and sustainable vision of wine, creating a sort of "biodynamic district" almost unparalleled in the world.

It was the early nineties when Moreno Petrini, together with Laura di Collobiano and with the technical support of Saverio Petrilli, started this reality. *"From the earliest years, I had an instinctive reaction to the use of harmful substances. I found it absurd so I approached the world of organic and finally biodynamics. The goal was to recreate humus in the soil, something no one talked about except the biodynamics "*. At that point came the first contacts with some Australian producers and from there, with Alex Podolinsky (who was President of Demeter Australia and, in practice, the founder of the movement in that country).

"We immediately liked his pragmatic approach, as a farmer who puts his experience at the service of other farmers. Hence I decided to become part of the circle and bought Joly's first books, which I read in French. From there to the certification, which arrived in 2002, the path was exciting. Much also depended on my training in wine, as a passionate taster: on every occasion, the biodynamic ones were the most captivating, even if less immediate at first. After all, how can you not fall in love with the wines of Leflaive, Romanée Conti, Leroy, Lafarge, Comte Lafon or Marcel Deiss? "

What is your position nowadays?

"Where do I place myself today? It does not really matter. I just make the wine that I like, having been very critical about some oenologist' wines, and in the same way, disliking wines that are overly funky. In the biodynamic world, (if one wants to call it so), our wines are sometimes criticized for being too clean and precise, therefore 'unnatural'. It is a big limitation for this movement. If we were to talk about image, in the sense of where we want to place ourselves, biodynamics is not enough. To be able to sell at certain prices, it is the quality that speaks, not the labels. I am very critical of the 'commercial' drifts of the

matter: selling a philosophy rather than a wine, is the wrong thing to do.”

The list of prestigious names, converted or somehow landed on biodynamics, is getting longer and longer and concerns famous brands in the sector, from Foradori in Trentino to Castello dei Rampolla, in the heart of Chianti Classico, just to name other prominent examples . The fact is that the club of biodynamics Made in Italy today has a pedigree of absolute value, capable of breaking down barriers and clichés; a bit like in France, a country where many prestigious companies have been working in this way for some time, without sacrificing their classic and prestigious image.