



2009 Valpolicella Superiore

Romano dal Forno, Veneto, Italy

Product details

Vintage:	2009	Drinking:	Now 2032
Producer:	Romano dal Forno	Alcohol:	
Region:	Veneto	Variety:	
Country:	Italy		

About the producer

Romano Dal Forno Wine

One of Romano Dal Forno's earliest memories is of helping his father in the vineyards at the age of five, trying to control an unruly mule much larger than himself. More than five decades on, it seems he's barely had a day off from working with these vines, planted in the foothills of the Monti Lessini, east of Lake Garda and just north of Verona, in the Valpolicella DOC. He is, however, supported by several members of his family - notably his sons Michele, Marco and Luca and his wife Loretta.

Between them, they tend 25 hectares of extremely low yield grapes and a Dal Forno winery, completed in 2011, in which one might assume magic happens, but - again - actually fastidious attention to detail and painstaking hard graft leads to absolutely incredible Amarone della Valpolicella wine and Valpolicella Superiore.

Romano Dal Forno's location in Val d'Ilasi - the flatter land in the Po Valley which was once seen as being an add-on when the Valpolicella- DOC was demarcated - has, at times, been associated with high yields and questionable quality. Not so with Dal Forno's methods. In 1980, soon after he took control of the estate at the age of 22, Romano Dal Forno went to visit the maestro of Amarone, Giuseppe Quintarelli. Over the years, Quintarelli became his tutor of philosophy - guiding him in the ways of quality over quantity.

As well as dramatically reducing yields, Dal Forno eliminated the pale, tart, and oxidation-prone Molinara grape and revived the likes of Oseleta (similar to the king of Valpolicella, the Corvina) and Croatina (deep in colour and fruit). Dal Forno has proven over years that this alluvial plain, composed of 70% gravel, 15% silt and 15% clay, can be magnificent terroir for these Valpolicella wines.

In essence, the same process is used to produce both Valpolicella Superiore and Amarone Dal Forno wines. Selective harvesting takes place over a month, with only the best bunches picked as soon as they are optimal ripeness. In fact, it takes six vines to produce a bottle of Romano Dal Forno Valpolicella Superiore and an astonishing nine to create the Romano Dal Forno Amarone. Then each bunch is manually sorted to remove less than perfect grapes. For both wines, there is a period of drying in the winery's drying rooms, which have an innovative ventilation system which maintains an elevated and thorough air flow.

After a further manual selection to remove any grapes damaged in the drying process, 15 days of fermentation takes place in steel tanks at a controlled temperature of around 28°, with automated punch-downs. They are then decanted into new-oak barriques for 36 months of maturation before bottling and further ageing for a further two years before release.

Of course, there are differences - and not only in the ratio of grape varieties used (Valpolicella Superiore: 70% Corvina and Corvina grossa, 20% Rondinella, 5% Croatina, 5% Oseleta; Amarone: 60% Corvina, 20% Rondinella, 10% Oseleta, 10% Croatina). For Amarone wine, fruit is only taken from vines over 10 years old. And the drying period is three months - twice as long as for Valpolicella Superiore. In addition, because of residual sugars, 18 months of the ageing is actually a period of further fermentation for the Romano Dal Forno Amarone.

The Valpolicella Superiore is an intensely aromatic, dark red wine, reminiscent of a very dry mulled wine - fresh, jammy, acidic and spiced in just the right harmony. Hints of blueberry, blackberry, cherry and chocolate emerge gradually and envelop the palate, held together by potent tannins which give it such great ability to age.

The Amarone della Valpolicella is somehow even more powerful, yet a step up in elegance too. Even more inky than its brother, it is full of mature dark fruits, black cherry, truffle and dark chocolate, with gentleman's club notes of pipe tobacco and leather armchairs. Indeed, while the Valpolicella Superiore will well accompany a hearty meal, for the Amarone Dal Forno, you probably need to be sitting down in a quiet room, in a favourite chair, to enjoy what the Dal Forno family call a meditative wine which leads to an almost other-worldly sensory experience.

Romano Dal Forno also produces a third wine, a sweet Passito Vigna Seré - otherwise known as Recioto, the wine which predated Amarone (which translates as "big bitter" to differentiate it from the sweeter style of hay-dried wines) as the wine of this part of Veneto. As with the other two wines, Armit Wines has been exclusively importing this to the UK for over a decade. Its dense opulence is rich in ripe plums and roasted sugary notes. It serves as a wonderful return from the Interstellar trip of Amarone, to more sociable drinking, carrying you through the cheese course into coffee and chocolates.

Find your favourite among our Romano Dal Forno wine selection today.