

[Erin Scala] How vessels changed wine history: from clay amphorae to wooden barrels
amphorae - easy to ship/carry/reuse, carry, virus-borne, cheap, cheaper to break
where amphorae were not a given, barrels took over after a few centuries, more useful for long trip, can be
tacked, easily moved from ship to ground, durable, flavor
pushbacks away from barrels back to cement and clay: large cement tanks are efficient for space, doesn't
impart flavor as much, clay harder to come by - requires craftsman's skill to transform clay to vessels
building which takes time, patience, and skill; glazing and kilting not easy, the provenance of clay vessels
important, different clay and glaze options lead to different strengths heat retention levels and nuances, with different
base materials under different kilting temperature gets different porosity whereas that of oak is dependent on grain of
wood. Fermentation in clay affects pH levels beneficial to winemakers

Born in Friuli bordering Slovenia, grandfather has a farm, after father started to work in the farm at 15 years
old after industrial schooling. Cherry tree, peach, other fruits, some cows, mostly the same as now. Had been
planted with Ribolla (the most important, historical local variety) and Riesling. Works with father and uncle
when 20 years old dedicated more to vineyard and stopped producing fruit but just vines.

in 1970s introduced international varieties Chardonnay Sauv Blanc Pinot Grigio. Father simple and good person -
produce very good wine, respect everything: nature, vineyard, customers. After WWII, many people from
Friuli had to leave due to difficult economic situation, despite the difficulty we produced a lot of wine in the
beginning after WWII and were not able to sell.

We have vineyards in Slovenia the biggest belong to father's mothers then bought some in 1990s and 2000s as
the border becomes easier to cross. Living on the border is never easy as border time is to be respected which
is normal life. Even with Slovenia it's not difficult to work in our vineyards. Effects of eastern/western
Europe? Language: Slovenian at home, feels more Slovenian than Italian.

in 1970s the trend was for quantity not quality, but still not easy to sell. Siblings helped to leave vineyards
with him solely and thus he was able to buy neighbors' plots with quality soil.

1970s beginning: 4 hectares, slowly grew to 18 now back to 15. Characters of (grand-)parents' wines? Simple
wines, no tech, just farm and big new barrels. Most work by hand, main change was adding a tractor. Used to
be cow pulled equipment.

in 70s/80s to be seen as a quality producer new tech has to be used - follow the latest fashion, which is a
mistake - it took a long time to realize the mistake and make changes. Father always said the work has to go
away but wine tasted worse than before, preferring simple homemade wines, more passionate by the progress,
wine industry and the market.

in 1997 took a trip to California: saw all the newest tech much more modern than in Italy and tasted ~1000
wines; learnt what not to do, started cleaning but took a long time because if use stainless steel tanks, need a fridge
(against the no new tech philosophy) - a whole change of process, couldn't just change one part but all
goal is to produce a simple wine, going back to roots

in 90s used to produce single variety wines, aged in small barrels

opinions on early wines in 70s/80s/early 90s: good wines but able to do better because light maceration with
skin contact in whites is important

lost crop in 1996: 2 big hailstorms, 1st came from north on 19 June, 2nd 20 June from south, lost 95% in 2
days

in 1996 received first amphora even if we didn't produce much it was a high quality vintage, learnt working in
a factory without roof - no control of weather, completely dependent on weather; learnt a lot, made a lot of
changes

1997 first vintage with amphora fermentation

heard about amphora winemaking and fascinated, made trips to Georgia in Soviet Union in 2000 (not safe for
people from Europe to travel there, more trips in 2003 with police for safety) to witness wine production. In
Georgia almost 100 years behind in tech, interesting to see. People live a poor but good/happy life. Biggest
wine production area in Georgia is Kakheti in south, south of Caucasus (?) mountains, Imereti too and small
regions. Church vs wine in Georgia? Most Georgians are Catholic Orthodox instead of ?? in two regions
where wine production is stopped. people were friendly but wouldn't talk much but it was easy to understand
what they are doing. Only white grapes are fermented in amphora, red grapes are fermented in barrels. why?
hypothesis: white grapes can stay with skin during long maceration for many months whereas red wines only
for 3-4 weeks before skin separation. amphorae made by farmers, difficult to find people able to produce.

source of clay of amphorae: 1st few from Kakheti area, later learnt about people in Imereti area who produce
much better amphorae. it takes at least 2 months: soil, water, 10-50 centimeters per day produced. ordered
many times of amphorae now it's much easier to import through a Russian importer. the person has greater
influence on the wine/grape put in the clay amphorae...

in 1990s wanted to not use any sulphate in wine but no other option, only was able to limit usage. romans used
sulphate too

why do so many Friuli winemakers make skin contact wines? maybe we understand in a systematic way we have to be different than the industry because its the only way to produce natural wines diff than industry because its difficult for them to produce this way, great to see people from other regions follow suit

2000 last year using large wood

2001 first year amphorae at scale

difference between the two vintage: no need for tech to produce amphorae, simple process, no need to control temperature, grapes choose itself fermentation temperature

2000 Ribolla high in acid upon release softened ever since, 2001 rounder more textual upon release: 2000 during harvest/fermentation very warm as he decided not to control temperature at the begining there were some problems with bacteria with fermentation so you can see it in the wine. now after 14 years he felt it was a good wine but atm he was too focused on the amphorae which didnt arrive in time for vintage thus then not satisfied

late 90s worked botrytis on grapes: 98 was the 1st vintage with botrytized grapes, father had always instructed to leave perfect grapes in the grapes which was the reason why before 98 always worked with healthy grapes botrytis important for white grapes because in sunny vintages/harvest everything goes well, if a lot rains the only thing that can help is to use botrytized grapes so the flavors can concentrate (since rain dilutes) is it partially a factor of thick skin of Ribolla so that botrytis softens its skins? having botrytis reduces production quantity greatly and very healthy grapes until the rain otherwise itd be mold. thick skins help with botrytis production

picked later and later since late 90s, since 2001 having only amphorae in the cellar never controlled sugar/acidity in grapes (not measured)

the last 3 years always rains in harvest time, but still produced good quality grapes given our dedication in the vineyards, some loss crop due to rain is fine as long as quality is ensured

never control the temp during fermentation - not our major decision, we decide on the right [/Ee-Der-Tin/]??

2001 made Ribolla in amphora and Bianco Breg (blend of grapes in amphorae) since 2012 no Breg any more: in 70s easy to sell international varieties which are also well paid, diff to sell Ribolla; in early 80s the first time [GM of Italy??] visited and Josko told him he'd like to produce only Ribolla, and it took him almost 30 years to produce just that - desire is to produce/focus on local varieties

also produces a pignolo (one of the four lcoal varieties - the other three are schioppettino, tazzelenghe, refosco; after tasting all four, he preferred pignolo so made)

stopped making Merlot? so still merlot and cs in an old vineyard but in the future only pignolo

difference in white/red production: white wines can be macerated for months but for red wines maceration is only as long as fermentation after which skin has to be pressed off, he thinks mostly of white wines

how white wine maceration approaches changed over time: the maceration time depends on when we harvest (never before early oct, sometimes end late november): 1st grapes harvested have > 6 months of maceration bc usu rest and ferment the grapes and enter maceration between end of March and begining of Feb depending on the harvest month

what does your cellar look today? simple, need a theatre (which get old after 10 years) not a cellar (that's durable)

how/when to enjoy your wine? in 2000 tasted wine in terra cotta cups, and finally in 2011 able to produce own cups, need to drink without a stem, hold in hands, treat as red wine, not chilled. drink with food, not decanted but big glass

"wines are either alive or dead" depending how you produce, alive wines: fermented with own yeasts, no filtration which takes away things what makes wine wine: yeast, bacteria, and enzymes which help digestion see your progress as against modernity? no, not against, with computers but important to introduce natural healthy things

thoughts on ethical components in winemaking: thinking of who make wine, ethic is a big problem nowadays not only in wine production