



viticoltori del ponente ligure

## Rossese di Dolceacqua

Rossese di Dolceacqua wine received D.O.C. classification (a wine with the Italian Protected Designation of Origin) in 1972. Rossese di Dolceacqua is an extremely ancient wine from the province of Imperia although its precise origins have not been clearly determined. There are historical references to the period of Bernabò d'Oria who wanted to rouse his crew before each naval battle. It was also a favourite beverage of Pope Paul III, a gourmet who "derived great relief from it in old age" and who, as documents of the period relate, would "dunk bread into the wine in the early evening". It also proved very popular with Napoleon who, after tasting it in Liguria, ordered it to be delivered to Paris. It appears that he was such an admirer of the wine that he granted that the wine could be named after him. However, the inhabitants of Dolceacqua did not change the name as they were rightly very proud of their own product.

The name of the grape is Rossese. The area where it is cultivated includes 14 municipalities (*comuni*): Apricale, Baiardo, Camporosso, Castelvittorio, Dolceacqua, Isolabona, Perinaldo, Pigna, Rocchetta Nervina, S.Biagio della Cima, Soldano and several zones of the municipalities of Vallecrosia, Ventimiglia and Vallebona, an area in the foothills that ranges from 300 to 600 m. above sea level.

In keeping with Mediterranean tradition, Rossese is often grown "ad alberello" (as a low shrub), so that the foliage provides shade for the base of the plant and the root, protecting it from the sun's rays during the hottest part of the day. The vines are cultivated in inaccessible areas where all the vine-tending tasks have to be carried out by hand. This has often led to the risk of abandoning parts of vineyards where plants that had reached the end of their growing cycle needed to be replaced.

The Rossese vine has a large leaf with five lobes. The fairly large pine cone-shaped bunches of fruit grow in clusters and the grapes are round, dark purple and slightly waxy. The same grapes are also used to make another Rossese wine of the Italian Riviera (*Riviera Ligure di Ponente*).

Rossese has the following sensory properties during tasting: ruby red colour developing garnet tones with ageing; a vinous nose when young; an intense, distinctive flavour with pleasant hints



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# MAIXEI

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of wild strawberry and floral notes; the bouquet evolves over time and develops broader, ethereal sensations.

It is a dry, full-bodied, well-balanced wine whose enticing aroma of wild berries is confirmed by the flavour. It has a strength of 12° alcohol although if it has 13° or more, it may be classified as "Superiore" and, in this case, cannot be sold until 1 November of the year following the harvest.

It pairs well with rich sauces, including sauces with game, meat with mushrooms, goat stew with beans (a speciality of Dolceacqua) and with medium-matured cheeses. It should be served at a temperature of 18/20°C and should be drunk within two or three years although the best vintages can age well for longer.

Serve Rossese in glasses with slightly round bowls and medium stems. If the wine has aged and shows traces of sediment, it should be poured into a decanter.



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