



MICHELE SATTÀ

## HISTORY

I am the son of an engineer and a graduate in Science and I come from Varese, with Sardinian chromosomes.

One day, I fortuitously arrived in Tuscany and I ran into a job offer that put me in contact with agriculture. I will not go into all the details, because, like all stories, there are many episodes. One thing I have to say, because it has led to my enrollment in Agriculture, though I came from a secondary school focused on humanities.

When I was a kid, in seventh grade, I went to visit my cousins in Sardinia (we are from the north of Sardinia) and I stayed one week with my uncle Banigio who reared sheep. This experience caused me a stratospheric emotion, I relived in the encounter with Tuscany. I relived it because I met those people who are today the surviving protagonists of the last Italian agricultural season, where the work was the physicality of the daily dedication to nature, and I, was immediately fascinated by the relationship with reality, which is beautiful on its own.

For the first time I saw the wheat flower while I have been with these people. I remember my first contact with olive trees, on the swaying wooden stairs. The first two years of university I went for short periods to study, and then, the second two years of university I spent all afternoons at work following, like a shadow, the farmer, meeting the knowledge of a man's relationship with nature and assimilating it. I learned that the earth becomes hard when the wind blows, the dew is abundant when the temperature is of a certain type, I learned the cycle of the plant and why in certain areas of the field, plants struggle and in others, they do not, because we prune at a certain moment: in short, I could make a list of ten thousand, twenty thousand little things that entered my mind by watching.

So, the first big thing I want to tell you is that this was for me the beginning, it was a passion for a relationship where the intelligence, the observation, the work, the physicality, the strength also physical, it was only function of a relationship with everything that was given.

At twenty-three I finished my studies, I got married, and I became a farmer: peaches, strawberries ... What I remember is the battle sustained with myself, I was sent to pick strawberries with women – they seemed to be already very old then, lately I met them again still alive and I was shocked -: They filled twelve pans and I only four, so I was very slow.

All these episodes marked my approach to the countryside that was convenient to me because, from 78 to 83, I made a career in this little farm, I became Director-farmer, with a great burden of responsibility, commitment, from selling peaches to discussing prices.

The wine was part of the company business, it was the wine that was produced in Maremma and it would end as blending wine. The farmer said, "a case-plant", that is twenty kilos per plant.

I do not know if you have experience, but we are now producing a kilo and a half per plant. Try to imagine the change there has been in the conception of viticulture.

To make it short, I made my choice; I understood, because I am a smart guy, that agriculture is going to die, that there is no room for those kinds of companies, and I say: let's get out of here before it's too late, though mine was a boundless passion, I could not abandon the idea of being able to produce and making that life.

I already had three children, and together with my wife we decided to try to stay there in the countryside and find a solution. I thought to find an agreement with other former share-croppers and start up our own business, and instead no agreement was found, the only positive thing I found was the rent of the vineyard in Castagneto Carducci, in 1983. I rented a vineyard without knowing what bottling means, with the idea of saying: well, I make my product, then I'll sell it and I can get by. Between '83 and '87 I understood what wine is, and this is the great, second thing I wanted to tell you. In those years of widespread wealth, the world noticed different qualitative things: Italy following French producers example obtaining great privileges. They created market niches and made exceptional products. These were the years where wine culture spread and then I studied, observed, learned, traveled going to France and soon I fell in love and I moved again towards wine.

What is wine? What is the quality of wine? Wine is wonderfully unique in our food history. Normally an agricultural product; peaches, for example, they grow, they are picked, they are put on the market, you do not like their price, bring them back home, they rot and lose them. The wine instead is the grape that changes, it is always that grape there that becomes another thing, extraordinarily more suggestive, remarkably better, or in some cases becomes really better and different in time, inebriates you a little, it opens one heart space.

It is your harvest, everything you worked for and that's left; in my opinion, this implicitly suggests that great passion-companionship that wine has been in our entire civilization. We have to look at wine with respect, for what it really is, because it is the unique expression of a piece of the world: the land that there; there is no another point on the planet with that complexity of land where you chose to plant the vineyard. There is no equal vintage to the previous one, the wine I will make this year will be unique, I will not do it ever again. The type of grapes that are in my vineyard, and that will make that wine are unique. The way as a man I devoted passion, intuition, mistakes, as I bent a bow, how many gems I left, the way I pruned, removed the leaves, if I worked the land, it is mine, only mine. If Paul came to do the same things in the same vineyard, he would do other things.

So, you understand that we must be able to return to capture this value of the wine, which is solely due to a history, to a relationship; to an interconnection between man and nature. Here I launch the theme to close, because I took already up too much time. Today we have a lot of pressure, the wine is coming back to be an Anglo-Saxon product, where what dominates is quantity, as polyphenols, how much color, how many tannins. Instead, the wine is unique, unrepeatable, it is a poem, something made by a man in a certain place, that will not be repeated ever again. We must believe this thing even in our days of conspicuous consumption, because to drink well, like to eat well, we have to be aware that the product is the outcome of a story.

Thank you.

**Michele Satta**



MICHELE SATTA

## BRIEF HISTORY OF MICHELE SATTA'S WINERY

January 2015

The first harvest of Michele Satta in Castagneto Carducci dates back to **1974**, at Tringali Casanuova's, as worker and student at the University of Agricultural Sciences.

The first label with his name, produced by traditional vineyards and in a rented cellar, is 1983, with the white and red Diambra.

In **1984**, the year of the founding of the DOC Bolgheri (only white and rosé wines, sic !) he produced the first 100% Vermentino of the area, the COSTA di GIULIA.

In **1987** the first settlement as owner, with the purchase of the vineyard of Costa Giulia, already rented, and he built the cellar adapted to modern needs.

In **1990**, the first label of Cavaliere, 100% Sangiovese with vinification in wood and use of barriques.

In **1991** he planted the first vineyard with the decision to produce a Bolgheri Rosso, PIASTRAIA, which is not only the expression of the vineyards of Bordeaux or the search of international taste, but a wine expressing a more Mediterranean viticulture and a more Italian tradition.

Therefore Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Sangiovese and Syrah, all grapes that somehow he knows and identifies with. For the passion of exploring new possibilities and the firm conviction that in every choice of viticulture a personal practical experience is needed, he also planted a small portion of Tempranillo, Grenache, Petit Verdot, Syrah and Teroldego clones.

Between '93 and '95 he became a consultant in the vineyard of Ornellaia where, in contact with a world-wide excellence, he broadened the vision of the international market for quality wines and refined growing techniques and country choices. He decided to invest and bet everything on this land and on viticulture of quality progressively buying available and suited lands close to his cellar.

From '95 to 2005, new insights lead to the choice of producing a blend Sauvignon and Vermentino ('97) and a 100% Viognier with vinification in used barriques (2000). For the reds the convincing performance of Syrah (produced 100% since 2005) and Teroldego (enters the blends in 2001) are confirmed alongside the Bordeaux vineyards and he improved the style with which Sangiovese can find its incredibly stylish expression even on the coast.

Today's history is the beginning of the second generation, with a company organization which depends on family work where every gesture is born of a personal experience, passion and expertise and where the wine is seen as the wonderful discovery of a quality hidden in the earth, in the sky and in the heart.

Each wine has to be himself: **SEMETIPSUM**

With this Latin name we wanted to synthesize the character with which we intend to make wine, always searching the quality as the expression of the unique nature and unique vineyard and his encounter with the man.



MICHELE SATTÀ

## WHY I MAKE SANGIOVESE...

**(Text taken from a letter to a friend)**

First red grape that I found in the vineyards of Castagneto (up to 1980 it was 70% of the local vineyards).

Grapes with ancient gene (used by the Etruscans and then always present in the country), very versatile it was known only in its quantitative expression and appreciated for drink, freshness and good acidity.

When I started cultivating Sangiovese in 1990 being careful to the qualitative balance I discovered a great character and a very complex and typical expression, that attracted me.

I became passionate of wine as the expression of an unrepeatable uniqueness, synthesis of environmental and human factors that are in an amazing relationship, in the true sense that you cannot expect, and not even “govern” the final result. So I appreciate very much the way this grape responds to practices of cultivation, vintage, vinification, always bringing into the wine sensations and taste with a unique character.

Particularly I am fascinated by the fact that our grape responds to the soil and climatic conditions very markedly.

The market, above all the one we consider as not prepared, is instead very attracted by wines with personality, with distinct taste, that cannot be reproduced anywhere and not lined with other wines.

Too many people and even not authorized by any real personal experience, have decreed the irrelevance of Sangiovese in Bolgheri, this wonderful corner of Tuscany. The only reasonable objection that you can make to this vine is to be very difficult to grow and to interpret and to be far from certain aesthetics, such as: color, low concentration, animal and hunting aromas (leather, wet land, mushrooms and tobacco...).

But this being so PARTICULAR makes this vine my favorite one.

**Michele Satta**



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## **PIASTRAIA 2012 Bolgheri Superiore**

**After 20 years, the historic label won the mention SUPERIORE**

When I planted the first vineyard with the consciousness of “planting” a Bolgheri, in 1991, I only had in mind that I had to follow at all costs the dream to express my Bolgheri land and my “feel” as vigneron.

I had already had 15 years of exciting “peasant” experience and knowledge of traditional vineyards, but right at that time, only in a few - 4/5 people, we had caught a glimpse of the development that would have had Bolgheri, thanks to driving force of Sassicaia.

Well, which grapes could I plant? Two visions: the first one was to accommodate the acclaimed Bordeaux choice, guideline of smart Tuscan merchants following the international model, a guarantee of success and attention from the worldwide market.

The second one was the desire to emphasize the Mediterranean character, the first determining factor that the place offers, with two complex and suggestive grapes more related to our climate: Sangiovese and Syrah.

Here are the 4 grapes with which Piastraia was born and proved, first label in 94, at the same time the granting of the DOC.

Since the vine knowledge can never be rushed (we do one thing a year and we “drink” it maybe after other 5 or 6 years... and in any case a vineyard reveals its substance after 15 years) I needed all this time to tell myself that this wine was my interpretation of Bolgheri, of our land.

Piastraia had opened a way where I found myself more and more convinced.

That is why today I accept the definition of Superior for my historical label (and I also changed its graphic), because I want to celebrate a bottle that is not only a pioneer in the short but prestigious history of Bolgheri, but has an identity in which I recognize all the elegance and expressive power of this place.

**Michele Satta**