"le bollicine piemontesi"

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To know about Contratto...

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Amazing history...

An amazing history...

Contratto was founded in 1867 by Giuseppe Contratto and the winery is known as the oldest producer of sparkling wine in Italy. In fact, the "Metodo Classico" 1919 Contratto Extra Brut was the first vintage sparkling wine ever made in the country.

The winery has a long, distinguished history. At the turn of the 20th century, its wines were leaving Canelli for destinations all over the world (predominantly to royal houses), and Contratto was the personal supplier to the Vatican as well as to the Italian Royal Family. Awards and medals from international exhibitions and contests of the time emphasize why the name of Contratto has long been synonymous with prestige and quality in the world of sparkling wine.

In 150 years of winemaking, Contratto went from producing Moscato and red wine to Spumante Metodo Classico, still white wines, as well as Vermouth, tonic and syrups. The historic cathedral cellars at Contratto, now designated a UNESCO Heritage Site, are a real treasure, and among the finest of their kind. These huge underground cellars, covering more than 5,000 square meters, were built into the heart of the hill that protects the small town of Canelli, excavated from tuff limestone to a depth of 32 meters. The project took three years of manual work to finish. The cellars maintain a constant annual temperature of 12 to 13 degrees and sufficient natural humidity, an ideal environment for bottle fermentation and the slow and steady bottle maturation of "metodo clasico" sparkling-wines. For many generations the winery remained in the hands of the Contratto family.

In 1993, after 126 years and somewhat in decline, it was sold to Carlo Bocchino, owner of Canelli's grappa distillery of the same name, who undertook the restoration of these historic cellars and the impressive building and tasting rooms with great effort and investment.

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The entry into a new era...

Bocchino will now return to concentrate his efforts and resources on the family distillery. "I am glad to have been able to leave Contratto to the Rivettis, who are people from the same land" states Bocchino. "I would not have wanted to see the cellars end up in the back of a large group or multinational's catalogue."

For La Spinetta on the other hand, the acquisition of Contratto represents the entry into one of the top Italian sparkling wine houses, by way of a prestigious brand whose high end bottle fermentation production from Asti DOCG to Brut, have greatly influenced the history of Italian Spumante, and whose potential is yet to be fully expressed.

"We are very excited to have acquired this important facility," says Giorgio Rivetti. "It was important for us to enter into this market, and to do so with a famous brand. From now on, we can play an active role in making Contratto known throughout the world, thanks to our own high profile abroad. Italian sparkling wine does not yet enjoy the recognition it deserves on the international scene. Now, we will be able to bring the wine onto all the international markets, along with our Barbaresco, Barolo and Moscato.

There are some real treasures hidden in these cellars and our goals for quality are ambitious.

Present and Goals...

Since June 2011 Contratto is officially in the hands of La Spinetta, but the idea of taking over the Contratto sparkling wine production was already born in 2007. For 4 years La Spinetta has been secretly making metodo classico wines at Contratto, with Pinot Noir and Chardonnay grapes from Oltrepo Pavese. We are working closely with grape growers in that area who understand what it means to be a grape grower of quality.

It is our long-term plan to invest in own vineyards in Alta Langa to grow Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Estate-grown fruit will then be the base for our special high-end Cru Riserva production.

With sparkling wine made from its own fruit, Contratto's ul-timate goal is to prove that Northern Italy has the soil and climate to make sparkling wines that rival the top sparklers of the world.

Contratto therefore will return to its rich heritage of 150 years in wine-making, but, enhanced by modern knowledge and technology as well as great passion and respect for tradition, moving ahead into a bright future.

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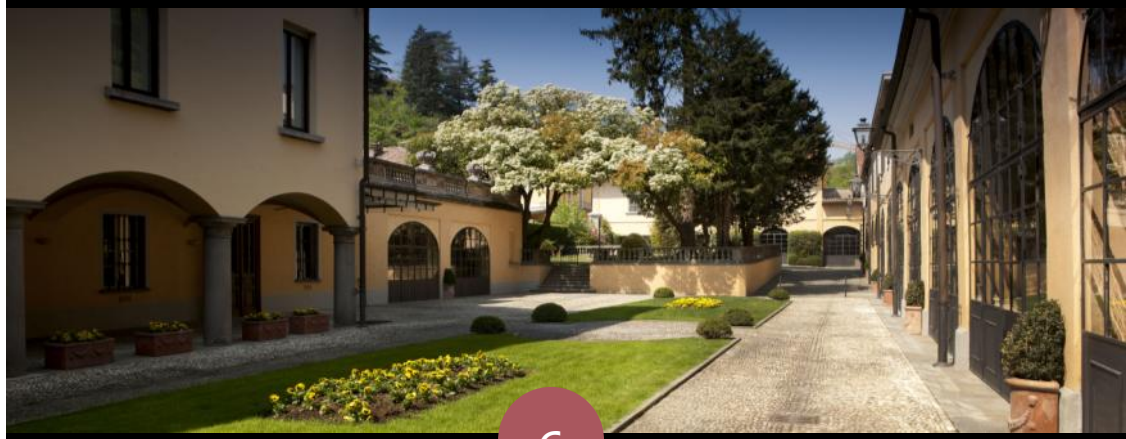

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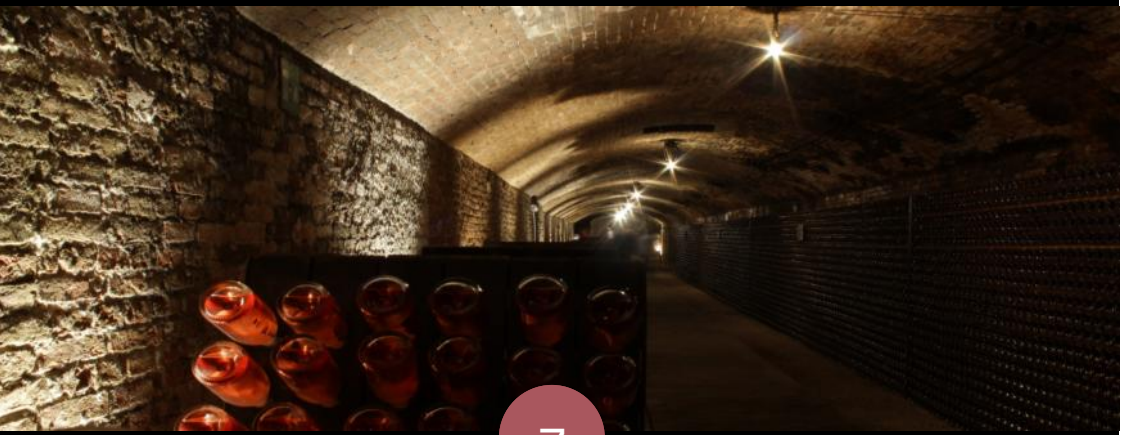

Wines...

Contratto is returning to its roots and producing sparkling wines, "metodo classico" only. Six different wines have been released in 2011, wines that are undoubtably higher in quality than previous years and come with a fresh new look and packaging.

The entry-level Brut is the Millesimato. The wine is named for the fact that it is a vintage wine and produced every year, not a combination of vintages as you find in "basic" champagne. All the wines, with the exception of the Rosé and the Blanc de Blancs are a blend of 80% Pinot Noir and 20% Chardonnay. The high percentage of Pinot Noir is typical for sparkling wines from Piedmont and distinguishes the wines from their "sparkling colleagues" in Franciacorta.

The wine For England was named as such in 1930, when Contratto began producing a low-dosage wine for the English market. At that time, all Champagne and sparkling wines were extremely sweet and the Royal Court of England was the first in Europe to develop a drier palate for wine. Today For England is a zero dosage (no added liquor d'expedition) and For England Rosé (100% Pinot Noir) has very little residual sugar. Bacco d'Oro is again a blend of 80% Pinot Noir and 20% Chardonnay. It has always been a less dry sparkling wine and remains so, however with 10gr/lt of sugar it is still considered a Brut.

The vinification is done according to classic method standards. After the initial alcoholic fermentation the base wines are vinified separately, then are aged for 8 months in temperature-controlled stainless steel vats. Second fermentation takes place in bottle for a good two weeks and is further enhanced with bottle aging on yeast in underground cellars at a constant temperature of 12° C.

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People with Passion...

It is the goal of everybody behind this new venture to revive the brand Contratto, a winery which during the 1920's and 30's was making sparkling wines that were called Moscato Champagne and Asti Champagne, exporting its wines all over Europe, North and South America, Africa and as far as the Far East. Dedication to top quality is La Spinetta's only way of making wine and the same philosophy applies to Contratto. There are many passionate wine people involved in this new project; one of the most important is Andrea Rivetti, Giorgio's son, who has had a love for Champagne for many years. Andrea, in the past, has always made a small production of La Spinetta sparkling wines for his own private consumption, he now has ample opportunity to live his passion, supporting the winemaking of the Contratto wines. Mauro Ferrero has been working for Contratto since 1978 when he began his apprenticeship to learn to become a maker of sparkling wine. The work includes the general work of cellar management, but also the skilled tasks of riddling and disgorgement, two crucial steps of making high-quality sparkling wine. In peak times, Mauro used to disgorge over 2,000 bottles a day, all by hand. Today this manual skill is an art, as manual disgorgement has been replaced by machines, that first freeze the yeast in the neck of the bottle, before the cap is opened and the wine gets disgorged. Carlo Rivetti and his son Marco love Champagne and just like the rest of the team fell in love with this beauty of a winery. Both contribute to selecting the best fruit from the Oltrepo vineyards and are always available, when an extra pair of hands is needed. Luca Cigliuti and Massimo Dossena only recently joined the La Spinetta / Contratto team, but they have been passionate wine lovers and experts for many years. Their passion for great wine brought them to Contratto. Both men are in charge of sales, Luca primarily for Export and Massimo for Italian sales. In 2004 Anja Cramer left Germany to start a new venture in the wine world of Piedmont. Her love for wine and her skills in Marketing have contributed to the sales of La Spinetta over the past 7 years. Today Anja is also a proud part of the Contratto winery, putting her passion and efforts into the Marketing and Sales of Contratto's wines. In addition we all know, that a little bit of German organizing can't hurt in any Italian winery.

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Metodo Classico...

"Aromas of white leshed fruits mingle with almonds which leads to a complex and powerful mouthfeel, all complemented by a fresh, elegant finish."

Millesimato Brut

Vintage:	2007
Denomination:	Metodo Classico -Vino Spumante di Qualità
Grape Varieties:	80% Pinot Noir and 20% Chardonnay
Vineyards:	Oltrepo Pavese
Harvest Period:	last week in August
Aging:	almost 4 years on yeast in bottle
Tirage:	April to July
Riddling:	by hand
Dosage at Degorgement:	10 milliliters of liqueur per bottle
After Degorgement Data:	
Sugar content:	5.0 g/lt
PH-level:	3.2
Total acidity:	6.0 g/lt
Alcohol:	12.0%
Production quantity:	180.000 bottles
Available:	in 0.75l, Magnum and 3 Liter
Pairings:	ideal as aperitif
Serving temperature:	6 to 8 degrees Celcius
Recommended glass:	small Bordeaux

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Metodo Classico...

"A beautiful nose that remind of tangerines and clementines with a full, deep and perfectly balanced, long-lasting finish"

Bacco d'Oro Brut

Vintage:	2008
Denomination:	Metodo Classico -Vino Spumante di Qualità
Grape Varieties:	80% Pinot Noir and 20% Chardonnay
Vineyards:	Oltrepo Pavese
Harvest Period:	last week in August
Aging:	almost 4 years on yeast in bottle
Tirage:	April to July
Riddling:	by hand
Dosage at Degorgement:	10 milliliters of liqueur per bottle
After Degorgement Data:	
Sugar content:	10.0 g/lt
PH-level:	3.4
Total acidity:	6.0 g/lt
Alcohol:	12.5%
Production quantity:	25.000 bottles
Pairings:	ideal as aperitif, appetizers and fish
Serving temperature:	6 to 8 degrees Celcius
Recommended glass:	small Bordeaux

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Metodo Classico...

"A nose that is reminiscent of baked apples with light hints of ginger, sublime ethereal flavors on the finish, reflecting the characteristic qualities of the 2007 vintage, destined for the Champagne connoisseurs, who love this style"

For England Pas Dosé

Vintage:	2007
Denomination	Metodo Classico -Vino Spumante di Qualità
Grape Varieties:	80% Pinot Noir and 20% Chardonnay
Vineyards:	Oltrepo Pavese
Harvest Period:	last week in August
Aging:	almost 4 years on yeast in bottle
Tirage:	April to July
Riddling:	by hand
Dosage at Degorgement:	no
Sugar content:	2.0 g/lt
PH-level:	3.2
Total acidity:	6.3 g/lt
Alcohol:	12.5%
Production quantity:	20.000 bottles
Pairings:	ideal as aperitif, appetizers and fish
Serving temperature:	6 to 8 degrees Celcius
Recommended glass:	small Bordeaux

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Metodo Classico...

"the nose is very fresh with tiny red fruit notes and a few aniseed aromas, followed by nuanced hazelnut. A Rosé of crisp and pure ellegance."

For England Rosé Brut

Vintage:	2007
Denomination:	Metodo Classico -Vino Spumante di Qualità
Grape Varieties:	100% Pinot Noir
Vineyards:	Oltrepo Pavese
Harvest Period:	last week in August
Aging:	almost 4 years on yeast in bottle
Tirage:	April to July
Riddling	by hand
Dosage at Degorgement:	10 milliliters of liqueur per bottle
After Degorgement Data:	
Sugar content:	2.0 g/lt
PH-level:	3.3
Total acidity:	6.0 g/lt
Alcohol:	12.5%
Production quantity:	20.000 bottles
Pairings:	ideal as aperitif, appetizers and fish
Serving temperature:	6 to 8 degrees Celcius
Recommended glass:	small Bordeaux

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Metodo Classico...

"Delightful aromas of ripe white fruits and kumquats.
Powerful yet refined on the palate"with the citrus of the nose combining with the biscuity flavours of classic Blanc de Blancs"

Blanc de Blancs Brut

Vintage:	2008
Denomination:	Metodo Classico -Vino Spumante di Qualità
Grape Varieties:	100% Chardonnay
Vineyards:	Oltrepo Pavese
Harvest Period:	last week in August
Aging:	almost 4 years on yeast in bottle
Tirage:	April to July
Riddling:	by hand
Dosage at Degorgement:	10 milliliters of liqueur per bottle
After Degorgement Data:	
Sugar content:	1.0 g/lt
PH-level:	3.3
Total acidity:	6.0 g/lt
Alcohol:	12.5%
Production quantity:	12.000 bottles
Pairings:	ideal as aperitif, appetizers and fish
Serving temperature:	6 to 8 degrees Celcius
Recommended glass:	small Bordeaux

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Metodo Classico...

"This delicious and unusual wine is a Moscato made as "Metodo Classico". With this product Contratto goes 145 years back, when only Moscato grapes were available in Canelli to use for metodo classico. Crafted from old-vine Moscato grapes."

De Miranda

Vintage:	2006
Denomination:	Metodo Classico Moscato d'Asti DOCG
Grape Varieties:	100% Moscato
Vineyards:	Canelli
Harvest Period:	last week in August
Vinification:	fermentation in bottle (not steel vat)
Aging:	almost 4 years on yeast in bottle
Tirage:	April to July
Tasting Note:	this delicately sweet wine is bottle fermented and aged 4 years on its yeast, resulting in a delightful potion of fresh grapey Moscato, laden with fruit, honey, mineral and herbal com plexity.
Dosage at Degorgement:	no
Sugar content:	140 g/lt
PH-level:	3.13
Total acidity:	6.2 g/lt
Alcohol:	6.0%
Production quantity:	8.000 bottles
Pairings:	ideal as aperitif, desserts and strong cheeses
Serving temperature:	6 to 8 degrees Celcius
Recommended glass:	small Bor- deaux

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Asti Spumante

"This delicious Asti Spumante is a Moscato made in steel vats, but left for two years on its lees to combine the fruity aromas of the Moscato grape with the complexity of extensive yeast aging. The result is a Moscato that re-freshes, yet showing impressive depths."

De Miranda Asti Spumante

Vintage:	2009
Denomination:	Asti Spumante DOCG
Grape Varieties:	100% Moscato
Vineyards:	Canelli
Harvest Period:	last week in August
Vinification:	slow alcoholic fermentation in steel vat for 3 months at extremely low temperature
Aging:	almost 2 years on yeast in steel vat
Tasting Note:	this delicious wine is fermented and aged in steel and kept on its yeast for almost 2 years, resulting in a delightful potion of fresh grapey Moscato, laden with pair and honey, mineral and herbal complexity.
Sugar content:	130 g/lt
PH-level:	3.43
Total acidity:	5.9 g/lt
Alcohol:	8.0%
Production quantity:	6.000 bottles
Pairings:	ideal as aperitif, desserts and strong cheeses
Serving temperature:	6 to 8 degrees Celcius
Recommended glass:	wide Champagne glass from the 1960s

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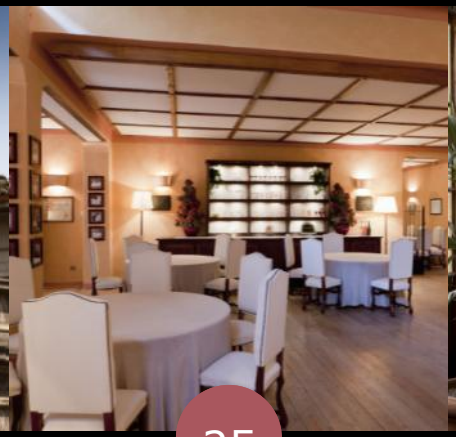

Winery Visits...

A visit to the cellars of Contratto is a one-of-a-kind experience. This year the Contratto cellars become part of the UNESCO world heritage.

It is therefore our pride to show this heritage to anybody who is interested in visiting.

We are happy to receive visitors from Monday to Sunday (November to March from Monday to Saturday) by appointment. The maximum group size that we are able to accommodate at a time is 20 people. The tasting fee per person is 15,00 Euro. Please calculate a minimum of 90 minutes for the tour and the tasting.

Please contact us at:

info@contratto.it
or
Tel: +39 0141 823 349

See you soon!

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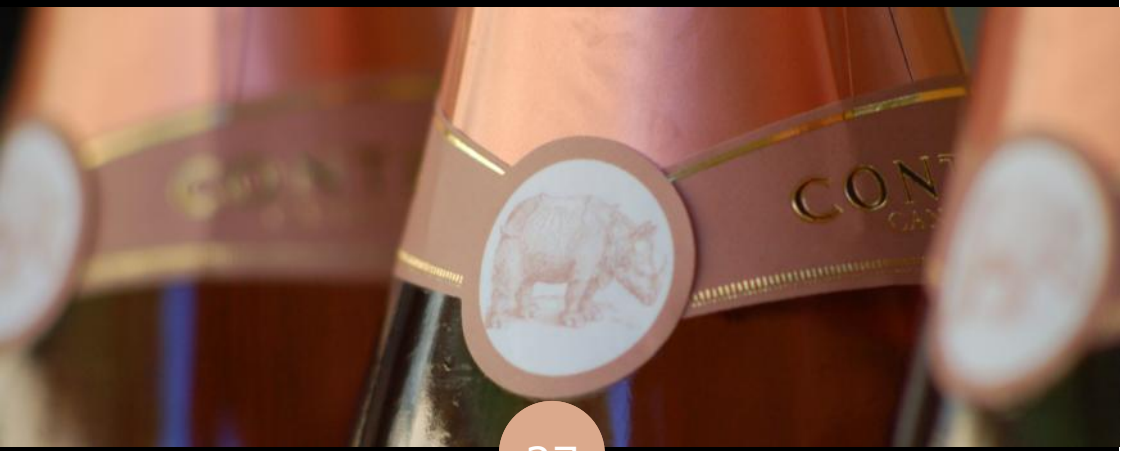

La Spinetta...

Why is there a little La Spinetta rhino on the upper backlabel of the Contratto bottle?

In June 2011 La Spinetta acquired the Contratto winery, a jewel of a cellar in the heart of old town Canelli. The Rivettis always have had a strong love for Champagne and "Bollicine Piemontesi" were missing in the gamut of La Spinetta's wine portfolio. In particular, Andrea Rivetti, Giorgio Rivetti's son, had already for many years been making a small production of Metodo Classico wines at La Spinetta. They were Chardonay based sparklers and produced to his friend's and family's delight. The love of Champagne and the desire and ambition to preserve and to continue a 140 year tradition of making Italian sparkling wines in Canelli, made La Spinetta take over the Contratto winery.

With the same passion for wine making and dedication to quality, which La Spinetta has had since 1977, the Rivettis now aim to make top sparkling wines at Contratto.

As it is a short 20 minutedrive from Castagnole Lanze to Canelli, visitors are encouraged to visit both cellars, La Spinetta in Castagnole Lanze and Contratto in Canelli.

For more information on La Spinetta and the wines please visit: www.la-spinetta.com