



RAFFALDINI[®]

VINEYARDS

August 2019

Ciao Amici,

I hope this letter finds everyone happy and healthy. If you are new to the Raffaldini Wine Club, welcome! With each semi-annual wine club package, you will receive a letter from me describing the wines, why they were chosen, and updating you on all activities happening at Raffaldini Vineyards.

This package includes the following:

- 2 bottles of Raffaldini 2017 Montepulciano Riserva
- 2 bottles of Raffaldini 2017 Il Falco
- 1 bottle of Raffaldini 2018 Auguri
- 1 bottle of Raffaldini 2018 Girasole
- The Winemaker's Notes associated with the wines
- Recipes that we encourage you to enjoy with the wines
- Invitations to upcoming signature events at Raffaldini

When I purchased the abandoned farm eighteen years ago and began the conversion to a vineyard, it was with a dream to make wines of the quality found in this release. In order to do so, the vines needed to move beyond the youthfulness of their establishment phase and begin to express themselves. Equally as important, the weather had to be perfect, meaning hot and dry during the summer and fall. 2017 was the year both of those things came together as ripening went smoothly with great production levels. The previously released 2017 Sangiovese is classically Tuscan in style both in elegance and aromatics, while the Bella Misto turned out to be the most fruitful version we have made. The 2017 Grande Riserva is without question the greatest wine I produced and is capable of aging up to a decade. It is with that background that I'm excited to describe the red wines in this package. But first, let's talk about the non-reds.

When I chose to discontinue making Pinot Grigio last year, there was a bit of an outcry from our patrons. I felt for while it was good, it could never be an exceptional wine, and if I can't achieve that, I simply move on. The reason is that Pinot Grigio is a difficult grape to fully ripen, but when harvested early to make a sparkling wine, it can do quite well. So last year I decided to produce our first ever, completely dry sparkling wine, called Auguri, made in the high acid style of Prosecco. In my opinion, the quality is very high, and customer reaction was extremely positive. I am proud to say that this wine is now a permanent addition to our tasting line up. As we plant more grapes for this wine, we are going to transition to a combination of the more traditional Trebbiano grape, rather than rely on Pinot Grigio, and also mix in a little bit of Vermentino, Petit Manseng, and Traminette. I am incredibly excited for this blend's potential, though I need to temper my enthusiasm given my general love of sparkling wine. Auguri (like all dry sparklers) is more than just a celebration wine given that it can pair with any food, especially very spicy foods like Indian and Thai foods as well as anything with a lot of green vegetables, salads, and peppers.

The 2018 Girasole, our dry rosé, was perhaps the most difficult wine we ever have made. Unlike the early harvested grapes used to make Auguri, these grapes suffered mightily during Hurricane Florence and, without mincing words, took an absolute beating. As the grapes were not quite ready to pick, I decided to let them hang, and we took nearly 80% crop losses resulting in only slightly more than one hundred cases being made. The wine itself is lovely, with beautiful aromas and even a bit of those famous Raffaldini tannins, resulting in a wide range of food pairing. My only wish is that I had more of it.

Next up is our 2017 Montepulciano Riserva, and I can only describe this wine as simply delicious. Montepulciano is a grape that thrives in this part of North Carolina, and I am pleased to say that now four other vineyards grow this varietal. The 2017 is a powerful wine in density and fruitfulness, the latter being the hallmark of this grape. Naturally, even with perfect weather, we pushed it even further through the Appassimento drying process to magnify the qualities present in these vines. Surprisingly, while the alcohol levels are in typical Raffaldini nosebleed territory, the fruitfulness of the grapes is such that the wine is perhaps the most balanced of the Riserva line to date.

Last but not least is the 2017 Il Falco, our Sagrantino-based blend. I think this wine is the absolute superstar of the package. Sagrantino continues to impress me as a grape that I believe will ultimately surpass Montepulciano in style, complexity, and long aging ability due to its structure, finesse, and incredibly high tannin levels. This wine is an iron fist in a velvet glove that can pair with any red meat, and I so wish we had the native wild boar that lives near the vineyards in Umbria where Sagrantino grows. Eating Pappardelle with Wild Boar and this wine is a match made in heaven. This wine is a treasure.

On a non-wine related note, you will begin to see some construction on the left side of Groce Road as you approach Raffaldini as our two out-of-State neighbors begin work on their vineyards and tasting rooms. On the right side you will see some tree clearing for some vine planting and early work on the long-awaited restaurant and lodging project. These are very exciting times at Raffaldini!

Recently I was reading an interesting book entitled *When -- The Secrets of Perfect Timing* by Daniel Pink, and I was struck by a quote from Orson Wells:

If you want a happy ending, that depends, of course, on where you stop your story.

I pondered this and took away the idea that like beginnings and midpoints, endings quietly steer what we do and how we do it. We tend to define our endings as the end of life, when it is healthier to view it as simply another stage in the journey, and a perceived ending today could very much be just another midpoint.

Our best wishes to all of you.

Salute

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jay Raffaldini', written in a cursive style.

Jay Raffaldini on behalf of La Famiglia Raffaldini

2018 AUGURI



THIS COMMON TOAST TRANSLATES FROM THE ITALIAN AS TO YOUR HAPPINESS! ESCHEWING THE EASIER METHOD OF FERMENTING IN THE TANK WE CHOSE TO FERMENT ALL 7500 BOTTLES ONE AT A TIME, EACH IN THEIR OWN BOTTLE. THIS TRADITIONAL METHOD IS EXTREMELY LABORIOUS BUT PRODUCES THE HIGHEST QUALITY OF WINE AND IS A PURE LABOR OF OUR LOVE FOR THIS WINE. WE SIMPLY ADORE THIS STYLE OF WINE AND IT IS FREQUENTLY COMPARED TO FRANCIACORTA, THE HIGHEST END OF ITALIAN-STYLE CHAMPAGNE, PRODUCED IN THE PROVINCE OF LOMBARDY, HOME OF THE RAFFALDINI FAMILY.

AFTER THE GLASS IS POURED, THE SOUND OF BUBBLES FIZZING ALONGSIDE THE SMELL OF SLICED GREEN APPLES OPEN YOUR SENSES. AS THE BUBBLES POP ACROSS YOUR PALATE, FLAVORS BEGIN TO EXPLODE WITH A RUSH OF APPLE, PEAR AND WHITE PEACH. THE FINISH HIGHLIGHTS A MINERALITY OF CRUSHED SLATE AND HINTS OF TARRAGON.

Thoughts on Sparkling Wine Pairings

Although frequently consumed as a celebratory beverage, sparkling wine should not be underestimated as a food wine. Most sparkling wines have high acidity, thanks to the fact that the grapes are picked early, which is necessary to retain natural tartness and a “neutral” grape flavor, rather than varietal character. Bubbles add a delightful complexity and lift the aroma out of the glass. Some bubbly, even “Brut” contains sugar to help mask the acidity. Our Auguri contains no residual sugar, and as such is the perfect sparkling wine to enjoy at the table.

As an aperitif, you can mix fresh fruit juice with sparkling wine to create a classic cocktail. Try peach juice, or sweetened grapefruit or blood orange for a unique flavor. Be sure to rub the rim of the glass with your favorite Italian herbs like basil or rosemary that stimulate the senses and lend an authentic essence to your sparkling beverage.

The acidity in sparkling wine cuts through rich dishes, such as those enjoyed with butter, making sparkling wine a natural compliment to shellfish and crustaceans or red fish. A staple Italian sparkling wine pairing is fried calamari or even arancini.

On the sweeter side, you can pair sparkling wines with savory desserts like cheesecake and shortbread cookies. A classic Tuscan dessert is called panforte, basically a dense, honey, almond and hazelnut cake that is utterly delicious.



2018 GIRASOLE

A SUNFLOWER IS ONE OF NATURE'S GIFTS TO THE SENSES, THEY ARE DELICATE AND BEAUTIFUL. THEREFORE, WE NAMED OUR ROSÉ GIRASOLE, WHICH MEANS SUNFLOWER IN ITALIAN. ROSÉ IS MADE ALL AROUND THE GLOBE WITH DRASTIC STYLISTIC DIFFERENCES. WHAT DEFINES A STYLE OF ROSÉ WILL RANGE FROM WINEMAKING PRACTICES ALL THE WAY TO MICRO CLIMATE OF THE GROWING REGION. THE RESULTS OF THIS DIVERSE PRODUCT CAN BE A FRESH, LIGHT, AND ACIDIC WINE SHOWCASING FRUITS SUCH AS LEMON AND BLOOD ORANGE ALL THE WAY TO A RICH, COMPLEX WINE WITH A RIPE FRUIT PROFILE, LIKE STRAWBERRIES AND POMEGRANATE. THE RAFFALDINI GIRASOLE HAS INVITING AROMATICS THAT SHOWCASE A NOSE OF HONEYSUCKLE AND FRESH SLICED PEAR. THE FIRST SIP BRINGS A RUSH OF BRIGHT ACIDITY CARRYING NOTES OF CITRUS FRUIT THAT DEVELOP INTO A HONEYDEW MELON MID-PALATE WITH A REFRESHING AND LINGERING RASPBERRY FINISH.

Basil Pesto

Yields 1.5 Quarts

1 lb. Fresh Basil Leaves

1/2 Cup Minced Garlic

3 Cups Toasted Pine Nuts

2 Cups Grated Parmesan Cheese

1 Lemon, Juiced

2 Cups Extra Virgin Olive Oil

In a food processor, pulse the basil, nuts, Parmesan cheese and garlic until roughly chopped.

Remove to a mixing bowl and stir in the lemon juice and olive oil.

Check seasoning and salt and pepper to taste.

2017 MONTEPULCIANO RISERVA



MONTEPULCIANO IS OUR FLAGSHIP RED AND THE OLDEST RED VARIETAL PLANTED AT RAFFALDINI VINEYARDS. THIS VARIETAL HAS THICK SKINS, LARGE BERRIES, AND LOOSE CLUSTERS WHICH GIVES US THE FREEDOM TO RIPEN IT TO ITS FULL POTENTIAL. THESE CHARACTERISTICS MAKE MONTEPULCIANO AN IDEAL CANDIDATE FOR THE APPASSIMENTO PROCESS. APPASSIMENTO INVOLVES DEHYDRATING THE GRAPES TO CONCENTRATE THE FRUIT FOR A MORE RICH, COMPLEX WINE. OUR 2017 MONTEPULCIANO RISERVA PRESENTS A VERY COMPLEX NOSE WHICH BRINGS A HOST OF DESCRIPTORS: PLUM, FIG, CHERRY, CLOVE, CACAO AND A FINE LEATHER LIKE A NEW PAIR OF GUCCI LOAFERS. THE WINE ATTACKS YOUR PALATE WITH AN AGGRESSIVE DISPLAY OF JUICY RED FRUITS. AT THE FRONT, PLUM, FIG AND TART CHERRY ARE FOLLOWED BY TANNINS THAT GIVE THE SENSATION OF RAW CHOCOLATE THAT ADD TEXTURE TO THE WINE. THE FINISH IS BALANCED WITH RICH EARTH AND SPEARMINT THAT WILL BRING YOU BACK TO THE OLD WORLD STYLE OF WINEMAKING.

Tuscan Panzanella Salad

2 1/2 Lbs. mixed tomatoes, cut into bite-sized pieces	1 small shallot, minced (about 2 T)
1 Cup cucumber, small dice	2 medium cloves garlic, minced (about 2 t)
1/2 cup red onion, julienne	1/2 t Dijon mustard
2T capers	2 T 18yr balsamic vinegar
2 t kosher salt, plus more for seasoning	Freshly ground black pepper
3/4-Lb. ciabatta or focaccia cut into 1 1/2" cubes (about 6 Cups bread cubes)	1/2 cup packed basil leaves, roughly chopped
10 T extra-virgin olive oil, divided	

Place tomatoes in a colander, set over a bowl and season with 2 teaspoons kosher salt. Toss to coat. Set aside at room temperature to drain, tossing occasionally, while you toast the bread. Drain for a minimum of 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, preheat oven to 300°F, adjust rack to center position. Add bread to a sheet pan. Bake until crisp and firm but not browned. Remove from oven and let cool.

Remove colander with tomatoes from bowl with tomato juice. Place colander with tomatoes in the sink. Add shallot, garlic, mustard, and vinegar to the bowl with tomato juice. Whisking constantly, drizzle in the remaining 1/2 cup olive oil. Season dressing to taste with salt and pepper.

Combine toasted bread, cucumber, capers, onion, tomatoes, and dressing in a large bowl. Add basil leaves. Toss everything to coat and season with salt and pepper. Let rest for 5 minutes before serving, drizzle with balsamic.



2017 IL FALCO

IL FALCO TRANSLATES FROM THE ITALIAN AS “THE FALCON” IN HONOR OF THE ANCIENT HILLSIDE TOWN OF MONTEFALCO (MOUNTAIN OF THE FALCON), WHICH IS THE CENTER FOR SAGRANTINO PLANTINGS. THIS SAGRANTINO-BASED BLEND IS DEEPLY STRUCTURED WITH BIG, DRY, DUSTY TANNINS. SAGRANTINO LOVES HOT WEATHER AND HAS MADE ITSELF AT HOME IN OUR VINEYARD. SAGRANTINO RESPONDS WELL TO OUR APPASSIMENTO DRYING TECHNIQUE, DISPLAYING CONCENTRATED FLAVORS OF DRIED PLUMS, DRIED CHERRIES, CURRANT AND SAVORY CHARACTERISTICS REMINISCENT OF PIPE TOBACCO. WE “SOFTENED” UP THIS SUPER UMBRIAN BY BLENDING IT WITH PETIT VERDOT. THOSE OF YOU WITH PATIENCE WILL BE REWARDED WITH AN INCREDIBLE FLAVOR EVOLUTION AS THE WINE SOFTENS UP AND NEW FLAVORS EMERGE WITH A FEW YEARS IN THE CELLAR. THIS VERY DRY RED WINE IS BEST RESERVED FOR RICH DISHES LIKE ROASTS, STEWS, AND GAME. SAGRANTINO IS THE UMBRIAN’S COMPANION TO ONE OF THEIR CHERISHED INGREDIENTS, WILD BOAR.

Wild Boar Stew

Spezzatino Cinghiale

- 4 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 onion, coarsely chopped
- 1 carrot, coarsely chopped
- 1 celery stalk, coarsely chopped
- 2 lbs. wild boar, cubed
- ½ tsp freshly grated nutmeg
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 Cup dry red wine
- 1 (28 ounce) can pureed tomatoes
- 1 Cup beef broth (preferably homemade)

In a large Dutch oven or heavy-bottomed stew pot, heat the olive oil to medium high. Add the onions, carrots and celery and cook until they become soft, 5-7 minutes. Add the cubed wild boar and season with salt, pepper and nutmeg. Mix the ingredients together then add the wine. Bring to a slow simmer and allow the wine to reduce by half. Add the tomato puree, beef broth and salt. Bring to a gentle simmer. Cover with a lid and simmer for 2 hours.



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VINE TO WINE

IMMERSIVE HARVEST EXPERIENCE

Friday, September 6

An immersive harvest experience. Join Jay Raffaldini and the rest of our winemaking team for a day to remember. Make history as you take part in the 2019 vintage harvest at Raffaldini Vineyards. Receive complete, inside access to our production and enjoy three lovely meals, wine pairings, and activities throughout the day.



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I 4 T H A N N U A L
FESTA ITALIANA
Saturday, September 21

One of the largest Italian celebrations in the Southeast features vendors from across the region including food, art, music, crafts, and of course, wine. Discounted, advance tickets and exclusive VIP experience available now. Ticket includes parking, admission to the festival, commemorative wine glass, and either a tasting of three select Raffaldini wines or a glass of wine.



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ASSEMBLAGGIO!

RED WINE BLENDING EXPERIENCE

Weekends in November

Our reds are ready for blending and we need you to help us determine the blend for the Raffaldini Grande Riserva! Each session is a two-hour education wine experience led by Owner Jay Raffaldini. Each blend you create will be carefully analyzed, sampled and help inspire our new vintage of Grande Riserva.

This is an opportunity to hone your winemaking knowledge and ability, learn more about grape varietals, and make a few new friends in the process. Blending trials will be held in the botti room allowing you to experience the winery during the winemaking session.



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WINE CLUB APPRECIATION

Saturday, December 14

La Famiglia Raffaldini cordially invites all of our wine club members to our wine club member appreciation day. You'll enjoy live music, samples from local vendors, raffles for door prizes, and special tastings all day!

This event is free, however please RSVP to wineclub@raffaldini.com.

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LONTANO DAGLI OCCHI
VICINO AL CUORE