

Ca' La Bionda

There's a lot to like about the new releases from Ca' La Bionda. The traditional Amarone and single vineyard Ravazzol continue to impress with a combination of energy, depth and savory character. The same is true of the Ripasso. However, what Ca' La Bionda is really about is Valpolicella. Winemaker Alessandro Castellani firmly believes that Valpolicella could be the Burgundy of Italy.

While most of the world thinks of Valpolicella as a fruity wine with near-term appeal, Ca' La Bionda aims to deliver a wine with a ten-to-twenty-year lifespan. There's no *appassimento* used in the Valpolicella lineup; residual sugars all finish below one gram per liter, while maturation takes place entirely in neutral 30-hectoliter barrels.

The winery and vineyards are all located in Marano di Valpolicella within the Classico zone, with elevations spanning 150 to 300 meters and most on steep inclines. As I drove along the restored stone walls and terraced vineyards, Nicola Castellani (Alberto's brother and partner) pointed out how the stones used in each section show the difference in soil types from one parcel to the next. This, in many ways, is the inspiration behind their single-vineyard wines. Ca' La Bionda, along with a handful of other estates, represents the future of Valpolicella.

From *Veneto: A Constant State of Evolution (Feb 2024)* by Eric Guido

2018 Amarone della Valpolicella Classico Ravazzol

95

Color: Red

Drinking Window: 2026 - 2038 ^
Eric Guido, December 2023

The 2018 Amarone della Valpolicella Classico Ravazzol is intense, bursting from the glass with bright cherry and rose tones complemented by a dusting of sweet spice and violet pastille. It opens with a pretty inner sweetness, contrasted by juicy acidity as crisp red and blue fruits slowly saturate. Chalky mineral tones add grip toward the close. The Ravazzol tapers off with tension, nearly salty and quite crunchy, leaving a licorice tinge to linger.