

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 wine with a ten-to-twenty-year lifespan. There's no *appassimento* used in the Valpolicella lineup; residual sugars 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

2022 Valpolicella Classico

Color: Red

Drinking Window: 2024 - 2028 ^
Eric Guido, December 2023

Remarkably floral and vibrant, the 2022 Valpolicella Classico blossoms in the glass with violet and lavender tones, giving way to hints of white pepper and crushed blackberries. This is silky in feel and energetic in style, with crunchy wild berry fruits and mineral-tinged acidity that pinches at the cheeks. It finishes with medium length, leaving the palate completely refreshed as suggestions of rose slowly fade.