

OVERVIEW



The Colli Tortonesi DOC is located in the southeastern Piedmont, adjacent to Otrepò Pavese in the Lombardy region. Tortona, founded by the Ligurians, became a Roman colony in 148 BCE and was known in ancient times as Derthona, the oldest colony under Roman rule west of the Po River Valley. Today the name Derthona represents the Piedmontese white wine made exclusively from Timorasso grapes grown on the Tortona hills and it aims to be the symbol of the Renaissance of the Colli Tortonesi.

The Colli Tortonesi DOC is comprised of 47 municipalities, approximately 1800 hectares of vine and is divided into two sub-zones (sotto-zona): Terre di Libarna and Monleale. The area has a transitional topography of hills and valleys as it rises from the plains of the Po River to heights of 1,700 meters in the Apennines, all of which contribute to the diversity of soil and climate.

Much of the soil was formed during the Tortonian age, between 5 and 15 million years ago. It is a mix of calcareous clay, with ancient marine deposits, limestone and a surface layer of sand. Gray to light blue in color, these soils are also called *Marne di Sant'Agata* and are not dissimilar to that which runs through Barolo, 100 km to the north.

The climate is humid, influenced positively by the Ligurian sea. It receives the lowest rainfall in the Piedmont, with a considerable diurnal temperature range, which contributes to the intense aromatics of the wine.

Throughout the Middle Ages, the area was planted to local varieties like Barbera, Cortese, Croatina and Timorasso. However, when the phylloxera epidemic devastated the area in 1879, Timorasso was excluded from replanting because of its low yields and, instead, Cortese, was widely planted owing to its much easier growing attributes. After the second World War, the area was largely converted to red grapes and, in 1973, when the DOC was awarded, Barbera and Cortese were the focus grapes.

It wasn't until the 1980s, that Timorasso was rediscovered by a group of young vignerons, led by Walter Massa. This foundation led to the renaissance of this great white wine grape with the release of the first bottle of Timorasso, Massa *Costa del Vento* in the early 1990s. The result was so phenomenal that two other Tortona producers - Andrea Mutti and Paolo Poggio - decided to follow suit, believing in the capacity of this grape

to express the terroir.

By 2000 there were multiple producers of Timorasso, and it began being associated with the town of Tortona. Soon after, its ancient Roman name, Derthona, became the name of the wine made 100% of Timorasso from this area in the Piedmont.