

'Waiting is not wasted time': Tenuta San Leonardo launches artistic programme with 2018 vintage

On 21 March, fans of historic Italian wine producer, Tenuta San Leonardo, will finally be able to get their hands on the 2018 vintage. This latest offering confirms what makes this wine so distinctive and unique, says Filippo Bartolotta – an over-arching elegance superbly expressive of its terroir, always displaying a consistent, precise style – as well as launching an artistic programme.



Husband and wife team, Anselmo Guerrieri Gonzaga and Ilaria Tronchetti Provera Owner-winemaker father and son duo Marchese Carlo and Anselmo Guerrieri Gonzaga said they were proud to introduce the latest version of their estate's *grand vin*, the fruit of an exceptional quality growing year that produced superbly-ripe, healthy grapes picked at just the right moment to prevent over-ripeness and ensure a wine of enviable refinement. As Anselmo explained, "San Leonardo 2018 is already exceptionally enjoyable, but this wine is famous too for acquiring complexity and depth with ageing. That is a gift of its constituent grapes, Cabernet Sauvignon, Carmenère, and Merlot, in descending order of proportions." He noted the impact of the "brilliant sun" in July, "whose welcome heat warmed a season that [had been] quite wet up to that point and with below-average temperatures. The overall results were more than satisfactory, and we now have a San Leonardo 2018 with a gorgeously-complex nose of wild black berry fruit along with hints of pungent forest floor and wild herbs," he said. "It stands out, too, for a masterful balance of dense, well-integrated tannins, a vibrant, firm structure, and a beautifully-rising finish. This is an intense vintage, but flawlessly balanced and supported by an enviable acidity, just as our estate style demands." The 2018 vintage is also distinctive for signalling the launch of a new project, Arte a San Leonardo. This was inspired by the desire of Anselmo Guerrieri Gonzaga and his wife Ilaria Tronchetti Provera to initiate a dialogue between the history and character of the San Leonardo estate, and the various languages and artistic visions of contemporary art.

The concrete fruit of the project is the creation of a numbered-edition Libro d'artista (Artist's Book) and an Etichetta d'Artista (Artist Label), whose thematic will change from year to year. The inaugural edition bears the signature of artist Simone Berti, who has created her Libro d'Artista entitled *L'Attesa non è tempo sprecato* ('Waiting is not wasted time'), an axiom that perfectly embodies the belief of San Leonardo, as she concluded her 2022 artistic residence. Berti's Etichetta D'Artista for San Leonardo 2018 will adorn 999 numbered bottles, which will comprise 200 separate wooden gift boxes of 3 bottles each. These rare art pieces will be sold exclusively online for only 2 days, between 21 -22 March.

The world preview of the Tenuta San Leonardo 2018 took place in the Marquis Guerrieri Gonzaga Palazzo Taverna in the heart of ancient Rome, between Piazza Navona and Castel Sant'Angelo this week. The taverna dates back to the 16th century, built over the ruins of Giordano Orsini's fortress, which was mentioned in Dante's *Inferno*; The Diving Comedy. *The Drinks Business* was on the exclusive guests list for this wonderful event. We walked the halls of the Baroque wing that were gorgeously decorated with arazzi (tapestries) and antique furniture, enjoying aperitifs with floral, sage and passion fruit-driven Dolomitic Sauvignon Blanc, Vette di San Leonardo 2022.

Anselmo, Iliara Guerrieri Gonzaga, the curator of the project Giovanna Amadasi and the artist Simone Berti all spoke to showcased the project before a marvelous candle-lit buffet dinner prepared by Anselmo's aunt, Stefanina Aldobrandini.

It was a remarkable night which helped bring some deserved attention to this Italian wine masterpiece.

Although the estate dates back thousands of years, and grapes are thought to have grown there back in 900 AD, it was not until 1982 that Tenuta di San Leonardo came to life with the first ever bottle from their estate in Trentino. The estate was originally a monastery but has been the residence of the Marquis Guerrieri Gonzaga, passionate guardians of its heritage, for three centuries. It comprises 300 hectares, of which 30 are organically managed vineyards, that are protected by the imposing Trentino mountains which act as a barrier to the cold northern winds and welcome the temperate breezes of Lake Garda. Here Cabernet Sauvignon, Carmenère and Merlot find their home, the grapes dedicated to the production of San Leonardo.

I believe this 2018 vintage is one of the most refined ever produced.

Tasting notes:

- **Tenuta San Leonardo 2018:** The transparent red ruby color is the anticipation of a very vibrant wine. The nose takes you on a thousand journeys, starting from Paulliac pencil shaving, eucalyptus and sublime black currant notes. Then we are back in the Dolomites with fragrant mountain herbs, yellow roses, gory berries and underwood. This is a wine with a very approachable style and yet way more complex than it seems. The palate is pure drinking velvet with so much forest fruit and mineral quality and a very lingering finish. One last thing we know about this vino is a reliable aging potential. Drinks now/45 years