



*Our wines are produced where the sun follows the curves of those hills that were once the sea and where the river shapes the territory with its endless flows.*

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## **Castello di Spessa**

Castello di Spessa is a historic manor located in Capriva del Friuli in the Gorizia Hills –a hilly micro-region in north-eastern Italy, made up of a winery with almost 100 hectares of vineyards and a historical residency immersed in the green of a large centuries-old park, offering a Spa, three restaurants and a Golf Country Club.



## Our History

The **history of Castello di Spessa** is lost in the mists of time.

Dating back to a primitive Roman sighting outpost from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, later passed to the Lombards, the castle was probably founded around the 13<sup>th</sup> century and for centuries it served as the home of Friulian nobility including the Dorimbergo, the Rassauer and the Della Torre Valsassina families. The latter, whose lineage can be traced back to Charlemagne, remained owners of the castle for over 300 years. In fact, it was Count Luigi Torriani who welcomed Giacomo Casanova at Castello di Spessa in 1773, who seemed to have appreciated the estate's wines, referring to them in his Memories as being "of excellent quality".

Over the centuries the castle saw many other illustrious guests passing through its gates, such as Lorenzo Da Ponte, Mozart's famous librettist, and, in the early 1900s, Marshal Diaz and General Cadorna, commanders of the Italian army in the victorious World War I.

Here, history becomes closely intertwined with **viticulture**: wine was produced with grapes from the castle's vineyards since the 13<sup>th</sup> century and, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the grape variety Ribolla Gialla, a white once typical of this area, was already grown there, as attested in a sales document from 1559.

The castle's historic **aging cellars** are located underground on two levels: the first dates back to the medieval period; the second, excavated below, at a depth of 18 metres, was originally a military bunker built in 1939. With a constant temperature of 14 °C, the latter is ideal for the ageing and maturation of wines.

Today's neo-Gothic appearance of the castle is the result of an extensive intervention completed in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century by triestine architect Ruggero Berlam.



## Today

In **1987** the Pali family bought the castle and the winery was founded, starting from the core of the pre-existing vineyards. Since then, **Loretto Pali** has been tirelessly investing in the company and in the territory, carrying forward his ideas of quality and dynamism. The last chapter of this vision has been the expansion and modernisation of the wine cellar located in Cormons, a few kilometres from the castle.

In addition to producing wine and grappa, Castello di Spessa is also a **Golf Wine Resort & SPA**, with an 18-hole golf course. Moreover, the Estate offers a wide range of **hospitality** in the historic and charming **lodgings** located inside the castle or in the **typical farmhouses** scattered on the hills among the vineyards, as well as the **VINUMSpa**, which offers **Wine Therapy**, and **three restaurants**.

## The Territory

### Vineyards and Grape Varieties

Castello di Spessa owns about 100 hectares of vineyards consisting of:

- A 28-hectare plot, on the hills of the **Collio DOC**. Here, they grow: Pinot Bianco, Pinot Grigio, Sauvignon Blanc, Ribolla Gialla, Friulano, Merlot and Pinot Noir.
- A 70-hectare plot in the **Friuli Isonzo DOC** plain. Here, they grow: Pinot Grigio, Sauvignon Blanc, Ribolla Gialla, Friulano, Chardonnay, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon.

For several years now, Loretto Pali has started a fruitful collaboration with **Simonit & Sirch**, internationally renowned specialists in vineyard management and vine pruning, to grow the “3-Pinot Vineyard” (consisting of Pinot Noir, Pinot Grigio and Pinot Bianco). The guyot training system has been adopted, little used in the Friuli region, but typical of some of the most renowned areas where quality Pinot is produced, such as



Burgundy and Champagne. The goal is to best interpret the varietal characteristics in the micro zones of the Collio to obtain high quality Pinot wines. In particular, careful attention was paid to the Pinot Noir, to obtain excellent acidity, colour stability and elegance. The intent is that the vines — grown with the utmost respect for the environment — have a life of at least 50 or 60 years, to produce grapes for the finest wines.

### **The Land**

The Collio DOC is located at an altitude between 60 to 270 metres above sea level. The land where the vineyards are planted consist of a mixture – locally called “ponca” – of stratified marl and sandstone from the Paleocene-Eocene period, brought to surface by the lifting of the Adriatic seabed.

The “ponca” is rich in salts and microelements and gives the wines structure, longevity, as well as a full and intense bouquet.

The Friuli Isonzo DOC stretches out like a glacial plateau, gently sloping from the Collio and Carso hills towards the Adriatic Sea. The Isonzo River has a strong influence on this territory: from the movements of its riverbed to the floods, the washout of organic substances and the deep deposits of gravel carried downstream by the melting waters of the Julian Alps snowfields. The alluvial deposits range from the oldest, dating back to the Pleistocene epoch, to the most recent ones of the Holocene age.

The soils of the Isonzo valley are characterised by a first substratum rich in minerals, followed by layers of clay and gravel. These surface layers have the characteristic of accumulating heat during the day and releasing it at night. The resulting wines produced in this territory are markedly mineral, elegant, with good acidity and particularly long-lived.



## The Climate

For the gentle hills of the Collio, the circle of the Julian Prealps to the north offers an effective shelter against the cold winds blowing from the north. What's more, the

proximity to the Adriatic coast helps to mitigate temperature changes throughout the year, thus creating an ideal climate for viticulture.

The Isonzo valley plateau is characterised by a Mediterranean climate, with a constant presence of winds and breezes of maritime and continental origin. The cold and dry Bora wind from the Balkans alternates with the hot and humid Mediterranean Sirocco wind from the Adriatic, creating a continuous climatic variation characterised by a prevailing mitigating influence from the sea.

## Our Approach

No synthetic products are used in the vineyards and grassing is practiced to preserve the natural microflora and microfauna.

Moreover, Castello di Spessa has recently joined the eco-sustainable “**Bees in the Vineyard**” project aimed at the repopulation of bees on the Collio. The initiative involves carrying out treatments at certain times of the day and not in the presence of wind, thus avoiding the dispersion of molecules that can affect the bee microsystem.

## Our Wines

Today, Castello di Spessa produces 400,000 bottles from its vineyards.

### From the Collio DOC:

- Classic Method: Amadeus VSQ Brut Millesimato
- White wines: San Serff Bianco, Rassauer Friulano, Santarosa Pinot Bianco, JoyPinot Grigio Ramato, Segrè Sauvignon Blanc, Yellow Hills Ribolla Gialla
- Red wines: San Serff Rosso, Torriani Merlot, Casanova Pinot Noir



### **From the Isonzo DOC:**

- Sparkling wines: Pertè Ribolla Gialla
- White wines: Ribolla Gialla, Friulano, Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio, Sauvignon Blanc
- Red wines: Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot

### **Our Grappas**

Castello di Spessa is also passionately dedicated to the creation of quality, long aging grappas and spirits, thanks to the collaboration with a historic distillery in the area which has been in business since the end of the 1800s.

Our production includes:

- Grappa Riserva del Conte Ludovico di Spessa
- Brandy Casanova X.O.
- Grappa la Decana
- Grappa la Delicata
- Grappa la Decisa

## **The People**

### **Loretto Pali**

Born and bred in Friuli, member of an important family of entrepreneurs in the furniture sector, Loretto decided to pursue his passion and, in the 1970s, he embarked on his adventure in the world of wine by purchasing his first vineyards in the Boatina area, in the village of Cormòns, an important producer in the Isonzo region. In 1987 he acquired the Castello di Spessa in Capriva del Friuli, the historic estate of the Collio Goriziano, continuing to expand the vineyard over the years. His dream is to contribute, in a concrete manner, to the growth and development of this rich territory, learning from the past to improve the present.



## **Enrico Paternoster**

Oenologist originally from Trentino, Enrico joined the Castello di Spessa team as a consultant in 2014. Enrico grew up in the Non Valley, in Trentino and, after attending the Agricultural Technical College in San Michele all'Adige, he began his career in the world of wine, first in Tuscany, where he worked alongside Giulio Gambelli and subsequently, back in Trentino, also specialising in the Classic Method production. During this period, he met and worked alongside another great figure in the world of wine: oenologist Giorgio Grai. Since 1999, he began his collaboration with the Edmund Mach Agricultural Technical College in San Michele all'Adige, one of the most important and prestigious centres of education and scientific research in the agricultural field in Italy.

## **Contacts**

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