

## AN INTRODUCTION TO AMARONE

Pronounced: ah-mah-ROH-neh.

In Italian this means "big bitter"

Its name probably comes from Vaio Amaron, the name of the vineyard originally owned by Serego Alighieri, a member of Dante Alighieri's family. Dante was an Italian Florentine poet. His greatest work: *The Divine Comedy*, is considered one of the last and greatest literary statements produced during the Middle Ages, and one of the first of the Renaissance.

Its full name is now Amarone della Valpolicella as confusingly before 1990 some wines were labelled Recioto della Valpolicella Amarone.

Amarone is the dry version whilst Recioto is the sweet version. Also sparkling and fortified styles are made in small quantities.

In the novel "The Silence of the Lambs" by Thomas Harris, Dr Hannibal Lecter eats the census taker's liver with fava beans and a "big Amarone", rather than a Chianti as the film version states.



This is a wine produced from exactly the same grapes as a standard Valpolicella:

Corvina: richness and aroma.

Molinara: smoothness and balance

Rondinella: colour and tannin

- but it is significantly different.....why ?

This is due to the unique wine making process called "Appasimento".

This technique involves selected bunches of grapes being dried for up to 3 to 4 months in lofts or specially adapted sheds, where the grapes lose approximately up to a third of their weight. Only then are they crushed, producing a concentrated, rich, alcoholic wine.

Appasimento dates back to Roman times and Amarone as a wine did not grab the headlines until 1990. This was the year when Italy enjoyed an exceptional vintage and buyers having exhausted the "usual suspects" were desperately trying to find other new full bodied red wines: Amarone was propelled to fame almost overnight.