

TERRE DI FUMANE



The "Terre di Fumane" is essentially a large drying shed based in the Valpolicella Classico zone. This state of the art facility, run by a team headed by Franco Allegrini, consists of two wings which are used to store the grapes, providing approximately 27,000 square foot a piece, whilst the central section is used as an entrance and control centre. Storage space is available for up 8000 metric tons of grapes with humidity and temperature all computer controlled. The drying annexes have been designed so that space can be partitioned with curtains to provide a smaller number of rooms and in addition when fine weather occurs large doors and windows can be opened to ventilate the space. If the outside weather is too humid for the grapes these can be closed and the grapes still dried with the aid of giant de-humidifiers and fans. These methods are permitted by the Denominazione di Origine Controllata Wine Regulations.



The idea for such a facility originated from work carried out by the University of Bologna in 1978-9, Terre di Fumane was proposed with the founding of the Terre di Fumane Society in April 1995, whose objectives were to provide services to wineries wanting controlled appassimento. The Administrator is Franco Allegrini and this joint venture involves a total of 12 producers including Allegrini, Cesari, Campagnola, Nicolis, Speri & Brigaldara. The investment behind this project was jointly funded by the members and an EC grant. The facility has been in operation since 1997.

Traditionally, all the grape bunches destined for Amarone had to be placed in ventilated lofts on straw matting, however this exposed the grapes to botrytis and even grey mould. Controlling this can be difficult, time consuming and costly. With this facility when the grapes first arrive from the harvest, they spend two to three days in a specific low humidity environment with the temperature maintained at below 30°C. Franco Allegrini has found that this initial operation ensures that the grapes stems are fully dried which prevents botrytis forming and other associated problems, something he has personally been working on since losing all his 1987 vintage. At the same time the grapes lose around 10% of their weight. Thereafter, the grapes are maintained in a simulated natural environment, with the benefit of fans or openings when the weather permits, and dried in the usual manner.

