

Querciabella

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Garden to Table Querciabella Style

Sebastiano Cossia Castiglioni envisioned the highest form of winemaking when he gave the green light fifteen years ago for the expansion of his family's Chianti Classico estate into the southern reaches of coastal Maremma. Ever since Querciabella began planting vines in an area bordering on the *Parco dell'Uccellina* nature preserve, Sebastiano and his spirited team have made it their unrelenting mission to prove that no other kind of viticulture trumps that of land stewardship. That premise is also the driving force behind a broader course at Querciabella that pairs exquisite biodynamic wines with a cornucopia of wholesome crops ranging from grains and legumes to an uncommon selection of seasonal fruits and vegetables.

Under the direction of *Operations Manager* Marco Torriti, Querciabella's 33-hectare Maremma farm is a spectacular network of vineyards where many of the finest red wine grape varieties grow. Sangiovese, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon make up the blend for Mongrana, a youthful Maremma Toscana IGT that offers a fresh alternative to Querciabella's trademark crus from Chianti Classico. Worldwide acclaim for the estate's entire range has served to fortify an ever-advancing biodynamic regime, where a vegan or *stock-free* approach to soil management is carried out largely through the cultivation of rotating cover crops.

The orchard garden is a natural progression of the superb results achieved in grape growing at Querciabella and also a reflexion of its owner's profound convictions. The Castiglioni family, including Sebastiano's two young sons, are lifelong vegetarians and enthusiastic fans of the produce grown in Maremma for their household. "Fruits and vegetables should be nutritious and flavorful, yet these qualities are shockingly rare and in continual decline," notes Sebastiano. "The scarcity and unpredictability of organic produce, not to mention the unreliable information related to organic standards, led us to take action."

The project also focuses on soil fertility through the diversification of crops, which will eventually cover an area of two hectares that resembles a natural, self-regulating ecosystem. The farming regime operates at minimal energy consumption levels and only a portion of yields are harvested for human consumption. Such crops, some of which will soon include rare and disappearing species, also provide invaluable support to the many bee colonies that have proliferated since the winery's launch of *Bee Biodynamic*, a campaign addressing the devastating phenomenon known as *Colony Collapse Disorder*.

According to Marco, the balance attained in a closed system with limited interference from external factors is critical to preventing problems like plant disease or the need to intervene by mechanized and inorganic means. The health and purity of the fruits and vegetables produced at Querciabella are a testament to the age-old wisdom confirmed by such practices. "We have proved for years that wines acquire an unmistakable sense of place when we achieve balance with the land," says Marco, "It should come as no surprise that these crops can also possess astonishing territorial aromas, minerality and distinct expressions of light."

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ABOUT QUERCIABELLA

Founded in 1974, Querciabella enjoys the acclaim of the world's most discriminating critics and consumers for wines such as Camartina, Batà, Palafreno and Querciabella Chianti Classico. In its uncompromising pursuit of quality, sustainability and authenticity, Querciabella has continually honed its approach to biodynamic viticulture for over a decade. With vineyards located throughout Tuscany's Chianti Classico and Maremma areas, Querciabella exemplifies the mindful preservation of tradition through forward-thinking, albeit completely natural, winemaking. For the latest winery news and updates, join Querciabella on **Twitter** and **Facebook**.