



ECCELLENZA
PIEMONTE



CAPOFILA:

Associazione Cantina Comunale di La Morra

MEMBRI ATS:

Bottega del vino di Dogliani DOCG
Associazione Verduno è uno

PARTNER FOOD:

Consorzio di tutela Bra DOP e Raschera DOP
Consorzio di tutela Toma Piemontese DOP



Progetto finanziato con lo Sviluppo Rurale Piemonte 2023 - 2027
Intervento SRG10 Promozione dei prodotti di qualità
regione.piemonte.it/svilupporurale

SI INVITA AL CONSUMO RESPONSABILE DELLE BEVANDE ALCOLICHE

verduno *è* uno

VERDUNO PELAVERGA DOC

verdunopelaverga.it





VERDUNO PELAVERGA DOC AND THE 2025 VINTAGE

VERDUNO, 10 SEPTEMBER 2026

SPEAKER: SANDRO MINELLA



**Sviluppo Rurale
Piemonte 2023-2027**

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SI INVITA AL CONSUMO RESPONSABILE DELLE BEVANDE ALCOLICHE

- 1 The history — *from King Carlo Alberto to the DOC*
- 2 The territory — *two worlds, one ridge: the soils of Verduno*

Blind tasting: Verduno DOC 2025 – flight I

- 3 The grape and its clones — *a grape born of its territory*
- 4 The science of aromas — *rotundone*

Blind tasting: Verduno DOC 2025 – flight II

- 5 The 2025 vintage

Blind tasting: Verduno DOC 2025 – flight III

One guiding thread:

UNIQUENESS

*geographic, genetic,
aromatic, functional*

*In a land of great Barolo
some choose, and keep choosing,
Pelaverga Piccolo,
which only here becomes Verduno DOC.*

From the 1800s to the DOC: the milestones

THE HISTORY

- 1837 - 1857** King Carlo Alberto buys the Verduno estates; Gen. Staglieno refines his modern winemaking methods there
- 1937** “Pelaverga” appears on the wine list of a Langa trattoria.
- 1960s - '70s** G.B. Burlotto keeps varietal Pelaverga alive ($\approx 1,000$ bottles/year from vines scattered among Nebbiolo, Barbera and Dolcetto)
- 1972** Castello di Verduno plants the first all-Pelaverga Piccolo vineyards; then come F.lli Alessandria, G.B. Burlotto, Massara, Bel Colle, Brero...
- 1985 - 1992** Producers' association, the “Pelaverga Project” with Seminario Veronelli, Municipality's experimental vineyard (30 biotypes), CNR/university studies, Oberto's thesis
- 1994 - 1995** Entry in the Register of Varieties (code 330) and birth of the DOC (Decree 20/10/1995)

A grape with no parents

THE HISTORY

- **Mannini et al. (1991):** Pelaverga Piccolo is unrelated to the Pelaverga Grosso of Saluzzo (“Cari” in the Turin area) — a cultivar of its own
- **The Oberto thesis (1992):** in the Verduno experimental vineyard, Saluzzo and Cari coincide; the Pelaverga of Verduno and of Canavese are distinct from each other and from the first two
- **Raimondi, Schneider et al. (Scientific Reports, 2020):** DNA analysis of north-west Piedmont’s historic varieties finds no parent-offspring relationship for Pelaverga Piccolo. The hypothesis of a derivation from “Pignolo albese” finds no molecular confirmation

**No known father or mother
among Piedmont’s varieties**

**Pelaverga Piccolo is a
“child” of the historic area
from which
all its clones come:**

**Verduno, Roddi
and La Morra**

The boundaries of the production code (1995, am. 2015) THE APPELLATION

85%

min. Pelaverga Piccolo
almost always 100%

9 t/ha

max. grape yield
“vigna”: 8.1 t/ha
wine yield 63 hl/ha

11% vol

min. alcohol
min. acidity 4.5 g/l

1 March

earliest release
the year after the harvest

- Zone: the whole commune of Verduno + portions of Roddi and La Morra; hills only, up to 500 m asl
- Vineyard: vertical trellis with Guyot pruning; new plantings $\geq 3,300$ vines/ha; no forcing allowed
- No minimum ageing time, no prescribed vessel
- Bottling only within the province of Cuneo

Thirty years on: the numbers of growth

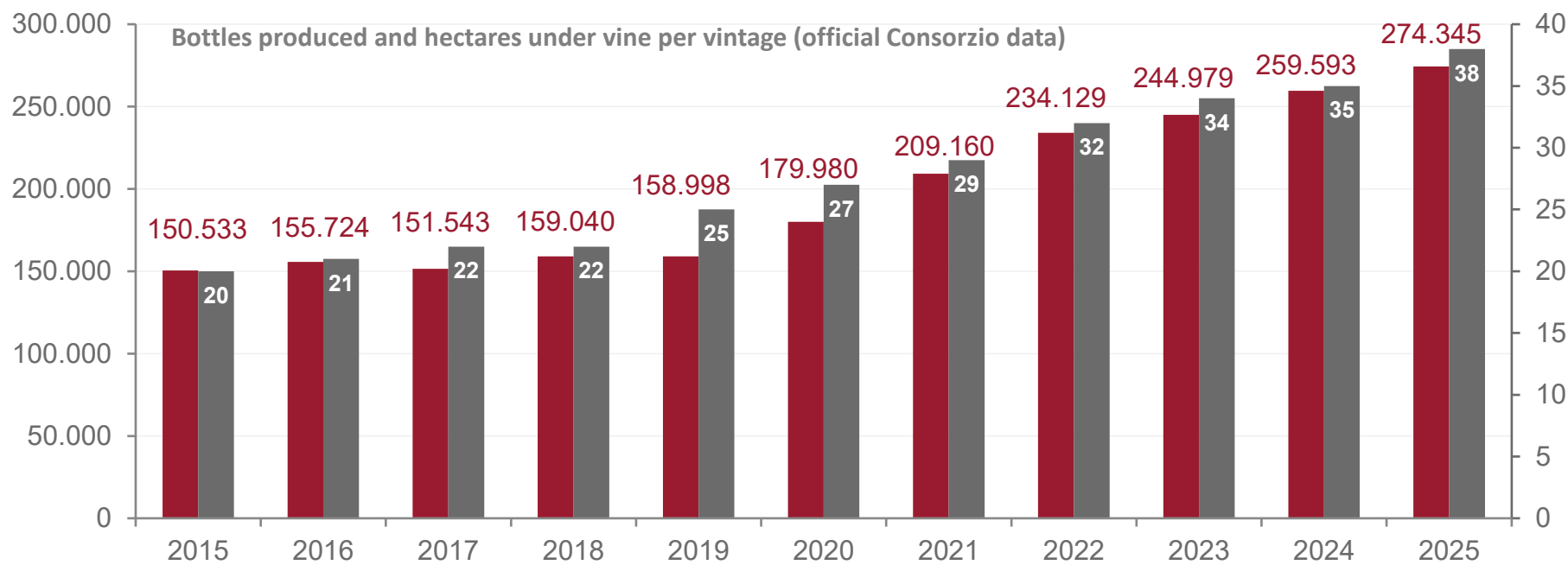
THE APPELLATION

7 → 38

hectares claimed
(1995 → today)

25

producing estates
(18 members of Verduno è Uno)



- +18% bottled (first half of 2026 vs 2025)
- Stock 2025: 37%
- Average price up from €6.05 (1995) to €16.50

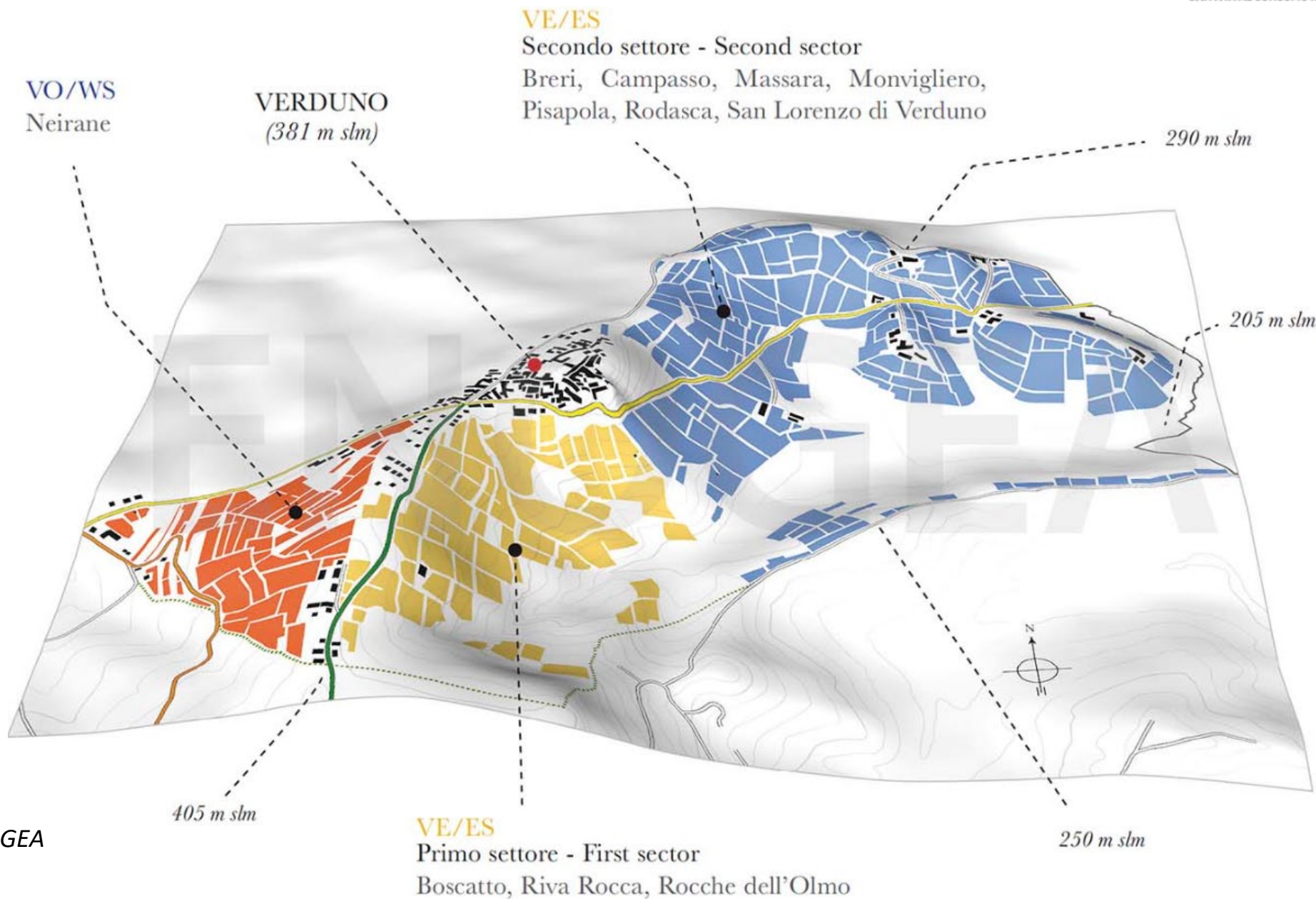
■ Bottles produced ■ Hectares under vine

Growth against the global consumption trend (-2.7% OIV 2025)

Morphology, geology and climates

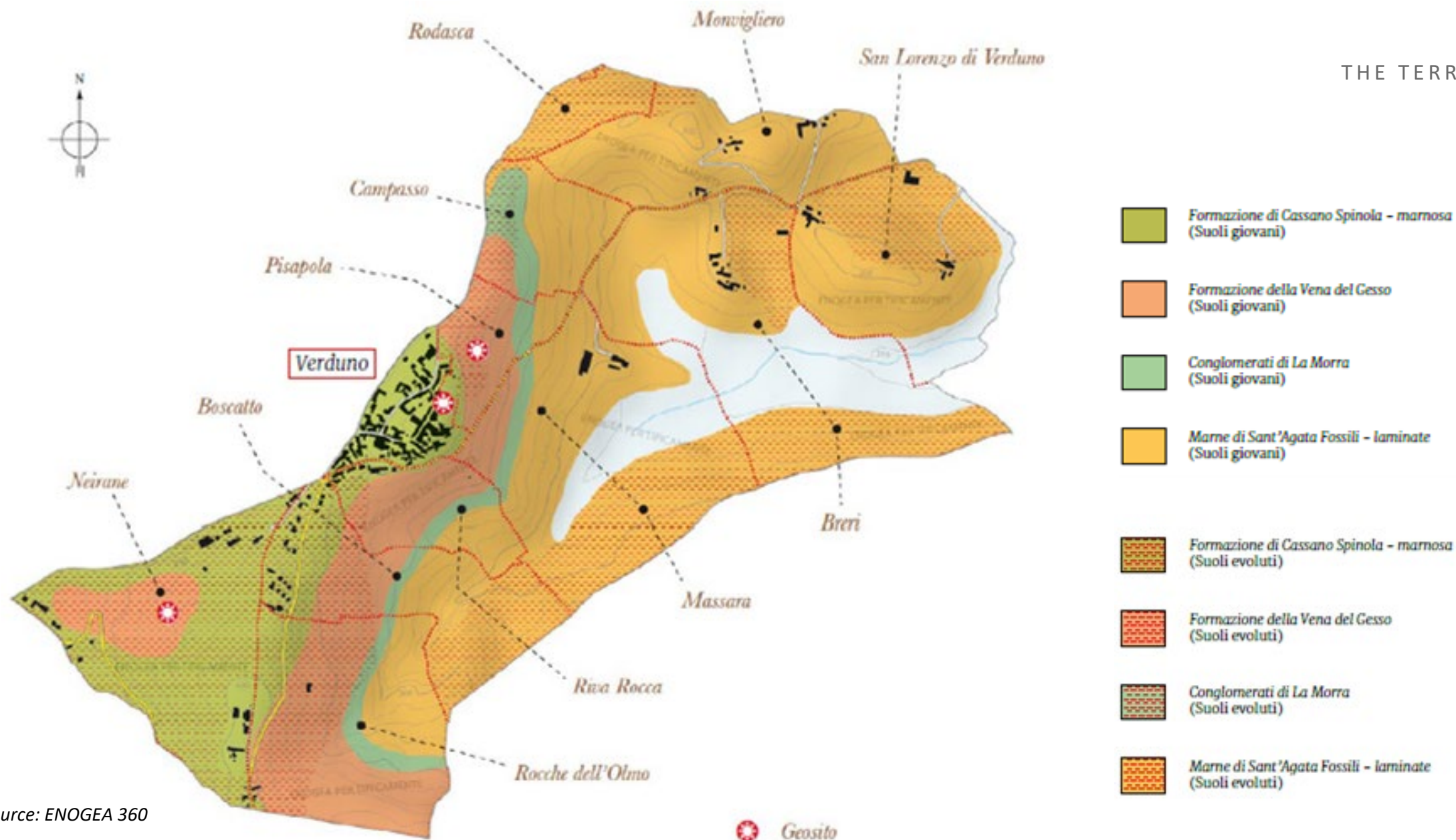
THE TERRITORY



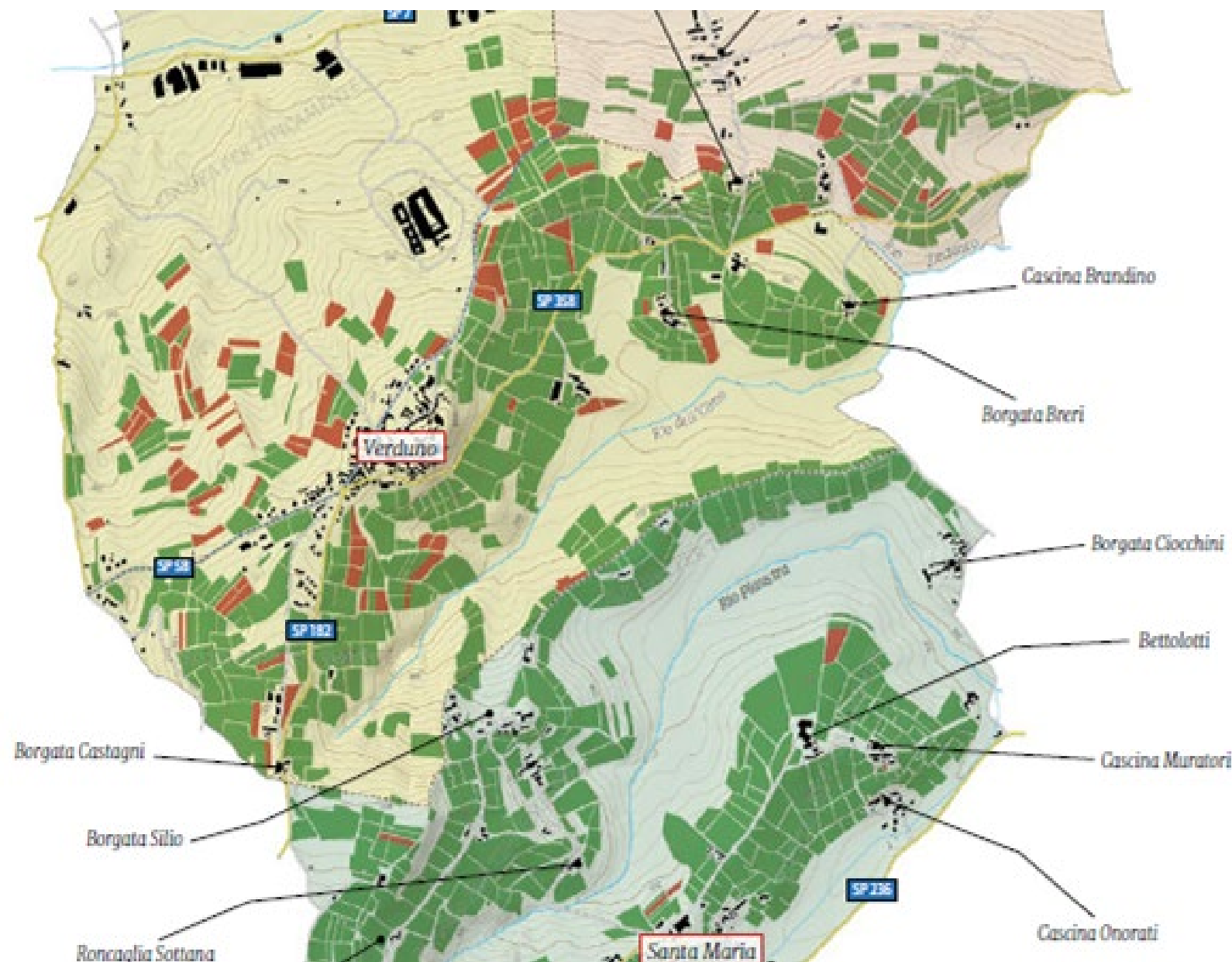


Source: ENOGEA

THE TERRITORY



THE TERRITORY



One hill, two geological worlds

THE TERRITORY

Two geological worlds, two landscapes, two geographies, two climates — separated by the ridge where the village sits

WEST

Gypsum Vein and Cassano Spinola Conglomerates

- Messinian, ≈6 million years: the salinity crisis
- Marls with gypsum crystals (calcium sulphate)
- Verduno, “beach of the crystals”
- Gypsum = a natural fertiliser - very high water retention
- **Savouriness, clarity, aromatic herbs, spicy notes**

EAST

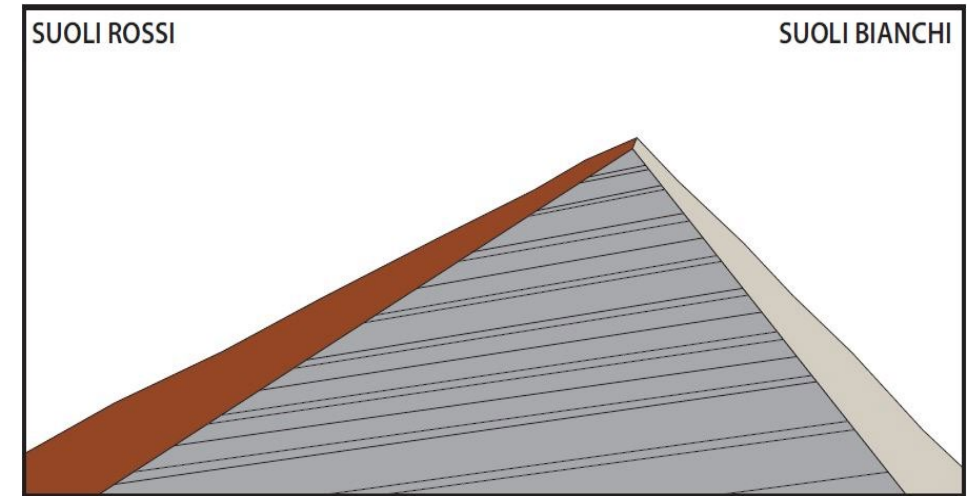
Sant’Agata Marls

- Tortonian, ≈8 million years
- Silt 60%, clay 30%, sand 10%; ~25% limestone
- High water retention, gentle slopes
- **High vigour, more fruit-driven, aromatic finesse**

The south-east side: the white lands

THE TERRITORY

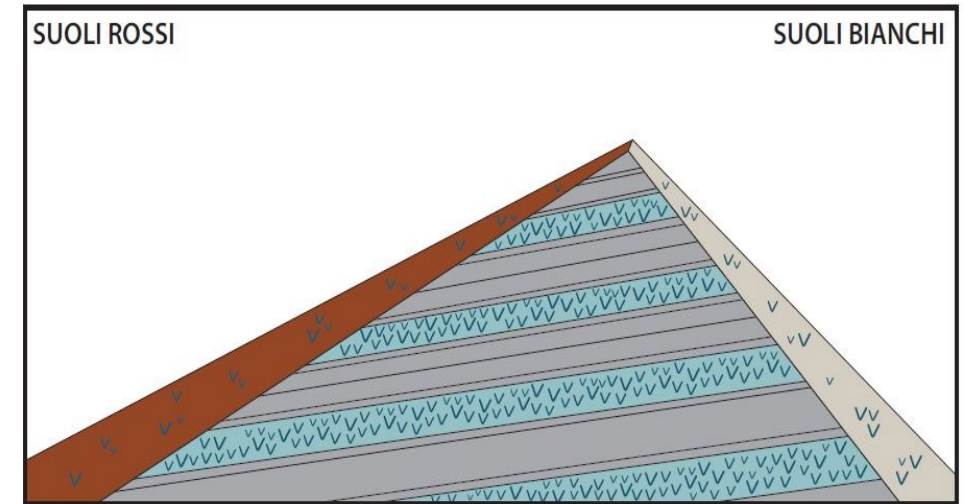
- **Laminated Sant'Agata Fossil Marls:** silt, calcium carbonate, clay
- **Scarp slope:** steep gradients, pale, little-altered soils
- **Lean, drier soils** — the «classic» Barolo territory
- **A microclimate sheltered by the hill:** the westerly winds descend, dry out and warm up
- **Yet with air humidity higher** than the rest of the area: the Tanaro is close



The west side: gypsum and conglomerates

THE TERRITORY

- **Gypsum Vein + Cassano Spinola Conglomerates** (gypsum also beneath the village and at Rocche dell'Olmo)
- **Dip slope:** gentle gradients, soils up to several metres deep
- **Evolved soils:** more clay, more fertility, a great water reserve
- **Exposed to the cool, humid winds** of the Cuneo plain: fresher, moister air
- An environment that **exists nowhere else in the Barolo region**



The climate: the aroma factory

THE TERRITORY

- **Tanaro** The Verduno hill is a peninsula over the valley: cool night currents, pre-harvest temperature swings and a constancy of air humidity unique in the Barolo area, which the vine «translates into the fruit»
- **“Non-Nebbiolo” exposures** Pelaverga Piccolo also gives its best facing east and north-west: slower ripening, preserved acidity — it takes the slopes Nebbiolo does not love
- **Föhn effect** Frequent episodes (65 in Piedmont in 2025, Arpa data): dry air, healthy grapes through to the late-September harvest
- **Phenological stages** Late budbreak (late April) = frost protection; ripening in late September, after Dolcetto

Blind tasting: 18 Verduno DOC 2025 – first flight

THE TASTING

1

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Pelaverga Piccolo — code 330

THE GRAPE

- Entered in the National Register on 24/11/1994; suitable throughout Piedmont, **claimable in one DOC only: Verduno Pelaverga**
- **Late budbreak, mid-late ripening;**
- **Good vigour, average productivity**
- Medium-size bunch, conical or elongated-pyramidal, winged; small-medium berry, blue-black, heavily bloomed
- **Historic harvest window: early October — today brought forward to the second half of September**

Signs of success

Grafted vines produced:

- 3,285 in 2014,
- around 14,000 in 2022

Source: Registro Nazionale Varietà di Vite

From thirty biotypes to three clones

THE CLONES

1990

30 biotypes

planted in the Municipality of
Verduno's experimental vineyard
(Turin and Milan agriculture
faculties, CNR)

2011–2013

8 candidates

compared in the certification
trial at
F.Ili Alessandria:
C1, C2, C3, C6, I11, 211, 212, 223

2016

3 certified

entered in the Register
(Gazzetta Ufficiale 155 -
5/7/2016)
Breeder CNR-IPSP Grugliasco:
I-CVT C1, I-CVT 212, I-CVT 223

Three interpreters, one grape

THE CLONES

I-CVT C1 - typicity

- Colour on the paler side, slender body
- Pepper to the fore, fresh acidity
- Balance on the palate
- Typically for early drinking

I-CVT 212 - structure

- Alcohol and extract on the higher side
- Colour: brilliant
- Strawberry, small red fruits, pepper
- Can afford short ageing

I-CVT 223 - completeness

- Deeper, brilliant ruby red
- Pepper, strawberry, small red fruits
- Balance and complexity, freshness

- **Massal selection:** many estates plant cuttings from old vines (1970s–'90s plantings, estate selections) alongside the certified clones — **biodiversity and historical memory**
- Budbreak, flowering and ripening coincide: the three clones are harvested together.

Rotundone: the pepper molecule

THE SCIENCE OF AROMAS

- A sesquiterpene discovered in *Cyperus rotundus* (1967); **identified in 2008** as responsible for the pepper note in grapes and wine (Wood et al.)
- In Pelaverga Piccolo: **identified for the first time in 2021** by CREA-VE in Asti in Verduno DOC samples (Petrozziello et al.)
- Also found in Syrah, Duras, Gamay, Malbec, Vespolina, Schioppettino, Grüner Veltliner...

16 ng/l

perception threshold in red wine
(8 ng/l in water)

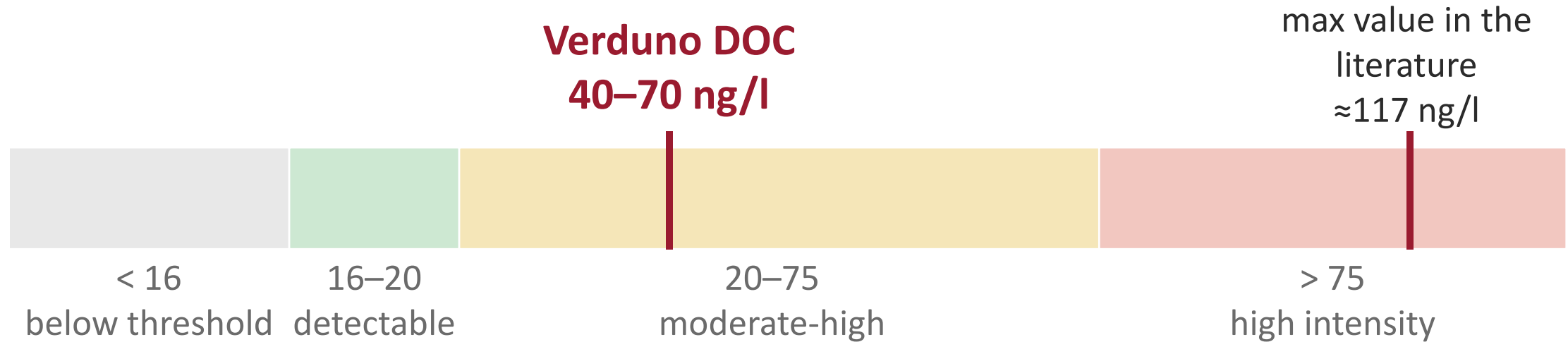
20–30%

of tasters cannot perceive it even
at 4,000 ng/l

The sensory paradox: a descriptor of big, dark, structured reds inside a pale, light, almost tannin-free wine — aromatic intensity without weight, wrong-footing anyone who tastes blind.

How much pepper is in Verduno DOC?

THE SCIENCE OF AROMAS



- Typically 40–70 ng/l: up to 4 times above threshold — the appellation's chemical signature
- Variability across samples: the AROSE project (CREA) even found one wine below threshold

***Pepper is not automatic:
it's a variable of vintage, territory, vineyard and production choices - it can be grown and defended***

“Pepper is cultivated”: the factors in the vineyard

THE SCIENCE OF AROMAS

- Ripeness** It accumulates late: stable 45–55 days after véraison; declining with overripeness — the harvest date is chosen “on the pepper” too
- Shade** Highest in the shaded parts of the bunch; leaf removal at véraison slashes it
- Temperature** Berries above 25 °C are penalised — and a sunlit berry is ≈ 13 °C warmer than a shaded one
- Vigour** More vigour = more rotundone: Pelaverga Piccolo’s natural exuberance works in its favour
- Water** Water availability boosts its biosynthesis; severe water stress reduces it — Verduno’s deep marls buffer drought

*In Verduno these factors converge by nature:
the same grape, grown elsewhere, may not give the same peppery notes.*

...and defended in the cellar

THE SCIENCE OF AROMAS

Extraction

Almost all of it sits in the skin; it passes into the wine between day 2 and day 5 of fermentation — only 5–6% is extracted by the end

Maceration

More time, higher temperature or enzymes do NOT increase rotundone; rosé winemaking destroys it

Oxygen

Moderate use gives a small but significant increase (≈ 47 vs 44 ng/l; $p = 0.011$)
— likely pathway: oxidation of α -guaiene (Petrozziello et al. 2021)

Storage

SO₂ and temperature do not touch the pepper — but heat depresses violet, raspberry, blackberry and cherry: the pepper survives, the rest of the bouquet does not

Blind tasting: 18 Verduno DOC 2025 – second flight

THE TASTING

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2025: the weather pattern (Arpa Piemonte data)

THE VINTAGE

Winter – March Mild; third consecutive year with no significant lowland snow

April The wettest month: 227 mm (+110%); 73 mm in a single day on 16 April — deep water reserves

June Exceptional: +3.4 °C, the 2nd-hottest June on record; for the first time since 2002 the hottest month of the summer → strong phenological advance

July–August Hot but without excesses: short heatwaves, 38.8 °C peak; rainfall slightly below average but well distributed, at times intense but never harmful

September Largely dry and stable: sugars and aromas concentrate; cool nights over the Tanaro

October Very dry (60–70% deficit): a harvest without pressure

2025: the vintage in the cellar

THE VINTAGE

- An early harvest, healthy grapes
- Modest yields, full ripeness
- Wines of fruit and colour — pepper is the variable to measure today

2025: a vintage in the glass

THE VINTAGE

- Colour: bright, vivid ruby — anthocyanins favoured by full ripeness
- Fruit: full, ripe (cherry, strawberry), immediately drinkable
- Pepper: the variable of the vintage — the scorching June worked against it (the only true heatwave of the summer); April's water reserves, cool exposures and September nights worked in its favour
- Freshness: to be checked wine by wine — acidity is the frame of Verduno DOC

Only a reading hypothesis: today's tasting is the test bench.

How the world sees Verduno DOC

THE INTERNATIONAL VIEW

« The industry darling of sommeliers from New York to London: the market has room for niche, story-driven wines. »

Vinícius Santiago (Brazil) — 2025

« Pure pleasure, served lightly chilled: almost a rosé role in a region that makes none. The comparisons? Nerello Mascalese, Schiava, Poulsard. »

Sebastian Wöll (Germany) — 2025

« A rare affinity with vegetables — from grilled peppers to raw fennel — and it even stands up to chilli: a food companion of extraordinary versatility. »

Jen Causton (United Kingdom) — 2025

***Lightness, authenticity, storytelling:
three keys to international positioning***

Blind tasting: 18 Verduno DOC 2025 – third flight

THE TASTING

13

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THE TASTING

Blind tasting: 18 Verduno DOC 2025

Let's raise the curtain...

- | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| 1 Reverdito | 7 San Biagio | 13 Cascina Massara Burlotto |
| 2 Diego Morra | 8 Sordo | 14 Poderi Roset |
| 3 Ramello | 9 Terre del Barolo | 15 Bel Colle |
| 4 Castello di Verduno | 10 I Brè | 16 Cadia |
| 5 Burlotto Giancarlo | 11 Poderi Luigi Einaudi | 17 G.B. Burlotto |
| 6 F.Ili Alessandria | 12 Scarpa | 18 Gian Luca Colombo Segni di Langa |



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