

LAPONE

‘L’ESCLUSO’ finally in Capri and Amalfi



‘Why exclude an Orvieto Classico in Orvieto, in one of the most spectacular vineyards in Umbria?’ asked Vincenzo Mercurio with as much tact as he could muster, a globetrotting winemaker from Castellammare di Stabia whose scholarly approach had brought him to consult for half the wineries in Italy. ‘Is it really possible that an Orvieto winery still doesn’t produce that eponymous wine?’ It seems almost a betrayal, Mercurio later told Piero and Ramona Cantarelli, this time with more conviction. The Cantarellis, a well-heeled Italian couple, found themselves bound to the winery by their genuine love for the 22 hectares of vineyards at ‘Tenuta Lapone’. And the origins of Lapone make its Orvieto Classico even more authentic: the Etruscans dug the first cellars in the tuff caves, the rest was created by eruptions of the Volsinii volcanoes.

The happily repentant Cantarellis preferred international wines such as their signature Chardonnay, a white made for sociable evenings, much appreciated from Capri to the Amalfi Coast. Yet their surrender was complete: ‘L’Escluso’ is the name of their first Orvieto Classico DOC and Mercurio was right. A white made from Grechetto, Malvasia, Trebbiano and Verdicchio grapes, powerful yet agile at 14% abv. Straw-coloured with golden highlights, aromas of yellow meadow flowers, marguerite, mimosa and broom, give way to candied fruits and honey. It is elegantly structured, with a searing minerality that comes from the tuffaceous soil. Under the Lapone banner L’Escluso now follows Chardonnay into the arena of Michelin starred chefs. But what a struggle to be born and to win on home ground.

Corbo A. (2019) ‘L’Escluso finalmente a Capri e Amalfi’, I Signori del Vino, *La Repubblica*, Roma, 29 agosto