

LINNE CALODO & THE PRACTICE OF “NATURE-POSITIVE” VITICULTURE

“It’s interesting how the old ways have become the hard way when it comes to viticulture. Why learn to dry farm your vines when you can easily pipe in irrigation? Why weed your vineyard with hand tools when you can spray with herbicides? Why bother with herding sheep to manage your cover crops when you can just fire up the tractor mower?”



Winemaker Matt Trevisan has spent his winemaking life discovering powerful answers to these questions. Much of what he does at the Linne Calodo estate vineyard is about un-learning the modern methods of viticulture in favor of what he calls “nature-positive” farming—which harkens back to when farmers lived within the bounds of their land’s limited resources, relying on natural solutions and manual labor in contrast to chemicals and carbon-burning machines.

These methods are labor and time intensive. They are also unbound to certifications and buzzwords such as “organic” and “sustainable” and “natural.” In fact, they are all of these things, bundled into a curated farming approach that is wholly distinctive to then terroir of Linne Calodo.



THE NICHE THEORY

Matt subscribes to the “Niche Theory” of ecology. In his words: “If you create a void in the universe, the most obnoxious thing will fill that void.” This outlook informs all of his farming decisions, which emphasize biodiversity, native lifeforms and species coexistence—all for the sake of creating responsibly grown, vineyard-centric wines. This approach helps stave off invasive species, resource depletion and other enemies of a healthily functioning environment.

CORE VITICULTURAL PRACTICES AT LINNE CALODO

- No-till, permaculture and polyculture practices
- Agricultural floor managed through careful plant selection via hand-removal, mowing and grazing
- Dry farming whenever possible
- All viticulture performed by the full-time, in-house Linne Calodo vineyard team

ALL IN — BUT UNCERTIFIED

Matt has also been asking the following questions of himself for several years: How do you promote the values of Organic, Biodynamic, Regenerative and Natural without joining organizations? Do you have to gain certification to have validity? Can you reach beyond their principles and create something greater? And if so, how do you educate the public and the consumer?

The answers to these questions, in many ways, remain a work in progress. Matt has opted not to seek official certification for his practices because he believes that they are uniquely responsive to the land in a way that checklist can never be.



For example, Matt points out that “organic” does not address the principles of water conservation. Another example: using sheep to naturally control weeds and cover crops may check the right box—but if you send the sheep into the vineyard when the earth saturated after a winter storm (as Matt saw recently), it compacts the soil—which is a negative for the vines, cover crops and environment. The principle of turning the soil over, which is promoted by organic and biodynamic philosophies, can have unforeseen consequences, most notably soil erosion.

“I believe that sustainability-oriented certifications are a force for good, but there are parts of the puzzle that can still be missed,” Matt says. “I just have my own way of looking at things, which is specific to our terroir and region. What works best in one garden might be different in another.”



“We will keep pushing forward with better farming practices that live between the gray areas of sustainable, biodynamic, organic and regenerative. For now, we call it ‘Nature Positive Agriculture.’ We look at the science, math and long-term sustainability of every operation that we perform and then evaluate the wines we produce. I think we are on to something..The proof is in the glass.”

– Matt Trevisan

LINNE CALODO
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