

## GUADO al MELO

The Bolgheri DOC zone lies within the territory of the *commune* of Castagneto Carducci (province of Livorno), along the Tyrrhenian coast, within the northern section of the Maremma known as the Alta Maremma Toscana. **The 18th-century land reclamation project turned a land of swamps into a garden of olive groves, vineyards, and pinewoods, encircled by hills carpeted by Mediterranean scrub.** A fragment of this ancient swamp is still preserved in Bolgheri's nature oasis, a wetlands that hosts many migratory birds.

The coast that stretches from Livorno to the island of Elba is called "degli Etruschi" for its numerous archaeological remains (necropolises, cities, and ore mines) that testify to the Etruscan settlements and cultural heritage. Its beaches and waters are known for their cleanness, attractiveness, and limited tourist impact.

Castagneto Carducci is a modest village, with origins in the Middle Ages, perched on a hill overlooking the Mediterranean. It takes its name from the poet Giosuè Carducci (1835-1907), whose poetry celebrated these spots, such as the famous cypress-lined road at Bolgheri (within the territory of Castagneto Carducci).

Castagneto is located on the "Costa degli Etruschi" Wine Road (Strada del Vino), that wends its way through the Livorno countryside between the hills and the sea.

Grape - and olivegrowing have flourished for millennia here on this land, nourished by particularly favourable climate and soils. Wine production in Bolgheri has enjoyed a significant reputation in particular beginning in the 1970s, with the awareness of the ability of this *terroir* to yield world-class wines, adding varieties such as *Cabernet Sauvignon* and *Merlot* to the local *Sangiovese*.

### **Guado al Melo: the harmony of the Tuscan countryside**

The *Podere Guado al Melo* wine estate is located in the heart of the *Denominazione's* area, on the famous *strada Bolgherese*, halfway between Castagneto Carducci and Bolgheri. Sited in a curve of the Fossa di Bolgheri watercourse, the winery is named for one of the numerous fords that cross the stream. The vineyard rises into the first slopes of the hills, encircled by Mediterranean scrub in a splendid, still-pristine environment. A second block is located in the nearby area of Alla Badia; in the style of ancient Etruscan viticulture, the rows of vines alternate with rows of centuries-old olive trees. The vineyards total some 12 hectares, with 2 hectares planted to olives.

### **History: a trajectory that continues**

The location of Podere Guado al Melo exhibits a long history of human settlement, as the remains of an Etruscan smelting operation testify.

More recently, the farm once belonged to the historic Espinassi-Moratti estate dating back to the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. Originally known as the "vigneto di Santa Maria," it was planted to *Vermentino*, *Sangiovese*, and, beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, to *Cabernet* and *Merlot*.

An old "wine review" of the Bolgheri products, appearing in the 1832 *Giornale Agrario Toscano*, reads: **"... These wines, made with great care, almost, we would say, bottle by bottle, are exceptional; the winemaker's hand prevails over the quality of the grape, or better, the one works hand in glove with the other."**

The Scienza family had been long familiar with this area, for at least 30 years. They left the management of their family business in Trentino, convinced that this piece of land was the ideal spot to establish a new vineyard of unprecedented, uncompromising quality--for just such promise had been clearly indicated by soil and climate studies carried out by the University of Milano. **In 1999, the Scienza family re-planted the venerable "vigneto di Santa Maria," but preserved its traditional layout even while adding new varieties.**

### **The Scienza family: research and culture**

***The Mediterranean peoples began to emerge from their barbaric state when they learned how to cultivate the olive and the vine. (Thucidides, 5th century BC)***

Michele Scienza, young grapegrower and winemaker, applies at and through *Podere Guado al Melo* a wealth of viticultural knowledge built up over numerous generations, beginning with his grandparents, grapegrowers in Trentino, and through his father Attilio, professor of viticulture. The latter's influence is clearly felt in *Guado al Melo's* explicit mission to dedicate itself to spreading the culture of the vine and of wine. It accomplishes this by being in continuous dialogue, at all levels, with both the scientific world and with enthusiasts, organising conferences and collaborating with agencies and universities on projects whose goal is to encourage agriculture increasingly in harmony with the environment. The mainspring of these efforts is a library of over **15,000 books** on the history, the culture, and the science of wine, including as well a collection of ancient texts on viticulture, gathered by Prof. Scienza over a lifetime of professional work.

### **When a vineyard is a preserve of the Mediterranean**

*Podere Guado al Melo* constitutes a true ampelographical preserve which gathers together the **viticultural wealth of the Mediterranean and of the Caucasia, a genetic bank unique in the world. The collection includes (a) many varieties from Mediterranean areas that are similar in soils and climate to the Tuscan coast, (b) varieties originating in the Caucasia region and (c) wild Tuscan vines trained on trees.**

**Michele Scienza**