

# LA MIRAJA GRIGNOLINO D'ASTI

## 2021/\$21.99



### DESCRIPTION

Nestled within the original castle of Castagnole Monferrato, La Miraja was constructed as an armory in the 11th century, only to be retrofitted as a cellar in the 1400s. In this armory-turned-cellar, Eugenio Gatti, a seventh-generation viticulturist, turns out Barbera, Grignolino, Freisa, and his fabled Ruché. His oldest Ruché plantings are in the famed Majole vineyard, one of the first sites in Castagnole Monferrato where the grape was planted with the intention of producing single-varietal wines. Majole was replanted in the 1970s, and its Ruché vines rank among the oldest in the world. This has long been considered the top site of Castagnole Monferrato—the epicenter of Ruché production and the first of seven villages granted permission to produce single-varietal Ruché under the DOCG. La Miraja (pronounced “me-rye-uh”) is tiny by any measure, comprising less than 4 hectares under vine. It is here that Eugenio devotes his life’s work to producing roughly 2,500 transcendent cases of wine each year. Harnessing his years of working in wineries and distilleries across Italy, he imbues his wines with a haunting purity and a simple elegance.

Castagnole Monferrato holds the honor of being the birthplace of Ruché. This grape is a unique red variety found primarily in the rolling hills northwest of the town of Asti, where only seven villages hold the distinction of producing wines under the DOCG. Closest to Castagnole Monferrato, silt and loam soils rich in calcium carbonate are predominant. These soils produce wines of breathtaking fragrance and fine structure. Farther to the southeast, the soils grow richer in clay and adopt a reddish hue. In the 1960s, the parish priest of Castagnole Monferrato, Don Giacomo Cauda, fell in love with Ruché and devoted his life’s work to rescuing it from extinction. Father Cauda pushed his parishioners to produce single-varietal Ruché, thereby ushering in the rebirth of this ancient vine. Ampelographers have discovered that Ruché is, in fact, the genetic offspring of the red grape Croatina and the now

extinct white grape Malvasia Aromatica di Parma, also known as Malvasia Odorosissima and often compared to Moscato Bianco. Croatina yields a hearty, peppery red wine produced from northeastern Piedmont through southern Lombardy to northern Emilia Romagna. When crossed with Malvasia Aromatica di Parma, the resultant Ruché sports a wild nose redolent of violet, rose, iris, jasmine, cardamom, white pepper, and most surprisingly for a red wine, lychee. Beyond Ruché, Eugenio focuses a great deal of his time and energy on Grignolino, an ancient red variety native to the Monferrato Hills of Piedmont. Grignolino was the favored red wine of the Savoy aristocracy in the thirteenth century, prized for its light color and elegant mouthfeel. In the latter half of the 1800s, these wines often matched or exceeded the price of Barolo bottlings. The grape name was derived from the word “grigné,” which is the local dialect for the pips, or grape seeds. Grignolino is rare among its fellow wine grape cultivars in that it has multiple pips per berry. In addition, the thin, delicate skins of the berry pose a challenge for winemakers aspiring to pull as much color from the skins as possible while avoiding the extraction of oftentimes harsh, green tannins from the pips. Accomplishing this oenological hat trick can result in brilliantly aromatic and brightly acidic expressions of Grignolino.

## Tasting Notes

### **NOSE:**

Beautiful floral notes of rose hip, violet, and geranium. The delicate, bright red fruit dominated by Bing cherry mingles with fresh mushroom.

### **PALATE:**

An underlying vein of stony minerality lends both texture and levity to this delightful bottling.

### **PAIRING:**

Poached salmon, simple risotto with fresh herbs, and the classic Piedmontese dish called vitello tonnato.

**WINERY WEBSITE:** [La Miraja — The Piedmont Guy](#)

# Grignolino d' Asti D.O.C., Piedmont, Italy

