

# Tommaso Bussola

*When Veneto legend* Giuseppe Quintarelli was asked years ago to name the region's next superstar, he didn't hesitate: Tommaso Bussola.

Quintarelli's prediction began to be realized in 1999, when Tommaso's 1995's were released. Among the countless accolades he received, *Gambero Rosso* gave him the first of many *Tre Bicchieris* for his majestic Recioto TB.


## Learning on the Job

Originally trained as a stone mason, Tommaso took over over his uncle's Valpolicella estate—with its prized old vineyards in the heart of the Classico zone—in the mid-1980's. While vineyard work came naturally to him, he experimented relentlessly, and absorbed information and ideas from every source available. With each passing vintage, his wines came to show more polish, finesse, intensity, and personality.

By the late nineties, his style had matured, and his wines had become world-famous for their incredible intensity of fruit. Like other top Veneto winemakers, he uses new barrels, but any hint of new wood is hidden by cascades of lush, opulent fruit.

## Ancient Clones

The key, we think, is not only the age of his vines but the fact that they are nearly all naturally low-yielding ancient clones: Corvinone (40%), Corvina Grossa (25%) and Rondinella (20%). Corvinone, in particular, is quite rare today because of its low yields and finicky growing habits. Yet, Tommaso claims it is the Corvinone that gives his wines their depth. He calls it the "Super Corvina," saying that it produces stronger, denser, richer, more perfumed wines.

 "Tommaso Bussola has an insatiable thirst for experimentation: he has a burning desire to see just how much he can draw out of his beloved Valpolicella area, and especially to know if he will be able to make the wine of his dreams."  
*Gambero Rosso (1999)*

Small percentages of old vine Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Dindarella and Pindara round out the *cépage*, along with new experiments like Teroldego.

## "TB"

Tommaso produces two levels of wine. Those labeled "TB" are his finest, made from a ruthless selection from his best sites.

### Valpolicella Classico Superiore TB

While the Amarone and Recioto garner the most accolades in the press, the Valpolicella "TB" may be Tommaso's greatest achievement.

### Amarone Classico TB

Fantastically hedonistic, offering great velvety richness on the palate and exotic notes of black cherry, cocoa and ash. **94** rating from Parker in 1997.

### Amarone Classico TB "Vigneto Alto"

A limited selection made only in the best vintages. Amazing Amarone. The 1997 earned **96** points from Robert Parker.

### Recioto Classico TB

Incredible in nearly every vintage. This wine has won multiple *tre bicchieris*, and the 1997 & 1998 earned **98** points from Robert Parker.

## "BG"

Despite being Tommaso's "standard" wines, the quality of his BG selections rate near the summit of the Valpolicella pyramid. All of the production comes from estate fruit—including declassified wine from top vineyards like Alto, Soto el Barbi, Casali and Quarer Longhe.

**Valpolicella Classico** — A Beaujolais-styled quaffer for early drinking.

**Amarone Classico** — "91 rating" *Wine Spectator* on the 2000

**Recioto Classico** — Tommaso is the master of Recioto, and even his BG wine can challenge the region's finest.