

PREMIUM

Tua Rita: producer profile plus latest releases tasted

Susan Hulme MW explores the history of this Super Tuscan estate, and tastes Tua Rita's latest-release wines including Redigaffi and Per Sempre 2018 and Keir 2019.



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Credit: tuarita.it

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Tua Rita: history

Scroll down for Susan Hulme's tasting notes and scores for the Tua Rita latest releases

In 1992, Virgilio and Rita took on one of Italy's best consultant oenologists, Luca D'Attoma, and started bottling their own wine, the first of which they called Giusto di Notri.

1994 saw the first vintage of Redigaffi, a 100% Merlot, but it was when Robert Parker awarded 100 points to the 2000 vintage that Tua Rita really came to the attention of the wine world: Redigaffi became the first Italian wine to receive a perfect score from the American wine critic.

Since Virgilio's death in 2010, daughter Simena and her husband Stefano Frascaola have been running the estate, more recently with the help of their son Giovanni, now a trained oenologist.

From an early stage there was also a fortuitous collaboration with winemaker Luca d'Attoma, who has since become one of Italy's leading oenologists and wine consultants. As Stefano tells it, they were both new to wine and were learning together.

Fact box

Owners: Rita Tua, daughter Simena and her husband Stefano Frasca

Founded: 1984 in Suvereto near Bolgheri, Tuscany

Hectares under vine: 57 (2021)

Total annual production: 350,000 bottles

Vineyards: Located in Upper Maremma in the Colline Metallifere

Tua Rita: wines to know

Redigaffi (100% Merlot)

Giusto dei Notri (Cabernet, Merlot, Cabernet Franc) – **Flagship**

Rosso dei Notri (Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah) – **Best Value**

Per Sempre (100% Syrah)

Keir (100% Syrah fermented in amphora) – **Must Try**

Keir Ansonica (100% Ansonica fermented in amphora)

Lodano (Petit Verdot, Merlot)

Lodano White (Traminer, Chardonnay and Riesling)

Sese Passito di Pantelleria (Muscat)

The organically farmed Tua Rita estate has now expanded to 57ha of vines. In addition to the original **Bordeaux** varieties (Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot) you can find **Syrah** and some **Sangiovese**, plus Vermentino, Traminer, **Riesling**, and more recently Ansonica.

Despite the attention given to Redigaffi, the wine the family regard as their flagship is Giusto dei Notri, a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and **Cabernet Franc**.

Meanwhile, Virgilio's favourite was the charmingly named Per Sempre ('Forever'): when asked what his favourite wine was, he would say 'Syrah – per sempre'. This is a powerful, world-class 100% Syrah which seems to go from strength to strength.

Introducing amphorae

One of the wines which really captured my heart is the **Keir 2016**. I was lucky enough to taste this first vintage at Tua Rita with Stefano. It is a 100% Syrah fermented on skins in clay amphorae.

Stefano seemed a little reticent at the time of this new stylistic departure, but I was so excited by the finesse and elegance of the tannins and the purity of the fruit. In my **note at the time**, I called it a 'rising star'.

Having just tasted both the **Keir 2018** and 2019 (note below), I am delighted that they confirm my first impression.

The latest addition to Tua Rita's portfolio is the Keir Ansonica. This white is made from the traditional Tuscan variety, Ansonica and, like its red counterpart, is vinified in clay amphorae to produce a complex, slightly tannic wine.

Lodano, named after a local stream, is a smooth, satiny Petit Verdot with some added Merlot and is one of the most refined versions of what is an intriguing but often more robustly structured variety.

See all Tua Rita wine tasting notes and scores in the Decanter database

Innovation

The great thing about Tua Rita is that it does not sit back and rest on its success; instead, it never stops innovating and refining.

As Stefano says, 'We believe that great quality is a set of small improvements and fine-tuning of details'.

In the vineyard, the estate was one of the first in **Tuscany** to use high density planting. A pre-harvest as well as a green harvest helps to reduce the yield per vine even further. An Enjambeur tractor – which does not compact the soil and maintains the oxygenation of the roots – has been used here since 1997. And in the winery, Oxoline supports enable the team to move the lees without disturbing the cap which is submerged in the barrique.

In 2020, Tua Rita ranked 88th in the *Liv-ex* Power 100 list of the most powerful fine wine brands, a jump of 153 places on the previous year.

It is a pretty incredible achievement to have risen from a 2ha property in an unknown location in 1984 to being producers of some of Italy's most sought after and highly regarded wines today.

Stefano puts this success down to a combination of luck and a few good, brave decisions. But going forward, 'the greatest fortune is to do a wonderful job still guided by the passion of the past and to have my son Giovanni follow our path. This is the greatest stimulus'.

Tasting Tua Rita wines:



Tua Rita, Keir Ansonica, Toscana, Tuscany, Italy, 2019

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This is the first vintage of a Keir white wine, made from Ansonica macerated on the skins in amphorae for two months. Unclarified and unfiltered, it has a deep, golden, Sauternes-like colour, with waxy orange peel aromas and just a hint of...

Points 93



Tua Rita, Keir, Toscana, Tuscany, Italy, 2019

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2019 is for Stefano Frascolla an exceptional vintage - one of the best vintages of the last two decades. Bright magenta in colour with an exuberant nose of vivid sweet blackcurrant, cream and spice, this has youthful raspberry, white pepper...

Points 98



Tua Rita, Redigaffi, Toscana, Tuscany, Italy, 2018

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The wine that started it all for Tua Rita: 100% Merlot grown on clay/pebbly soil. 2018 was a fresher and cooler vintage in general and has produced an elegant version of Redigaffi. Lively aromas of tomato leaf, toasted oak and smoky...

Points 97

Tua Rita, Per Sempre, Toscana, Tuscany, Italy, 2018

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The 2018 Per Sempre is one of the best examples of this wine I have tasted. The combination of freshness and elegance of the 2018 vintage combined with the



powerful expression of Tua Rita's Syrah has created something magical: it has a...

Points 97



Tua Rita, Giusto Dei Notri, Toscana, Tuscany, Italy, 2018

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This 2018 Giusto dei Notri seems delightfully Cabernet Franc-like, although that variety is usually the minor player in the blend. Intense cassis and leafy notes intertwine, while on the palate more concentrated blackcurrant, green herb...

Points 95



Tua Rita, Lodano, Toscana, Tuscany, Italy, 2018

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This is one of the best expressions of Petit Verdot I have tasted in a long time. While always intriguing, the variety is often very linear and structural whereas here it has some richness, roundness and charm. It opens slowly to reveal dark...

Points 94

Tua Rita, Rosso dei Notri, Toscana, Tuscany, Italy, 2019

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Rosso dei Notri is the more accessible, affordable version of Gusto dei Notri, with Syrah replacing Cabernet Franc in the Cabernet/Merlot blend. In the exceptional 2019 vintage it has really come into its own. The aromas are lightly leafy, with bright red fruits such as raspberry and strawberry. The palate...

Points 92



Tua Rita, Sese, Passito di Pantelleria, Sicily, Italy, 2017

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A gorgeous sweet wine from the tiny island of Pantelleria, south west of Sicily, this balances a rich, syrupy body with freshness and lift. Bright raisined fruit, caramelised nuts and a hint of dried herbs develop a slight orange zest quality ...

Points 92



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