Embracing the Fruit

CA' DEL BOSCO

presented by USA Ambassador Jacob Gragg

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The vineyards and winery of Ca' del Bosco (above and facing page).

Considering Franciacorta literally translates to "short France," one might be tempted to draw a comparison between the region's sparkling expressions and Champagne. Its French connection, however, has nothing to do with the wine; the name was allegedly derived from *courtes francae*, a tax-free zone established in the area by the Frankish empire during the Middle Ages.

Roughly 400 miles separate Franciacorta from Champagne to the northwest—a distance that's clearly reflected in the finished wines, as its morainic soils retain less water than the chalky and limestone-based soils typically found in the French region. In addition, the climate is warmer, noted Ca' del Bosco USA Ambassador Jacob Gragg, "so we are able to get total physiological and phenolic ripeness. Ca' del Bosco does not harvest based on purely retaining higher acidity." He added that the winery takes advantage of a lower dosage so as to preserve a purer fruit character.

Because there isn't a long history of grape growing or wine production in the area, said Gragg, Ca' del Bosco founder Maurizio Zanella had to embrace a broader view of global viticulture in order to set his own standards. "Our region itself was pretty young," Gragg explained, "so he looked at some of the greatest wine producers in America, in France, and in other places to emulate what they were doing."

Ca' del Bosco, he continued, seeks to uncover the land's potential for growing sparkling wine grapes by placing a continual focus on viticulture rather than on winemaking techniques. For example, the winery's so-called "berry spa" thoroughly cleanses the grapes to remove foreign matter and residue before pressing. "We focus on making the purest wine possible," Gragg said. "We accept that we're still young, with so much to learn from Franciacorta's terroir."

Ca' del Bosco founder Maurizio Zanella.