



CASTELLO DI VOLPAIA

AROMATIC WINE VINEGAR

Because vinegar has such a distinct flavour of its own, blending it with others is a long and subtle process. Inspired by some recipes written by a long gone but very imaginative family cook, we started off with a total of fifty different herbs, seeds, leaves, flowers, spices and vegetables and left each of them to macerate in both red and white vinegars. Then we brought in various small groups of tasters to choose the flavours that they thought went best with the individual vinegars. And, when they were in agreement and the blend struck the right cord, there was tremendous excitement. Finally we arrived at our recipes which are Fiori (Flowers) and Fresco (Cool) for the white vinegar and Orto (Vegetable Garden), Spezie (Spices) and Erbe (Herbs) for the red. Each recipe is comprised of about 10 carefully blended aromatic herbs and spices. The vegetables and most of the herbs we use are gathered around Volpaia whose altitude of 600 metres and soil give a particularly intense aroma to the various plants. To produce our vinegar we use first-class wines and the traditional “truciolo” or wood shaving method. We leave the wines to percolate slowly through oak and beech chips and the vinegar bacteria are selected from the wines themselves. In order to keep the original fragrance that goes so well with the herbs, we do not age the vinegar in wood, but we do leave a trace of alcohol to evolve and add grace to the scent. The herbs are put into large linen sacks and left to flavour the vinegar for at least two months. However, the time does vary, depending on the season and the herbs' intensity. Before they are removed, the sacks are gently squeezed to obtain maximum flavour. Prior to bottling, the vinegar is lightly clarified with bentonite and sterilized through a filter to prevent it from re-fermenting in the bottle.

