

Paolo Bea



Thirty years ago, a regular customer at the Rosenthal Wine Merchant retail shop presented Neal a bottle of 1985 Montefalco Rosso Riserva from Paolo Bea—a wine he had brought back in his luggage because he wanted so much to share it with him. Neal, no stranger to that sort of pitch, wasn't expecting much, but the bottle so ignited his imagination that he built in a trip to Umbria a few weeks down the road to make the acquaintance of Giampiero, Paolo's young son. The rest, as they say, is history, and Giampiero—both through his own deeply personal wines and his wide-ranging influence—has become a cornerstone of our family of growers. Building on the work of his father—a through-and-through farmer whose Umbrian dialect is so thick as to be nearly incomprehensible to outsiders—Giampiero realized what made Paolo's wines so special and built a philosophy around it: in a series of decades that saw Italian winegrowers enthusiastically embrace modern technology, Giampiero—as co-founder of the ViniVeri (“Real Wine”) group—advocated for respectful vineyard work, biodiversity, a de-emphasis on technology in the cellar, non-engagement with professional critics, and an overall trust in old agrarian wisdom.

Bea's wines remain singular—boisterous, unabashedly wild expressions of their undulating, sun-drenched hills of origin, each new vintage of which is eagerly anticipated by a legion of loyal clients. Giampiero's wines always proudly display their vintage: he pointedly resists striving for a consistent “product” from year to year, and the wines are bottled when they're deemed ready rather than according to some schedule. Giampiero relies on patience, and plenty of it, and what is in the bottle is always a full-on reflection of the fruit and the story of the season that birthed it.

Viticulture:

- **Farming:** Certified organic, some biodynamic practices
- **Treatments:** Copper-sulfate only, cover crops sown between the vines
- **Ploughing:** Annual ploughing to promote vineyard health
- **Soils:** Limestone-clay and gravels
- **Vines:** Trained in Cordon (Arboreus vines are trained up trees), vines for Pipparello and Cerrete are at least 20 years old. San Valentino vines are 50 years old. Vines for Arboreus and Lapideus are over 80 years old.
- **Yields:** Controlled through severe winter pruning and debudding
- **Harvest:** Entirely manual, late September to late-October
- **Purchasing:** Entirely estate fruit



Vinification:

- **Fermentation:** After total destemming, wines ferment spontaneously in stainless-steel tanks without temperature control. Cuvaison lasts 35-60 days.
- **Extraction:** Red wines see punchdowns during fermentation
- **Chaptalization and Acidification:** None
- **Pressing:** Vertical basket press
- **Malolactic Fermentation:** Spontaneous, following alcoholic fermentation

Aging:

- **Élevage:** Wines age between 12 months and 5 years in stainless-steel tanks and large Slavonian oak botti
- **Lees:** Wines remain on their fine lees until assemblage prior to bottling.
- **Fining and Filtration:** All wines are unfinned and unfiltered.
- **Sulfur:** Applied only at bottling if necessary, with 40-55 mg/l total sulfur