



## KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

### CORTE GARDONI

Country: Italy

Region: Veneto

Appellation(s): Bardolino, Bardolino Superiore, Custoza, Corvina Veronese IGT

Producer: Piccoli Family

Founded: 1971

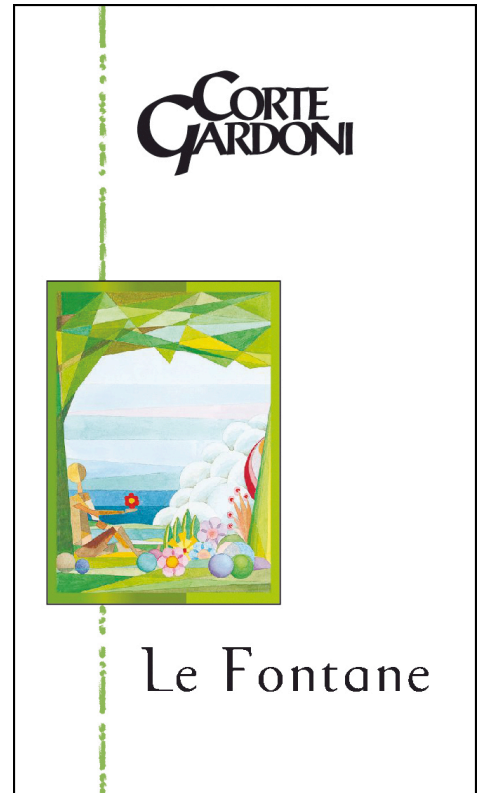
Annual Production: 15,000 cases

Farming: Sustainable

Website: [www.cortegardoni.it](http://www.cortegardoni.it)

Documents show that the Piccoli family has owned vineyards in the Veneto since the year 1600. Many generations tended the vines, but after phylloxera hit, the ravaged family estate couldn't support all five brothers, and one of them left to become a fruit grower. Two generations later Gianni Piccoli grew up surrounded by orchards, but he had wine in his blood so when an estate with extensive vineyards came up for sale in 1971 he jumped at the opportunity. For several years the grapes of Corte Gardoni were sold to local cooperatives, but Gianni felt that their wines lacked the soul and individual attention necessary to produce an honest, natural product. In 1980 he definitively broke those ties and for the first time crafted his own wine, focusing on the inherent character of the grapes and the *terroir*.

Today Gianni is a well-known and highly respected figure in the region as well as a fierce leader in the fight against the homogenization of the local wine scene. While local cooperatives push for laws that would force producers to plant only French grapes like Chardonnay and Merlot, the place of honor at Corte Gardoni is reserved for local varieties such as Garganega, Corvina, Rondinella, and others. The Piccolis' vineyards occupy 23 hectares, while the rest of the property encompasses orchards, forests, olive trees, and arable land, from which the family also produces fruit, olive oil, and the first balsamic-style vinegar to be made from apples. Gianni still keeps a close eye on every step of production, but he has turned over most of the daily work to his three sons: Mattia, the winemaker; Stefano, who manages the vineyards; and Andrea, who helps both of his brothers and also handles the commercialization of the wines. The majority of their production goes to the versatile and irresistibly delicious Bardolino "Le Fontane," Bardolino Chiaretto (rosé), and Custoza (white), while the more sophisticated Bardolino Superiore "Pràdicà," Custoza "Mael," and Becco Rosso demonstrate nuance and incredible longevity. At dinners with clients they regularly uncork bottles from renowned names like Armand Rousseau and Sassicaia, then they sit back and grin as their guests discover how well the older vintages of their own wines show in comparison.





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## CORTE GARDONI (continued)

<u>Wine</u>	<u>Blend</u>	<u>Vine Age</u>	<u>Soil Type</u>	<u>Vineyard Area*</u>
<b>Custoza “Greoto”</b>	50% Garganega, 25% Trebbiano, 10% Trebbianello, 10% Cortese, 5% Manzoni Bianco	15-50 years	Moraine	23 ha total
<b>Bardolino Chiaretto “Nichesole”</b>	50% Corvina, 25% Rondinella, 25% Molinara, Barbera & Sangiovese	15-50 years		
<b>Bardolino “Le Fontane”</b>	60% Corvina, 40% Rondinella	15-50 years		
<b>Custoza “Mael”</b>	40% Garganega, 20% Trebbiano, 20% Trebbianello, 10% Riesling	17-35 years		
<b>Corvina Veronese “Becco Rosso”</b>	Corvina	25 years		
<b>Bardolino Superiore “Pràdicà”</b>	65% Corvina, 25% Rondinella, 10% Sangiovese	20-45 years		

\* “ha”=hectares; one hectare equals roughly two and a half acres

## VITICULTURE / VINIFICATION

- Vines are sustainably farmed, the equivalent of *lutte raisonnée* in France
- Cover crop planted in vineyards to increase soil fertility and promote biodiversity
- Corvina vines are Guyot trained; all other varieties are spurred Cordon
- Vines enjoy southeast sun exposure

### **Custoza “Greoto”, Custoza “Mael”, Bardolino Chiaretto “Nichesole”, and Bardolino “Le Fontane”:**

- Yield: 10 metric tons per hectare
- Several months of aging in stainless steel before bottling
- Chiaretto is the local name for rosé
- Rosé made 50% by *saignée* and 50% by direct press; does not undergo malolactic fermentation

### **Corvina Veronese IGT “Becco Rosso”:**

- Yield: 8 metric tons per hectare
- Eight months of aging in 30-hectoliter, used Slavonian oak *botti*

### **Bardolino Superiore “Pràdicà”:**

- Yield: 8 metric tons per hectare
- One year of aging in 5-year-old and 30-year-old 30-hectoliter, used Slavonian oak *botti*
- The name “Pràdicà” derives from “prato di casa,” the field around the house