

# Ermes Pavese



In the highest reaches of the Val d'Aoste beneath Mont Blanc, Ermes Pavese harnesses the Prié grape to express the majesty of his alpine terroir. Located in the hamlet of La Ruine, between Morgex and La Salle, the estate has been making wine since 1999, when Pavese began marketing the family's production under the advice of Marziano Vevey. Starting with only 2 ha of vineyards, Ermes has, in recent years, assembled numerous parcels scattered around Morgex and La Salle to increase his total holdings to about 6 ha. At about 1,200 meters above sea level, these are some of the highest vineyards in Europe.

Prié is the oldest documented cultivar in the Val d'Aoste, and is among the oldest in all of Italy. Genetic parent to, among others, Prémetta and Mayolet, it gives crystalline wines of vivacity and precision when tended by a conscientious grower like Pavese. Pavese's vines, trained in the traditional Pergola Bassa system, are so isolated at the end of this valley that they are still planted on their original rootstocks, not threatened by the Phylloxera louse that devastated nearly all of Europe's vineyards at the end of the 19th century. Producing still, sparkling, skin-macerated and sweet wines, this domaine shows the majesty that wines of the alps can achieve. Illuminating in their youth, recent tastings with some of the Pavese's oldest vintages illustrates the profundity and complexity that his wines take on after significant bottle age.

## Viticulture:

- **Farming:** Practicing organic
- **Treatments:** Copper sulfate only
- **Ploughing:** Annual hoeing to maintain vineyard health
- **Soils:** Sandy glacial moraines
- **Vines:** Trained in pergola bassa and planted at 8,000 vines/ha on their own rootstocks, vines are 3-50 years old.
- **Yields:** Controlled through severe winter pruning, debudding, and an occasional green harvest
- **Harvest:** Entirely manual, usually in late September to mid-October. Cuvée Ninive is harvested after the region's first frost, usually in mid-December.
- **Purchasing:** Estate fruit with c. 5 tons of grapes purchased each year from Pavese's next-door neighbor. Neighbor's farming is directly overseen by Pavese.



## Vinification:

- **Fermentation:** After crushing and a 1-2 day maceration in the press, wines ferment with pied de cuve and selected yeasts in stainless-steel tanks. Cuvée Nathan ferments with pied de cuve and selected yeasts in 2-5 year-old French barriques.
- **Extraction:** Bâtonnage following fermentation
- **Chaptalization and Acidification:** None
- **Pressing:** Pneumatic whole-cluster direct pressing
- **Malolactic Fermentation:** The majority (c. 80%) of vats go through spontaneous malolactic after alcoholic fermentation; in the remaining vats malolactic does not occur.

## Aging:

- **Élevage:** All wines, except the cuvée Nathan, age for 9-12 months in stainless-steel tanks. Cuvée Nathan spends c. 12 months in 2-5 year-old French barriques.
- **Lees:** Wines remain on fine lees until assemblage prior to bottling. Sparkling wines spend 18 months on the lees
- **Dosage:** Sparkling wines see no dosage and are brut nature
- **Fining and Filtration:** Bentonite fined, sterile cross filtered
- **Sulfur:** Applied at harvest, rackings, and bottling, with c. 84 mg/l total sulfur