



Celebrity Marca Trevigiana Cheeses in Turin

The Italian cheeses of the Treviso area are a hit at the Salone del Gusto. *Morlacco* cheese heads the field

Turin

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Grappa Morlacco cheese – which the Slow Food movement associates with the Burlina cow – is most definitely one of the celebrities at Turin's Salone del Gusto, the event focusing on quality products and foods, on until Monday.

Not only is this celebrity cheese on the verge of achieving DOC status, the European PDO mark, the procedure for which is under way – it may also soon find a new production formula to join the traditional summer one, made from the milk of mountain-grazed animals, by using the milk from the stable animals as well during the rest of year, but only that produced by Burlina cows.

“In recent years,” confirms Bruno Bernardi, head of the dairy cattle breeders' association of the Veneto region, “this cheese has steadily gained in popularity, resulting in a significant increase in production and also in the prices guaranteed to the producers. Breeders have subsequently intensified dairy herds in the mountain pastures, but the problem of production being limited to the three months of summer still remains. This is why we have begun a project with Padua University and the Cavaso del Tomba Dairy, part of the Treviso dairy association, for the production of *Morlacco* cheese during the remaining nine months of the year, but using only milk produced by Burlina cows.

There are plans to extend production from the mountain-grazing period to the other months of the year. *Oca in onto* is all the rage again

Obviously, a clear distinction would be made between this product and the traditional one currently on the market.

But just what is the secret of the success behind *Morlacco* cheese? Desideria Scilla, Promotional Manager for Aprolav, whom we met at its stand said: “I think that for one thing people are intrigued by the creaminess it acquires with aging, a characteristic which is the reverse of what usually happens with cheeses. Then there's the fact that no two wheels of this cheese type are the same. They even differ in colour, and greatly so, depending on the cellar in which they were refined, which makes them unique.”

Aprolav did well In the Casus Veneti, and its award-winning cheeses are on show at the Veneto Region's stand. This “tour” will continue on 11 and 12 November at the Casari del Piavecheesemakers' exhibition in Santa Lucia di Piave, during the village event celebrating cheeses and new wines.

Cheeses are also the main focus of the Chamber of Commerce's stand, with a name which in recent years has become famous for the production of quality cheeses in the

Marca Trevigiana area, that of the dairy of Perenzin di Bagnolo di San Pietro di Feletto. “We are showing what has in recent years been our most successful product – medieval cheese, a cheese to be enjoyed with a raisin wine,” says Emanuela Perenzin, who represents the fourth generation of the business started up by her great-grandfather. She is at the stand with her husband, Carlo Piccoli, who created this and other cheeses. “Then there are all the goat's milk cheeses, enhanced by hay, walnut leaves and extravirgin olive oil and pepper. And then, of course, there are the “steeped” cheeses – the traditional one with cow's milk steeped in red wine grape must, and a rarer, more particular type steeped in Traminer must, another cheese which is doing very well.”

The stand belonging to Valdana, the company which selects quality products, on the other hand, features an interesting project under way to highlight several small raw milk productions of the Marca Trevigiana region. Called *Le formajele trevisane*, the project umbrellas different products which share the characteristics of tradition and quality.

Lastly, a speciality, *oca in onto*, launched by Slow Food a few years ago, the success of which is growing, and which is produced by Mondragon di Tarzo. Emanuela Tessari, at the stand with Elisa Da Silva Guimaraes, repeatedly has to explain to visitors what it is. People are not so much puzzled by the word “oca” (goose), as by the expression “in onto”, which those unversed in the dialect of the Veneto region find hard to understand. “Yes, the name is a bit of a problem. Consumers are initially put off by it, but fortunately they come round and decide to taste the product. It is in fact simply goose meat preserved in its own fat, an age-old recipe based on the golden precept of having to get the most out of everything. Not only that – it was a dish that could be rustled up in a matter of minutes with gentle heating and served directly with polenta and maybe some sweet and sour onions.”

At Mondragon, the family-run farm holiday establishment where Saint Martin's Day is celebrated with a traditional festival (and where goose is consumed in a variety of ways) there is quite a gaggle of some 1000-1200 geese: “They are a wonderful sight to behold. They are majestic, harmless birds and, in my opinion and contrary to popular belief, far more intelligent than many others.”

Giovanni Chiades