

a VITICULTURE  
of VOLUMES  
LAYERS  
VERTICALITY

# The Pepe Pergola



I always felt a bit strange at the question  
we get often asked as winegrowers:  
what's your surface?

It left me uncertain for a while, almost as if I wasn't the correct recipient to that question.

I kept thinking of the root of that sensation till the moment I realized that as farmers we are not in charge of surfaces but we own and cultivate: volumes.

We take care of everything that is visible and while doing that, we are cultivating, moving, growing everything that is beneath surface, just under our feet. While growing more of the visible and higher levels of it, we're cultivating deeper the invisible.

The whole vision of agriculture suddenly rotated to a tridimensional perspective the more and more I dream of volumes.

So I started thinking how I could enhance verticality to the way I was growing vines. Consciously that pergola was already a big sign of not being afraid of heights.

I started thinking layers, increasing layers and the more I thought I could go higher in what was to me visible, I was enhancing the development of the volumes of everything that was in the invisible side.



# Layers





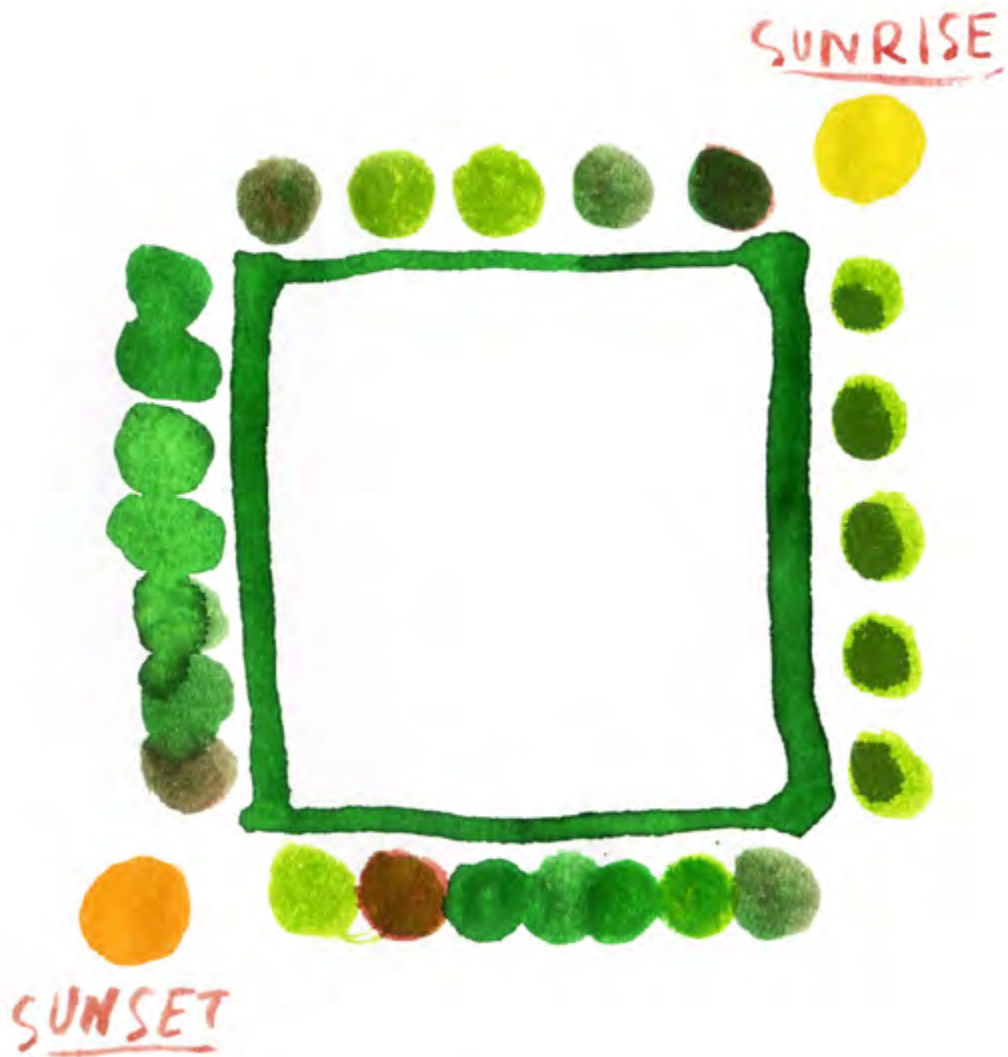
One more thought was also dedicated to reaching deeper levels of soil by roots, whenever a necessity of water or humidity was necessary – or possible extreme drought chances that roots of trees could access more beneficial areas and then send support to vine roots.

Who knows what conditions will be facing in the long term future and how little we know about root exchange and communication, aside the fact that it happens, it just felt needed and almost a responsibility as a farmer to allow this to happen, to make it possible.

Different levels of roots at different depths interacting and communicating: spontaneous herbs or cover crops / vine roots / tree roots.



# Extra Shade



I have realized over the past few years, while summers have been hot, how the grapes of the pergolas were qualitatively of a different level, higher acidities, lower pH and better phenolic ripening while keeping potential alcohols always contained and moderate. This is mainly the reason I wanted to plant more pergola but my considerations were also oriented on the necessity of extra shade in a far future to an already shading pergola, I wanted the pergola itself to be shaded and more protected.

So here the trees are shading the pergola, the pergola in turn is shading grapes and soil: keeping the velvety quality of Montepulciano skins and preventing soil oxidation and keeping ground much more humid.

I am so grateful for shade (as a human, so i think, also my vines?)

Denser canopy trees have been planted on the sun setting side, so I could protect vines from lesser qualitative light, while thinner crown trees have been planted on sun rising side to let pristine light penetrate and filter into the pergola.









*Vigna Elisa, Vigna Mare  
Vigna Nocetta*

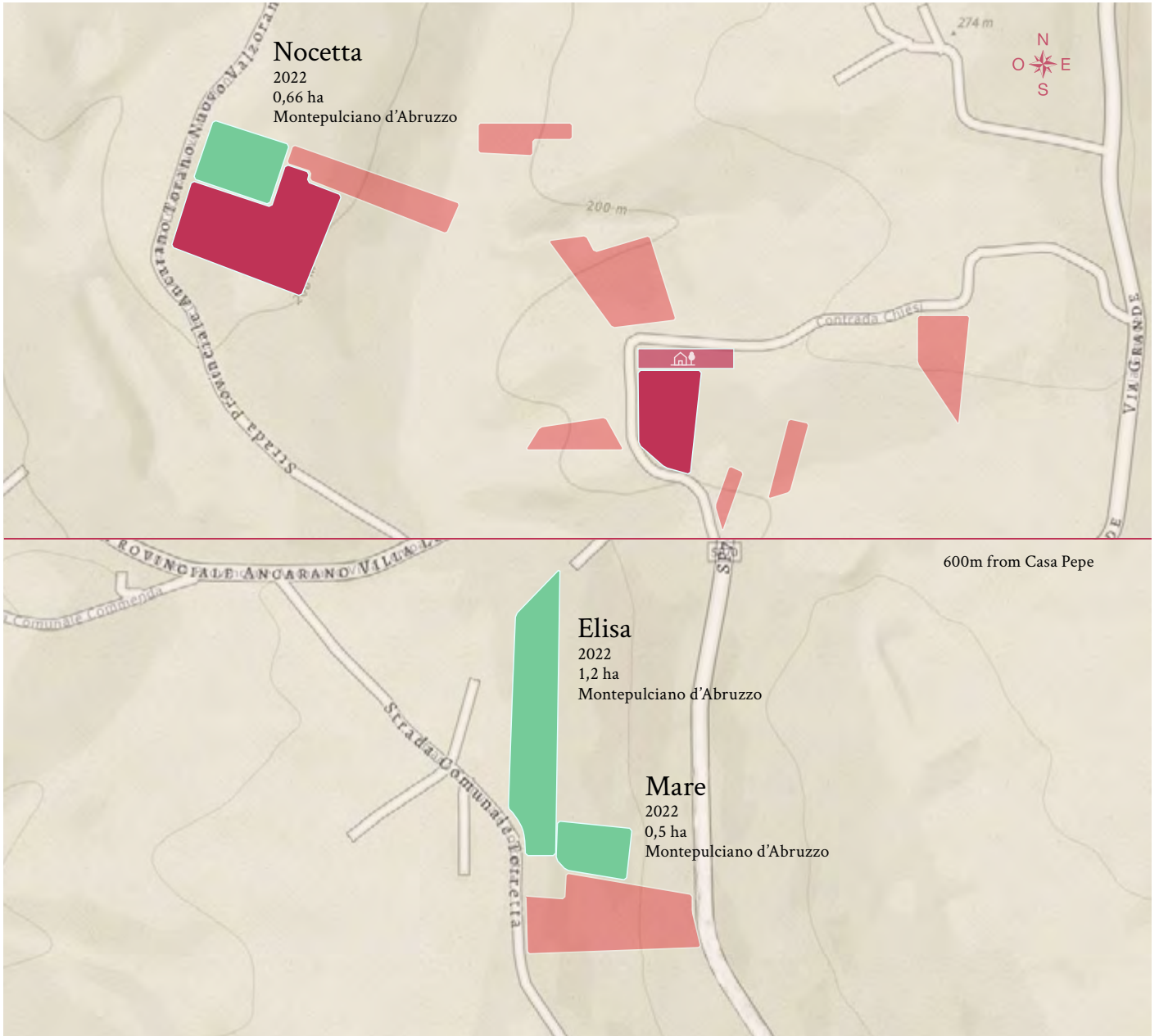


In 2022 I had the opportunity of planting more vines. In the specific 2.3 ha divided in three different locations that have been planted with an agroforestry method.

A 0.66 vigna Nocetta received more than 40 trees planted on the perimeter of the vineyard. All different trees, planted as baby trees and both, baby vines and baby trees have received the same mycorrhizae bath so they could start installing synergies early on while growing together.

On another vineyard, I already had trees, 85 olives here for instance – so I planted a pergola that would go in within the trees and all round them.





■ Pepe's new plots ■ Oldest plots ■ Other plots 🏠 Winery



# Spacing



The 4'000 baby vines have been planted on a 2.3 ha - meaning that there is very little concentration of plants per hectare.

Space is a gift for freedom, to let roots navigate and explore all levels of soil depth and having little competition which will enhance an undesired concentration\*. Having vines produce their fruit in their natural equilibrium without pushing human intention over them will be our way of interpreting winemaking in a constantly changing climate.

\*(concentration not depth)

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# Soil Intelligence





As every other winemaker - this is a fruit of a study, research and fascination around the intelligence of soil.

How humans can be of service to Nature in order to enhance those magic mechanisms to happen in the most fruitful thus instinctive way?

This is a beginning of our process of creating a more and more auto sustainable ecosystem in which we synchronize with Nature in a virtuous tandem.

The farming responsibility at this point is to make certain things in place and let the process follow.

Here below is a link of a TedX talk (in Italian) where Chiara talks about soil intelligence and asks for cooperation of other farmers and the entire population to respectively farm and buy meaningfully.

[Soil Intelligence by Chiara De Iulis Pepe - TEDX TALK](#)

