

NEWS IN PRINT

Leonardo da Vinci, Vintner



The Atellani House in Milan is the site of Leonardo's vineyard.



By Teddy Willson

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You may not be as talented as Renaissance man Leonardo da Vinci, but you can at least drink the wine he

grew. Yes, Leonardo was a vintner—not surprising for a man who wrote of the “divine juice of the grape”—but his small parcel in Milan was lost until a team of researchers brought it back to life in 2015. And now, 500 years after Leonardo’s death, his wine is ready to drink.

On the cusp of the 16th century, Leonardo was gifted a vineyard from the Duke of Milan, his friend and patron, who a few years earlier had commissioned the masterpiece *The Last Supper*. According to Jacopo Ghilardotti, historian at Museo Vigna di Leonardo in Milan, the original vineyard was about 2.5 acres.

The vineyard was destroyed by Allied bombs in World War II. But scientists, led by University of Milan viticulturist and geneticist Attilio Scienza, scoured the plot for plant material. Vine remnants were DNA-tested and cross-referenced with historical records of 15th-century grape varieties to determine exactly what Leonardo grew: a white called Malvasia di Candia Aromatica.

Following the patterns of the original vine rows, the Museo Vigna di Leonardo team replanted the vineyard and opened it to visitors while the vines matured. The first harvest took place in early fall 2018, and an auction of 330 bottles will be held this September.