



## Amici,

At Spannocchia, we have always aimed to balance the old with the new. Learning from the past to create a more sustainable future. Combining effective traditional methods with newer innovations in agriculture. Celebrating the estate and the region's rich history as part of educating the next generation of food, farming, and climate leaders.

These principles resonate as strongly as ever post-pandemic, as we return to providing the educational experiences of a sustainable agricultural community in a breathtaking landscape to hundreds of interns, students, and visitors. I was awestruck at how my annual Harvard Extension School class of 27 master's students was entranced by a week at Spannocchia in May, studying the practices and challenges of regenerative agriculture and sustainability, while gaining a deeper appreciation for community and historical legacies.

But casting a cloud over this triumph of Spannocchia's endurance are the alarming examples of climate change that threaten all parts of the globe, and which are deeply felt in southern Europe. The direct and indirect implications for food systems, human well-being, and wildlife and ecosystems are formidable.

Addressing climate issues at (and beyond!) Spannocchia requires continual, adaptive responses and wise strategic planning—and it feels more urgent than ever before. Your support will play a crucial role in our ability to confront this work. **Can we count on your year-end membership donation?**

Environmental challenges serve as a humble reminder and strong motivator to recommit to our values and our mission: regenerative farming, sustainability, education, and conservation. Balancing the old with the new, as we seek to effect positive change. **Join me in donating now to support our mission and build a more resilient Spannocchia.**

Grazie mille,

Mark Leighton

President, Board of Directors, Friends of Spannocchia  
Associate Director & Senior Research Advisor, Sustainability and Global Development Practice Programs, Harvard University Extension

*P.S. This year, with the generous help of our donor community, we were able to award scholarship funding to one deserving farm intern each session, expanding the program's impact to those who wouldn't otherwise have had access. If you're able, please consider a contribution to our Scholarship Fund in addition to your annual membership gift!*

**Donate online at [www.spannocchia.org/membership](http://www.spannocchia.org/membership)**





## CLIMATE CHANGE AT SPANNOCCHIA

**The Villa Garden:** Chiara, Spannocchia's visionary gardener, has spent over a year transforming the old Villa Garden to an incredible mixed ornamental and herb garden filled primarily with native, drought-resistant perennials. Not only is this reimagined space a gorgeous and contemplative area for the entire community to enjoy, it was designed with climate issues in mind: it saves water, supports the local ecosystem, and reduces labor demands.

**The Wine Program:** In addition to his wise, witty, and wonderful guidance of the internship and apprenticeship programs, our Farm Education Director Niccolò has been working with staff and interns over the last year and a half to transition the farm's organic wine production to natural wine—beyond organic—for higher quality and reduced environmental impact. Improvements include the use of only naturally-occurring, indigenous yeasts for fermentation, an absolute minimum amount of sulphites, and no filtering or clarifying the wine throughout the aging process.

**Even with these advancements, unprecedented weather had significant ramifications on Spannocchia's farming operations this year.**

The vineyards were seriously compromised by mildew. Constant rainfall in the spring made it impossible to protect the vines from this blight, while creating the ideal warm, humid environment for fungal growth. As a result, wine production shockingly dropped from 2,200 liters last year to what looks to be as low as 130 liters from this fall's harvest.

The harsh spring weather also severely affected olive trees all over Tuscany. The timing of the rainfall coincided with the pollination period, but wet conditions prohibited this crucial step in the growing process. This left the property's olive trees nearly completely bare of the fruit. We're devastated about the impact to one of our very favorite products—Spannocchia's extra-virgin olive oil—and the effect this will have on the farm-to-table dining program and farm product sales.

**We're so grateful for our colleagues on-site at Spannocchia, who have worked so hard this year despite all of these challenges. We couldn't do any of our work without their partnership and dedication!**

