

# UNIMONT

UNIVERSITÀ DELLA MONTAGNA

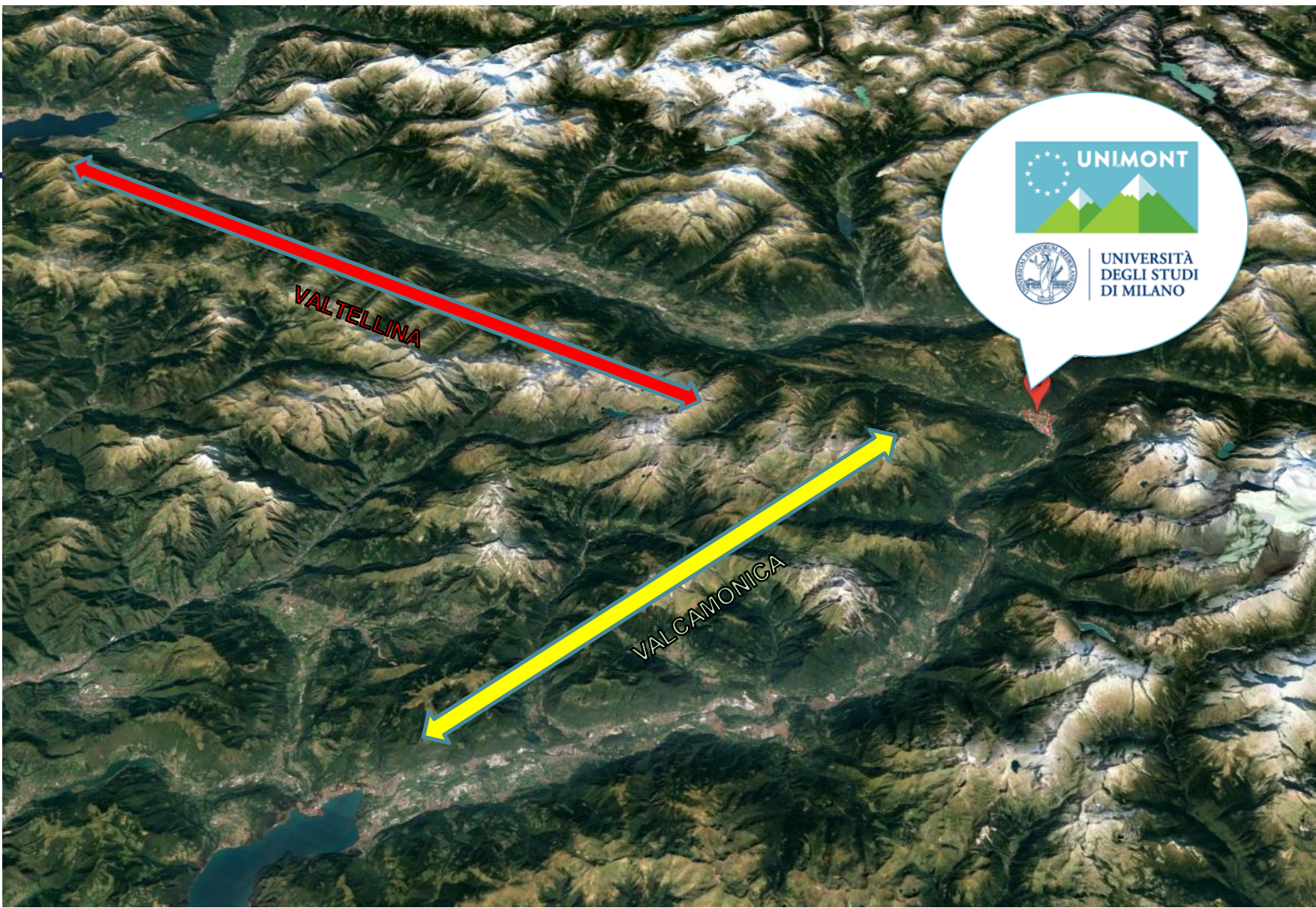


Italian Alps - the new frontier of olive oil production

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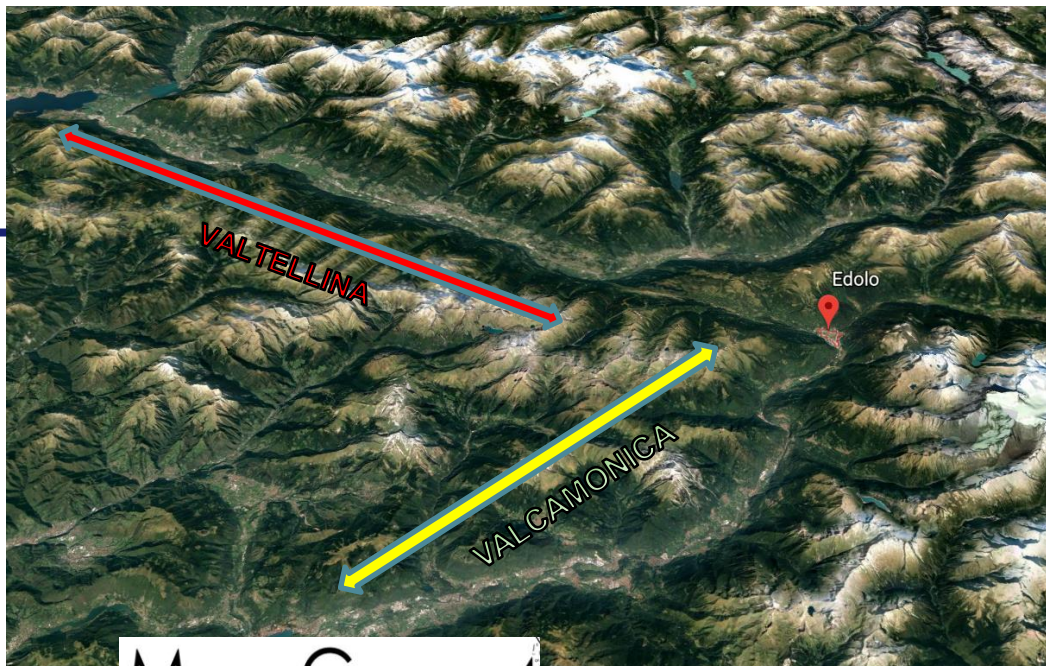


UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO  
DIPARTIMENTO DI SCIENZE AGRARIE  
E AMBIENTALI - PRODUZIONE,  
TERRITORIO, AGROENERGIA



UNIMONT is an innovative training and research centre of the University of Milan made up of the three-year degree course in “Conservation and Sustainable Development of Mountain areas” and “Center of Applied Studies for the Sustainable Management and Protection of Mountain Areas (GeSDiMont)”

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*“The olive tree advances North. With the changing climate it is more and more widespread”*

LAPROVINCIAIDISONDRIO.IT

L'ulivo avanza a Nord. Con il clima che cambia è sempre più diffuso



RACCOLTA AL VIA NEGLI ULIVETI DI MONTAGNA  
02/11/2016

*“Harvest starts in mountain olive groves”*

**l'Adige.it**

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#Clima #Vigneti #Ulivi #Montagna

07 luglio 2019



*«Vineyards and olive trees are looking for 'cool'»*

**B Territori**

BRESCIA | HINTERLAND | BASSA | VALTROMPIA | VALSABBIA | GARD

**Valcamonica**

**L'olivicoltura camuna? L'APAV invita gli attori ad alzare l'asticella**

02 marzo 2020



*“Olive growing in Vallecamonica? APAV fosters farmers to raise the bar”*

# Conquest or return?

In the Thirteenth Century, with the climatic optimum, there were many areas of the Alps where there was a microclimate suitable for hosting Mediterranean crops, encouraged by the Christian religion and the use of oil for liturgical purposes



Historical evidences

Natural evidences




centuries-old stumps



## FIRST STUDY CASE: IVANO FOIANINI - Fojanini foundation of Superior Studies SONDRIO (VALTELLINA)

Nineties: first experimental fields to help some “pioneers”  
Propose **ideas** to recover abandoned traditional terraced vineyards



Olive trees grew well in the following years, with qualitative and productive characteristics comparable to those of the Lariana area (lake Como), which is the closest traditional olive growing area 



Trend of the last decade: **increase of about 1000 olive trees per year**. In the last 10 years or so, the cultivation of olive trees on the sunniest ridges of the **Valtellina mountains** has reached about **20 thousand plants** (data confirmed by COLDIRETTI farmer association).



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## Climate change

- For several years, the olive trees have come winter out unscathed and are in good condition in spring
- Paradoxically, in the periods of intense frost, in the areas of Valtellina there was less damage from frost because the plants wintered better than in warmer areas
- the olive tree has shown greater adaptability to periods of drought in which the areas of the terraces lacked water
- Winters are perceived as milder by the local farmers and the good quality of the oil encouraged many producers to start family micro-productions and recover abandoned areas with olive groves



## Cultural and social trends

- Willingness to recover the territory (new generations)
- Olive tree is rustic plant, and it is suitable for low input crops coherent with the new perceptions of agriculture
- Fascinating plant and linked to an idea of a healthy diet comparing to animal fats (butter), traditional of the Valtellina area

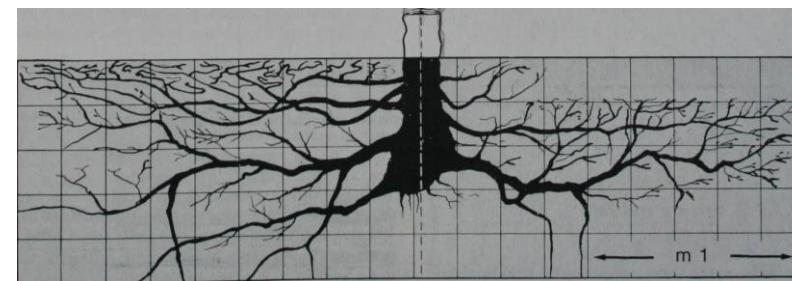


## FIRST STUDY CASE: IVANO FOIANINI - Fojanini foundation of Superior Studies SONDRIO (VALTELLINA)

Olive cultivation is leading to positive interventions in the area (restoration of arable land, recovery of traditional structures) and **undoubted advantages from a landscape and hydrogeological point of view**

The olive tree represents a **good transitional cultivation** for the recovery of terraced areas abandoned for decades, where there are stumps that must be degraded **before preparing the planting of the vineyard**

Valtellina olive growing will never be a substitute for other traditional crops as vineyards but will probably remain relegated to some areas of the Rhaetian side and conceived as a **good recovery of uncultivated areas**, maintenance of the most disadvantaged areas and a substitute for vines and a valid alternative to reforestation of abandoned farmland



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## Future trends

- In the wine-growing areas (DOCG) **the vineyard is obviously preferred by young farmers** (viticulture is traditional in the valley and is more valid at profitable)
- In areas outside the DOCG or close to the towns there is a further spread of olive growing, also for **hobby and self-production purposes**
- Other non-traditional plants: we have observed for example **saffron**, mainly for hobby purposes and with a minor impact on the landscape

## R&I to be done

- The most suitable **varieties** (the traditional and more used varieties do not fit the terraced mountain environment)
- Improve the economic sustainability of the activity in the mountains (**mechanization and smart solutions**)



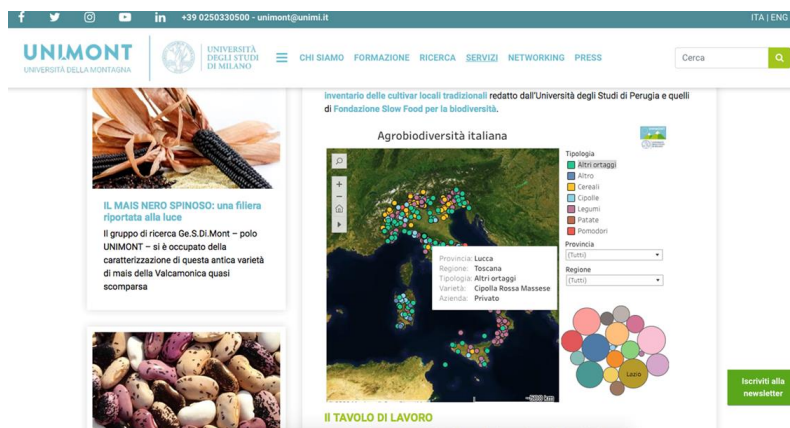


# SECOND STUDY CASE: Organic farm Alena Malegno (Valcamonica)

“Alena - Made in Italy from 2017 -  
Val Camonica - ethic, natural,  
sustainable”



- Young entrepreneurs
- Promote traditional resources of the territory (landraces)
- Multifunctional (mountain berries, fruit, vegetables)
- Recover the land
- Looking for a short supply chain: willingness to bring production closer to the final consumer through transformation (first through third-party laboratories and then directly in the farm)
- “Smart farm”: recently, e-commerce has also been launched in addition to direct sale in the farm, markets, local resales etc. currently the farm can supply a line of about 40 processed products (jams and baked goods)





### Most recent Alena farm strategy: olive oil

- Other farms are successfully growing olive trees in the Valley
- To increase the farm's offer with a product of the highest quality and value, sought after by consumers.
- Climate change has its role in the choice, as olive growing in the Valley has always been present but appears more feasible in recent years due to the perception of less cold winters



Now the olive tree is a test, 4000 square meters have been planted with about 500 trees, which is about 15% of the farm area.

The test is also related to agronomic and harvesting practices as it is located on a terraced land inaccessible to agricultural vehicles.

The farm needed rustic and resistant varieties, suitable for low input cultivation in the mountains and organic agriculture



If the test is successful, the farm is certainly aiming for an increase in the olive grove area

## Landscape improvement / prevention of hydrogeological risks and recover of traditional structures

Much of the farmland is restored from abandoned land and in this case **4000 square meters have been recovered** which have a **visible impact on the landscape on the mountain side.**

**Inherited “dust” particles lands** that couldn’t be used individually were **gathered** in the commonality. The lands are **terraced** and inaccessible to vehicles. Surely there is therefore an advantage at the territorial level, as **the farm restored the road system on the plot**



Terraced lands were recovered with unquestionable advantages on the land, the restraint of hydrogeological risk and recover of farmlands



## THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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