



CASCINA  
OSCHIENA



My name is Alice Cerutti, I'm 38 years old, and I'm a farmer. At our farm Cascina Oschiena my family and I grow rice, but cultivation is not our only commitment. We are deeply involved in safeguarding the environment, and committed to biodiversity and conserving the historical landscape. Cascina Oschiena is one of oldest farmsteads in the northern Italian Province of Vercelli in Piedmont. It belonged to the Abbey of St. Stephen of Vercelli from the 13th through the 18th centuries. The buildings themselves bear witness to a past which should not be forgotten; workers' quarters, children's school, herdsman's lodgings where butter and milk were sold, and the home of the permanent workers known as "sciavandè" who collectively owned the gardens. There was also an inn, a shop and a rural church which became important points of congregation. The farmhouse has become a historical archive, a memory, and with respect we have preserved it as such. Knowledge of the past culture helps us to understand contemporary reality and safeguard a promising future.



Over the years, we have made renovations to maintain the essence and character of the original structures, honoring a centuries-old history of our farmhouse. With extreme care and attention, we have preserved all the ancient buildings. The drying kiln and the silos necessary for modern rice cultivation have been seamlessly integrated into the traditional architecture while the stables, which once housed carthorses, have been converted into storage space for tractors and other agricultural equipment, but barn owls keep on living in the ancient barns with lancet arches. In 2012 we installed photovoltaic panels which have allowed us to reduce our energy consumption from non-renewable sources and to decrease our CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, thus making the farm more ecologically sustainable.



*AliaCerutti*



[www.friendoftheearth.org](http://www.friendoftheearth.org)

Today we maintain the long tradition of cultivating rice, an ancient crop, while also guaranteeing the highest quality standards and protection of the Environment. Our rice is grown in an Ecological Biodiversity Protected Area - Natura 2000 and it is '**Friend of the Earth**' certified. This Certification rewards companies that operate in accordance with the practices of sustainable agriculture and farming, implementing social responsibilities.

Our philosophy is inspired by creating a cultivation system that combines the guarantee of our agronomic productions and the protection of the heritage that belongs to All of Us: **The Environment**. We adopt integrated production farming techniques such as sowing winter cover crops to increase natural fertility and high quality of the soil, planting grass in all of our field boundaries, digging kilometers of ditches in our fields for aquatic biodiversity, sowing ancient varieties and maintaining their historical uniqueness and keeping traditional flooded sowing alive. Our logo depicts the Black-tailed Godwit, a rare migratory bird with a long and tapered beak that nests in our paddy fields.





The great lure of the paddy fields is the sense of boundlessness limited only in the distance by spectacular mountain ranges. When underwater, especially in spring, it is then that the rice growing landscape shows us its most spectacular views: reflections of the sky, the trees and farmhouses create optical effects like those of a mirror, and the farmhouses themselves look like islands in a beautiful lagoon.

A typical rice farm landscape today is characterized by an almost total absence of hedgerows and tree-lined perimeters. But at Oschiena, in order to restore the ancient landscape and safeguard and improve the local ecosystems, we decided to plant over 5000 tall trees and shrubs along the borders of the paddy fields and near our little XVI century Chapel "Madonna del Tabalino" that rises in the middle of the fields.

In 2016 we decided to open our Farm to tourists and schools. We strongly believe in the importance of transparency, sharing and bonding. It is essential for us to share what we do, how we farm, our products, their history, our passion, our territory, its landscape and Nature Reserve. The desire to increase sharing has brought us to open a little *Agriturismo* where we organize cooking classes for the "perfect traditional risotto" on an amazing wood-burning kitchen after a day of "work" and experience on the farm and before staring at the stars and relaxing in front of the fireplace. The renovation was carried out with natural materials like river sand and rice husk. The 500-year old bricks are exposed, the wood and the terracotta tiles of the ancient roof are today the floor of our *Agriturismo*... "Come to our farm and farm with us!"

All of Cascina Oschiena's Products are exclusively cultivated by us on our family farm with precision, love and expertise. We at Cascina Oschiena are among the few farmers in Italy that still grow ancient and local varieties and maintain their historical uniqueness and keep their quality alive.

## CARNAROLI CLASSIC RICE

Carnaroli is an Italian ancient variety with a tapered and pearled grain renowned for its excellent cooking properties and ideal for the finest preparation of Risottos. Carnaroli grains have the perfect cooking resistance and ability to blend with any ingredient. Why is ours called Carnaroli "Classic" Rice? Classic is the Certification that guarantees authenticity and purity and distinguishes this true ancient variety from the Carnaroli-type modern varieties created for industrial agriculture.

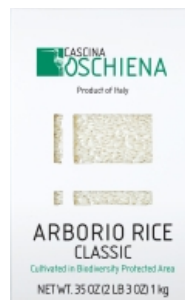
Cooking time: 16 - 18 minutes.



## ARBORIO CLASSIC RICE

Arborio takes its name from a small town nearby Vercelli. It is an Italian ancient variety with a big and pearled grain, renowned for its excellent cooking properties and ideal for the finest preparation of Risottos. Arborio grains perfectly blend with any ingredient, giving a natural creaming. Why is ours called Arborio "Classic" Rice? Classic is the Certification that guarantees authenticity and purity and distinguishes this true ancient variety from the Arborio-type modern varieties created for industrial agriculture.

Cooking time: 15 - 17 minutes.



## APOLLO AROMATIC RICE

Long grain aromatic rice, Apollo is the Italian alternative to Jasmine Rice. Famous for its natural fragrant floral aroma and excellent cooking properties, it is ideal as a side to vegetable, meat and fish dishes, whether spicy or delicate. It is even worth trying on its own, with a little extra-virgin olive oil. Highly digestible, Apollo is perfect in a healthy and low-fat diet. Fast in cooking and easy to prepare, Apollo combines versatility with taste in fine gourmet dishes.

Cooking time: 12 - 14 minutes.



## VENERE WHOLEGRAIN RICE

Wholegrain variety with black grains, Venere has a distinctive freshly baked bread aroma. Excellent combined with vegetables, meat, fish and shellfish, it is even worth trying on its own, with extra-virgin olive oil, lemon and basil or season to taste as an alternative original rice salad. Its natural color comes from anthocyanins, strong antioxidants. Because it is a wholegrain variety, the grain is only husked, keeping the germ and peripheral layers intact. It is therefore rich in protein, fibers, minerals, iron and calcium hence ideal for a healthy and balanced diet and easily digestible. Cooking time: 35 - 40 minutes.



## ANCIENT EMMER (TRITICUM DICOCCUM)

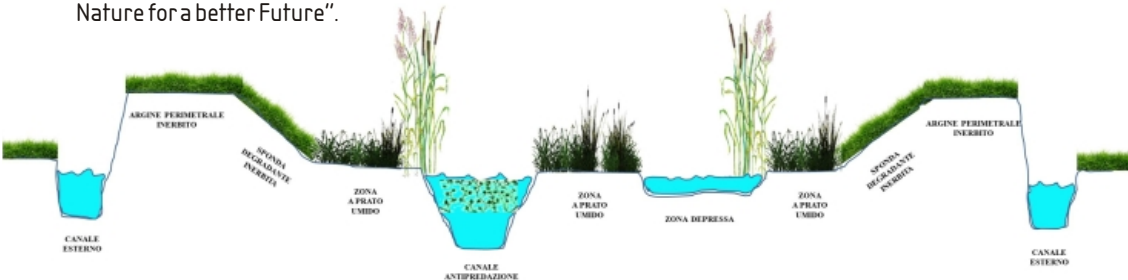
Emmer is an ancient type of wheat called Triticum Dicoccum. It is excellent to salads, soups, stews or as an original alternative of risotto. It is rich in protein, minerals, fibers and vitamins therefore ideal for a healthy and balanced diet. Thanks to the cultivation of Emmer and all the grains grown at Cascina Oschiena, the Black-tailed Godwit has a safe and biodiverse nesting ground.

Cooking time: 25-30 minutes.

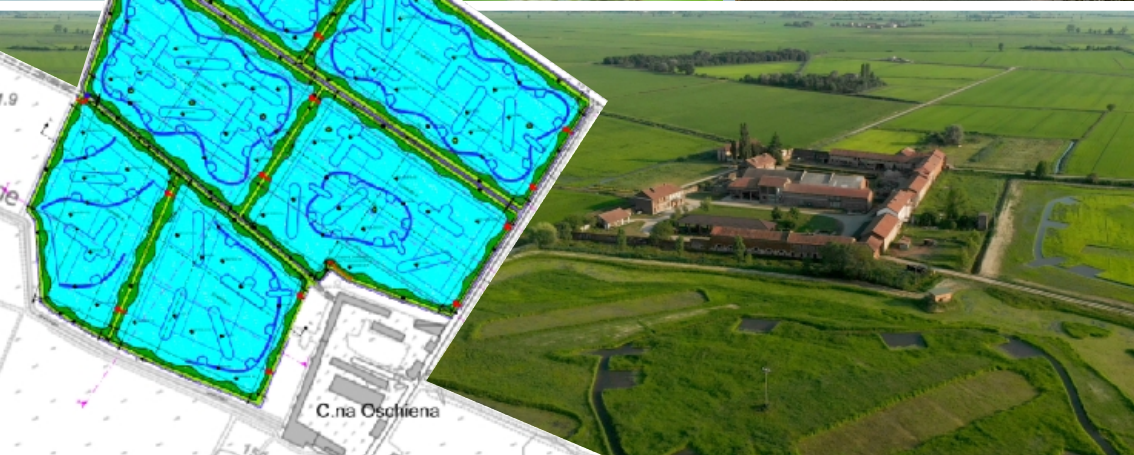
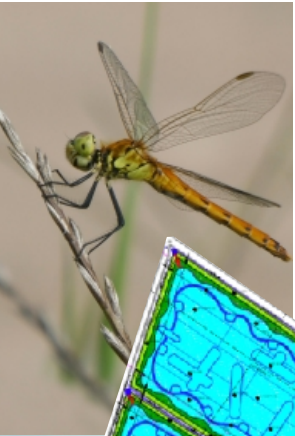


## THE BLACKTAILED GODWIT WETLANDS PROJECT

The project of the **Natural Wetlands of Cascina Oschiena** has the aim of recreating and maintaining during every season a natural wetland environment for the survival and reproduction of amphibians, dragonflies, butterflies and the nesting of different species of migratory birds. The main target species is the **Black-tailed Godwit**, since Cascina Oschiena is the only recorded nesting site in Italy. Enormous responsibility! Therefore in 2019, after 4 years of designing and planning and thanks to the cooperation with Parco del Po, Vercelli Province, botanists, bird experts and naturalists, we were able to accomplish our dream: we created over 60 acres of Natural Wetlands by converting one fourth of the farmland from rice cultivation into a **Nature Reserve**. Different levels of water during the year will allow to host the maximum number of not only different animal species but also plants like the reed thicket, an extraordinary natural habitat. The Natural Wetlands Project also provides an amazing benefit to Cascina Oschiena's Rice. It grants water purification and makes a unique and rich cradle of biological diversity. The Reserve is home to countless natural antagonists for pest control which helps guarantee a healthy top-quality rice. It's much better to live in synergy with Nature instead of trying to compete with it. The real quality of food is represented not only by the quality on the plate but it consists also in what came first, how it is produced and its environmental impact. This is why Cascina Oschiena is also an ethical choice. "Today preserving the Environment today is not enough, it is necessary to give back to Nature for a better Future".









Cerutti Alice

Cascina Oschiena

13040 Crova (VC) - Italy

Mob. +39 392.2262845

[alicecerutti@cascinaoschiena.it](mailto:alicecerutti@cascinaoschiena.it)

[www.cascinaoschiena.it](http://www.cascinaoschiena.it)



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