Winemaker: R and Antonella Lequio
eneration: 4th

TRE DONNE

Gavi di Gavi DOCG Donna Bianca

From the Alto Monferrato area of SE Piedmont, this classic DOCG offers up pitch-perfect freshness and typicity, perfect for pairing with rich seafood, pesto pasta, and soft truffle cheese. Good altitude, thirty-year-old vines, and a delicate cryo-press enhance the elegance and aromatics of this crisp and sophisticated white, which yields green apple, yellow pear, and wildflowers on the nose, followed by small-batch weight and a spine of minerality on the palate. Working in the cellar with her two teenage daughters, Daniela Lequio (one of the Tre Donne) is clearly in her element!

WINEMAKER BIOGRAPHY

For the past 30 years, this estate in the Barbaresco DOCG has been run by women: along with their loved ones, sisters Rosanna, Daniela and Antonella Lequio do everything themselves from soil to bottle. With some of their own daughters now studying enology, this may be the family's first generation of women winemakers, but certainly not the last!

ENOLOGIST

Gianfranco Cordero

TASTING NOTES

Color	Bright straw yellow
Nose	Green apple, yellow pear, and wildflowers
Palate	Elegant, low-yield structure with perfect acidity
Finish	Long and sophisticated

VINEYARD & VINIFICATION

Vineyard Location	Gavi DOCG, Piedmont
Varietals List	100% Cortese
Farming Practices	Certified members of The Green Experience in Piedmont (sustainable, eco-friendly practices with no chemical herbicides); dry-farmed; grapes picked by hand
Elevation	260-280 m
Soils	Sandy clay
Maturation Summary	In Steel for 6 months and Bottled for 4 months
In Steel	6 months
Alcohol	13.0 %
Acidity	5.4 g/liter
Residual Sugar	2.7 g/liter
Annual Production	9,000 bottles

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TRE DONNE

Much as he loved his daughters, back in the 1980s, winemaker Alessandro Lequio was hesitant to hand his family's winemaking tradition over to women. "Just marry a good winemaker," he would tell them. Just as stubborn as their father, however, Rosanna, Daniela and Antonella all staunchly refuted this notion, assuring him that they would one day earn his trust. In the end – and assuming they'd concede - he agreed to turn everything over if they could pass three years of rigorous enological tests, culminating in a single vintage which he, himself would judge. To everyone's surprise, the sisters persisted. Moreover, they actually won more awards in their first year of production (1988) than Alessandro had in his entire career! Deeply impressed, and true to his word, Sandro handed the estate over to his daughters, even allowing them to initiate the "Tre Donne" brand.

While everyone in the family (yes, even the men) lend a hand with the wines, today this 15-hectare, soil-to-bottle estate continues to be run by women. Rosanna, the middle sister, manages all aspects of production (along with her husband, Piernicola, who's often the social face of the estate); Daniela, the youngest sister, runs point in the cellar and is assisted by her two daughters, Alice and Elisa (ages 17 and 15), both of whom are studying enology in Alba; Antonella, the eldest sister, keeps everything ship-shape and oversees the company's finances. Even Donna Bruna, their mother, is still going strong at 80 years – among other things, she still supervises the harvest!

To clarify, Tre Donne owns 15 hectares in Neive and have long-term contracts to lease a few additional hectares outside the Barbaresco zone, allowing them to also produce Barolo and Gavi di Gavi. Altitudes on their hill, Serragrilli, range from 190-300 meters, and they have a significant rotation of old vines. Their youngest Barbera vines are 30 years old, for example, and the Nebbiolo for their cru Barbaresco was planted in 1951! While non-certified, vines are cultivated organically, and the estate is officially part of Piedmont's "Green Experience" program. (Certification requirements are similar to those for the EU's "bio" label, and also include maintaining habitats for various birds and the protection of pollinators. For more information, you can visit this website: https://www.thegreenexperience.it.

REGION

PIEDMONT

As the name might suggest, Piedmont (trans. 'foot of the mountain') lies in the NW corner of Italy, with Alps shielding it on two sides. 40% of the region is in fact mountainous, and an additional 30% covered in subalpine hills. Borders are shared with Switzerland to the north and France to the west, with the Mediterranean coastline just 90 minutes south. This dual proximity lends itself to bold, structured wines that stand the test of time: ice-cold air from the Alps blows down at night, replacing the warm afternoon temperatures afforded by Mediterranean breezes. These significant diurnal swings allow grapes to develop over longer periods of time, often deepening their natural tannic structure.

Often described as the "Burgundy" of Italy, few would fail to place Piedmont among the world's very finest wine regions. This reputation has been earned in part thanks to its numerous small-scale, family-operated wineries and a near obsessive focus on quality. With entire villages dedicated to the production of wine, it's not unusual to hear stories of winemakers who "sleep amongst their vines", or profess goals such as "making better wine than the French".

Importantly, the region is home to more DOCGs than any other in Italy. Barolo and Barbaresco (accounting for just 3% of Piedmont's production) are just the tip of the iceberg. The Nebbiolo grape alone makes up 13 DOC/DOCG certified wines, and, thanks to topographical variation, the differences between one tiny town and the next can be astounding. With their different altitudes and expositions, for example, the Langhe hills around the town of Alba are Italy's answer to the Côte d'Or. Even though Nebbiolo has a reputation for big tannins and long-term aging, many of the sub-regions (i.e. Langhe, Alba) produce softer styles with a similar weight to whole-cluster Pinot Noir. Single vineyards in close proximity can produce very different wines, which is also why we see so many single-vineyard bottlings.

GAVI DOCG

Spanning the hills around the town of Gavi, this esteemed Piemontese appellation was established as a DOC in 1974 and elevated to DOCG in 1998. All wines must be crafted from 100% Cortese and come in the area of Alto Monferrato, in turn located in the southern part of Alessandria province near the border with Liguria. Labels may indicate either Gavi di Gavi or Gavi del comune di Gavi, (both made within the town's borders) or simply read Gavi, indicating the wine was made from fruit grown in one of the surrounding communes.

Known for its light straw color and a brisk natural acidity, Gavi has a distinct (but often subtle) nose that can include green apple, citrus, stone fruits, green melon and white blossoms. The wine's reputation began its rapid ascent in the 1960s and 70s, becoming the first Italian white to gain the international spotlight. (Today, according to the consorzio, a remarkable 85% of all Gavi is exported.) A dry, sophisticated palate, subtle layers of fruit, clear-headed acidity, and terroir-driven minerality doubtless all contribute to the wine's popularity. Sometimes - but not always - the Cortese grape displays a hint of bitter almond on the finish, adding to its food-friendliness. With its crisp, flinty style, Gavi is hailed as being a particularly good pairing for rich seafood dishes, including oysters, scallops, clams, and fritto misto.

Under this DOCG, a Riserva is also permitted, along with two tiers of sparkling wine: a minimum of 6 months must be spent on the lees when employing the Charmat method, and 9 months on the lees when using the metodo classico.