



Winemaker: Romina Tacchino
Generation: 3rd



Gusti Barbera del Monferrato DOC

Juicy and traditional, this European-style Barbera was crafted by Romina Tacchino, best known for her Tre Bicchieri Dolcetto d'Ovada DOCG. Grown in a natural amphitheater, her vines enjoy higher altitude and a vein of white tufo, adding to the wine's backbone. A host of sub-alpine fruit graces the nose, poised against a backdrop of warm earth and smoke. Following the bright, layered fruit of the palate, some firm tannins make an appearance, book-ended by a fresh, food-friendly finish.

WINEMAKER BIOGRAPHY

Meticulous, thoughtful, and full of joy, Dolcetto masters Romina Tacchino and her brother Alessio work side by side in the high, green hills of Alto Monferrato. Subtle, subalpine aromatics tend to belie complex, powerhouse palates bursting with flavor. And with multiple Tre Bicchieri awards now under their belts, they're clearly just hitting their stride!

ENOLOGIST

Mario Ronco



TASTING NOTES

- Color** Ruby with purple highlights
- Nose** Cherry, black raspberry, red forest fruits, summer earth, and smoke
- Palate** Bright, traditional acidity, with tart cherry, pomegranate and crunchy red cassis
- Finish** Fresh and food-friendly



VINEYARD & VINIFICATION

- Vineyard Location** Barbera del Monferrato DOC, Piedmont
- Vineyard Size** 2 ha
- Varietals List** 100% Barbera del Monferrato
- Farming Practices** Organic (non-certified); grapes dry-farmed and picked by hand
- Elevation** 300-350 m
- Soils** White tufo, calcareous clay
- Maturation Summary** In Steel for 6 months and Bottled for 12 months
- In Steel** 6 months
- Alcohol** 14.0 %
- Annual Production** 30,000 bottles



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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.

BARBERA DEL MONFERRATO DOC

Credited with being the historic birthplace of Barbera, the hills of Monferrato canvas a reasonably large area, spread across the provinces of Alessandria and (eastern) Asti. This DOC was established in 1970 and should not be confused with the related Monferrato DOC (which was created in 1994 and also permits Cortese, along with a host of other red varieties). Also related is the Barbera del Monferrato Superiore DOCG, which spans the same territory but was made distinct in 2008 for wines that undergo a longer aging process (a minimum of 14 months, of which 6 must be in wood). Often grown at higher altitude, Barbera del Monferrato is known for retaining high acidity, even in warmer vintages. As a result, it tends to be a bit lighter, brighter, and earthier on the palate than Barbera from the nearby sub-zones of Alba and Asti. Wines typically exhibit aromas of cherry and plum, sometimes with hints of roses, violets, earth spice, and black pepper. While a frizzante rendition is still permitted, this style has decreased in popularity over the decades, especially as more controlled winemaking has become the norm. All wines in the Barbera del Monferrato DOC must consist of at least 85% Barbera, with small amounts of Dolcetto, Freisa, and Grignolino permitted.



TACCHINO

When Romina's father, Luigi, was only 11 years old, his own papa passed away and his mother had to sell the family's vineyards to survive on her own with three children. Years later, however, now married and with a family of his own, Luigi managed to buy back the exact same piece of land his mother had once sold! So, you can imagine just how heartfelt the family is today when it comes to their vines. Their first official bottling came in 1960 (starting with the "Trivoli" sparkling wine, which they sold in nearby Liguria along the coast), and as they grew, Luigi taught Romina and Alessio all that he knew. Romina laughs, "I must have been ten years old when I started helping in the cellar... I remember I kept dancing, dancing to the rhythm of the pump to help pass the time!" She also recalls those first few years she helped with the harvest, and the feeling of celebration that came along with it. "The whole family would eat lunch in the shade of a big cherry tree, and Grandma Clelia always made pasta fagioli for everyone...because it tastes so good cold. We would pour a little olive oil over the top and listen as the older women sang." Such a life! No wonder Romina still has such a sparkle in her eye and spring in her step today.

In addition to the family's original 6 hectares of vines located in Castelletto d'Orba, they purchased an additional 6 in nearby Lerma in 1999. Although the two sites are only separated by 200 meters, they lie on opposite sides of a natural amphitheater, and have different exposures, altitudes, and soil types. On the Lerma side, vines sit at 300-450 meters with E-SE exposure and sit directly on a long line of white tufo that stretches all the way from Alto Monferrato to La Morra in the Barolo district. Just a stone's throw away, the Castelletto d'Orba vines enjoy S-SW exposure and grow in a small line of red clay. According to Romina, grapes planted here fare better during times of dry weather, whereas the white tufo is better in humid years. So in any given vintage, they're able to counterbalance the two sites to help maintain their wine's acidic backbone, freshness, and consistency.