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Italian
Winery of the Month



Tenuta Sella

Keeping the Estate Intact



CelebrationsWineClub.com

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Ettore Germano

Since 1856, the Germano family has owned six hectares in Piemonte's famed Serralunga d'Alba, one of six premium growing areas for Barolo. During the last fifty years, the family has purchased additional properties in the area and more than doubled its original holdings. Today, Sergio Germano guides the enterprise and cultivates the traditional reds of the zone, Nebbiolo, Barbera, and Dolcetto. But unlike his neighbors, he has also experimented with white international varieties like Riesling and Chardonnay with the addition of Pinot Noir, from which he makes sparkling wine. His 2008 Langhe Bianco Herzu made entirely from Riesling won the prestigious *Tre Bicchierri* award from the Gambero Rosso wine rating board. At the same time, his red wines garner plenty of praise, especially the Barolo Cerretta, which has won multiple *Tre Bicchierri* awards. The Gambero Rosso wine guide

describes Ettore Germano as follows: "... year after year, [the estate] scales new peaks of quality and reliability."

Tenuta Sella

The Sella family has produced wine in Lessona from their own vineyards since 1671. Over the next three centuries, the Sella family has kept the estate intact, and its cellars still hold old vintages of their wines, dating back to 1881. Lessona and Bramaterra are located in Northern Piemonte in the foothills of the Alpine mountains. Outside of Barolo and Barbaresco, this area, together with Langa and Valtellina, constitute the three other classic zones for the production of Nebbiolo. Here in the Alpine Foothills, the climate is cooler and the soils richer in minerals when compared to Barolo and Barbaresco. Structurally, these wines are lighter than those of Barolo and Bar-

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WINES OF THE MONTH



ARTISAN SERIES

Tenute Sella

2009 Erbaluce "Doranda"

The Doranda is made entirely from the Erbaluce grape, the classic indigenous white grape variety of Northern Piemonte. The Sella Doranda elegantly expresses the character of the Doranda grape variety, the deep color of honey with typical perfumes that range from almond to mandarin, wild flowers, and a quality between sappiness and minerality. Grown at very low yields in soils known for the production of structured red wines, this Erbaluce expresses a power and richness rare for the variety, in part because the winemaker allowed two days of contact between skins and juice before fermentation. Serve chilled.

Pavia

2009 Barbera d'Asti "Blina"

Brico Blina, the name of the vineyard, is a direct, straightforward rendition of the Barbera grape. Fresh acidity and berry flavors are the hallmarks of Barbera, but low vineyard yields and old vines give this wine depth and concentration, too. Aged in stainless steel tanks, the Blina is bright red in color with a violet rim and shows aromas of red berries with mineral notes. The palate is classic Barbera with bright raspberry and cranberry flavors and a long finish. Serve at cool room temperature.

WINEMAKER SERIES

Ettore Germano

2008 Dolcetto d'Alba "Pra di Po"

The Germano 2008 Dolcetto is inky purple with flavors to match. It's all blueberry and flowers on the nose and the palate, full bodied but very smooth. This is a classic Dolcetto, maybe an acquired taste outside of Piemonte where it's a favorite and one of the three traditional red wines of the region. Pair it with deeply flavored foods, like grilled red lamb and beef and sauces with dried mushrooms, black olives, garlic, and tomatoes. If you drink enough of Dolcetto, it'll eventually transport you to Piemonte. This is not a wine for a dinner salad.

Tenute Sella

2007 Nebbiolo "Casteltorto"

The 2007 Casteltorto is a blend of 60% Nebbiolo, 35% Croatina, and 5% Vespolina, which reflect the vine composition of the vineyard. Aged for 20 months in large oak casks, the wine is fruity and smooth, in part because of the contribution of Croatina, which tames the noble Nebbiolo. Casteltorto is a newer wine from Sella and is made from more recently planted estate vineyards at Villa del Bosco in the Bramaterra zone. Serve at cool room temperature.

WINERIES from previous page

barecco with tannins that are perfectly incorporated even when young. Lessona has been for decades a rare appellation, owned almost entirely by one producer, Sella. Historically, such situations are official recognition of the history of the estate. In the old vineyards of northern Piemonte, Nebbiolo is never planted by itself. It is always found with some rows of Vespolina, Croatina, or Uva Rara. For this reason, Sella wines from Lessona and Bramaterra consist of a majority of Nebbiolo with a small percentage of these other traditional local varieties. The Gambera Rosso wine rating board has given the prestigious Tre Bicchieri award to Sella wines for multiple vintages, especially for the Lessona

Omaggio a Quintino, the Lessona S. Sebastiano allo Zoppo, and the Bramaterra I Porfidi

Agostino Pavia & Figli

The Asti and Monferrato areas of Piemonte, east of the Barolo zone, are Barbera country. Although grown elsewhere in Italy and increasingly here in California, Barbera is indigenous to this region and finds its best expressions there, ranging from bright, raspberry flavors when aged in stainless steel, to darker, more substantial examples when aged in small French oak barrels. Agostino Pavia and his sons Giuseppe and Mauro make both styles of Barbera from two different single vineyards, less than five thousand cases in all.

WINES OF THE MONTH

COLLECTOR SERIES

2003 Bramattera "I Porfidi"

Gambero Rosso gave this wine its highest *Tre Becchi* award. Sella's 2003 Bramattera "I Porfidi" is 70% Nebbiolo, 20% Croatina, and 10% Vespolina, a classic blend of the Bramattera zone. Aged for 24 months in oak casks and 12 months in smaller barrels, the wine reflects this oak aging with a hint of vanilla and softer tannins without weighing down the aroma and flavor of the wine. The wine is made from 40 year-old vineyards at the historic Villa del Bosco, located in the heart of the Bramattera area from which the appellation takes its name. The soils there are mostly grey-brown porphyry, which gives the wines intensely ferrous and spicy aromas and flavors along with succulent fruit in favorable weather. Serve at cool room temperature.

Errore Germano

2007 Barolo Serralunga

Barolo, the noble wine of Piemonte, is 100% Nebbiolo from vineyards in the Barolo appellation, which is divided into six main zones, Serralunga being one of them. The wine is always structured with acid and tannins that allow it to occupy cellars for many years. The 2007 vintage was warmer, so the wine fully displays the classic aspects of Nebbiolo from Barolo, medium garnet color and distinctive aromas of red currants, strawberry, licorice, and violets. Pair with substantial meat dishes and aged cheeses.

Tenuta Sella



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Winemaker Series:

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REGION OF THE MONTH



PIEMONTE



Almost half of Piemonte, which means “foot of the mountain,” lies in the great arc of the Alps and the Apennines, from which the Po River flows east through its broad valley to the Adriatic. Bordering Switzerland and France, Piemonte and the smaller Valle d’Aosta region to the north were part of the French-speaking principality of Savoy between the 11th and 18th Centuries and played a key role in the Risorgimento, the movement that united Italy under a Savoy king in 1859. Famous ski resorts and the wild Parco Nazionale del Gran Paradiso draw visitors to the majestic mountains in the north, while in the south, vine covered hills around Barolo and vast fields of grain and rice in the Po valley continue a rich agricultural tradition. Torino, the region’s capital, is a crowded industrial city and home to the Fiat car company, but it also offers splendid Baroque civic buildings, palazzi, and museums, one of which is world renowned for its Egyptian collection gathered during the Napoleonic Wars.

The ancient Liguri tribes who dominated the region probably first cultivated the wild vines of the Apennines, but they learned wine making from the Greeks about 600 BC. The Celtic Taurini, who gave their

name to Torino, also grew vines in the region. Although the Romans planted vines, they didn’t favor the wines. Finally in the 19th Century, the wines of Piemonte gained distinction when the Savoy and others began to use French methods.

Piemonte has 52 DOC and DOCG zones, more than any other region. Most vineyards are located in two major areas, in the Langhe and Monferrato hills, which are connected to the Apennines in the southeast and in the foothills of the Alps to the north between Lake Maggiore and Valle d’Aosta. In the Langhe hills above the town of Alba are the vineyards of Barolo, one of Italy’s most prestigious wines, “the king of wines and the wine of kings,” although some think that Barbaresco is its equal. The noble Nebbiolo vine produces both wines as well as Gattinara. Barbera and Dolcetto are popular full-flavored reds, while Freisa, Grignolino, and Brachetto are popular pale, fruity varieties often made as bubbly wines.

Whites are equally prominent, the first being Asti Spumante from Moscato d’Asti, the nation’s second DOCG in volume after Chianti and the world’s second sparkling wine after Champagne. Among still whites, Gavi from the Cortese grape has emerged as one of Italy’s most coveted wines, and Arneis is attracting increasing attention.

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