



Winemaker: P and Antonella Lequio  
Generation: 4th



# TRE DONNE

## Dolcetto d'Alba DOC Donna Viola

Grown on the family's hill in Neive, and flanking their Nebbiolo on either side, these 20-35 year-old Dolcetto vines get just as much love and attention as those devoted to their cru Barbaresco. While often viewed as an everyday wine, it was the lifelong favorite of Alessandro Lequio, father to Daniela, Rosanna, and Antonella (the Tre Donne), and they continue to make it just the way he liked it - clean, clear-headed, and perfect with the midday meal! Just 500 cases produced.

### 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** Dark ruby
- Nose** Cherry, forest berries, violets, and a hint of dark earth
- Palate** Fresh and fruity, with medium tannins
- Finish** Clean and food-friendly



### VINEYARD & VINIFICATION

- Vineyard Location** Dolcetto d'Alba DOC, Piedmont
- Vineyard Size** 1 ha
- Varietals List** 100% Dolcetto
- 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** 200-270 m
- Soils** Calcareous clay
- Maturation Summary** In neutral barrels for 2 months and bottled for 6 months
- Alcohol** 13.5 %
- Acidity** 5.9 g/liter
- Residual Sugar** 2.7 g/liter
- Annual Production** 6,000 bottles



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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.

### DOLCETTO D'ALBA DOC

This DOC encompasses the Langhe hills east of Tarano, around Alba, and also includes 25 communes in the provinces of Cuneo, Coazzolo, and Asti. As with the Barbera d'Alba designation, vineyards can also overlap those of Barolo and Barbaresco. Wines in the DOC are made from 100% Dolcetto and (Superiore aside) are not usually aged for any length of time. Compared to the other 6 DOCs which focus on Dolcetto, those from Alba tend to have more floral characteristics (ie lavender and violet), in addition to its typical, bright, black cherry fruit.

While enjoyed as a dependable, everyday wine in Piedmont, in terms of exports Dolcetto generally takes a back seat to both Nebbiolo and Barbera. It plays an important role in the vineyards, however, balancing out the crops: Nebbiolo is the most difficult of the 3 grapes to ripen, and commands the warmest, sunniest places in the vineyard. Barbera doesn't need quite as much heat or light, but the easy-going Dolcetto will ripen just about anywhere, so growers often plant it in the toughest, north-facing locations. The varietal tends to thrive on slopes with sandy, calcareous and tufa-rich soils. The name Dolcetto means "little sweet one" which is a bit of a misnomer because the Dolcetto is neither sweet nor small-berried. Instead, the name refers to its place in the harvesting lineup: the so-called "baby of the family", this low acid, mildly tannic grape is the first red to be harvested after the whites.



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