Winemaker: Nadia Curto
Generation: 2nd

Curto

Arborina Barolo DOCG

"Arborina" is a true flagship for Nadia Curto, epitomizing her layered, neo-classical style. Her four-hectare estate is located in the hamlet of Annunziata (part of La Morra) in the heart of the Barolo DOCG. A niece to the legendary Elio Altare, Nadia is her own enologist and generally tilts modern, while still following her father's organic approach in the vineyard. This single cru offering is intentionally bold and fruit forward, with the concurrent structure that only comes from the best Barolo.

WINEMAKER BIOGRAPHY

To put it mildly, Nadia Curto is "all in". Leading the charge for women winemakers in Piedmont, Nadia took her enological smarts and expanded the family's business from grower to producer. Today, she channels all her expertise into tiers of cru Barolo that are remarkably nuanced and possess a true feminine side.

ENOLOGIST

Nadia Curto

TASTING NOTES

Color	Bright garnet red
Nose	Dark fruit and earthy spice, with hints of rose petal, cocoa, balsamic and truffle
Palate	Full-bodied, yet smooth and elegant, with fine tannins
Finish	Long and rewarding

VINEYARD & VINIFICATION

Vineyard Location	Barolo DOCG, Piedmont
Vineyard Size	1.5 ha
Varietals List	100% Nebbiolo
Farming Practices	Organic (non-certified), including dry-farmed; grapes are picked by hand and wines are unclarified and unfiltered
Elevation	270-300 m
Soils	Marneous (clay)
Maturation Summary	In small French barrels for 24 months and bottled for 12 months
Alcohol	15.5 %
Acidity	5.8 g/liter
Residual Sugar	1.4 g/liter
Annual Production	5,000 bottles

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CURTO

When Nadia Curto urged her father, Marco, to bottle wine with their family name, he resisted. Although proud of his fruit, he knew that Barolo has always been one of the most difficult wines in the world to perfect. It's mercurial and moody; the requisite Nebbiolo grapes are thin-skinned and tannic, and wines take years to develop. Marco was getting older, and this change was an Everest to him... but Nadia persisted. She worked long, hard days in the Piemontese sun, talking to her father and ultimately earning his respect. When her uncle, the legendary Barolo producer Elio Altare, invited her to work for him, she leapt at the chance. With a new library of knowledge at her fingertips, Nadia came away enlightened, and Marco finally embraced her vision. Today, father and daughter continue to work side by side, with Marco overseeing the fields and Nadia the winemaking. Now, she says with a smile, "we have a fantastic equilibrio".

Hailing from the town of La Morra, known for its elegant reds, Curto's wines cut a razor's edge between traditional and modern. Their roots are classic, but most vintages are quite approachable and can be enjoyed sooner than many other Baroli. They have great structure, yes, but also stunning aromatics and sophisticated, earthy layers. Behind this overall style is Nadia's simultaneous devotion to the past and the present. Under Elio Altare's guidance, for example, she learned how to make wine organically, joining the 'green experience' movement in Piedmont and even getting rid of traditional filtering by using little-known methods of thermo-shock. In a nod to the region's changing climate, she also uses a short rotary fermentation (considered modern and a bit controversial!) to soften her tannins and deliberately showcase the fruit. No one can deny the results of this approach are stunning: powerful Barolo with a palate that lingers for days and a marked yin-yang balance.

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.

BAROLO DOCG

Historically known as "the wine of the King and the King of wines", Barolo hails from Nebbiolo vineyards located on the southern side of the Langhe. The designation overlaps 11 villages overall, however only vineyards on southern facing slopes enjoy DOCG status. While differences run wide from one hill to the next, Baroli from the western villages of La Morra and Barolo tend to be a bit lighter and more open than those of Castiglione Falletto, Monforte d'Alba and Serralunga d'Alba to the east and north.

Since the late 19th century, efforts have been made to identify which Barolo vineyards produce the highest quality wine. Inspired by the prestige of Burgundy's Grand Crus, producers began separating their holdings into individual lots and labeling the wines with these single vineyards. In 2010, the Barolo Consorzio introduced the Menzioni Geografiche Aggiuntive (additional geographic mentions), or MeGA subzones for short. 181 sites were officially recognized, ergo the term Vigna (Italian for vineyard) can now be used on labels if the vineyard lies within an approved micro-zone.

Although it's geographically close to the Barbaresco DOCG, Barolo enjoys a different meso-climate that can yield very different wines. Local laws require extremely low yields, and Barolo must be aged for a total of 38 months, including 18 in the barrel. Riservas, in turn, are aged for a minimum of 5 combined years.