



Winemaker: Federico Stella
Generation: 4th



PODERI ELIA

Barbaresco Serracapelli DOCG

From the heart of the Langhe comes this stunningly elegant, single cru Barbaresco from Poderi Elia. The Stella family has been making wine in the town of Neive since 1890, but only recently have they begun to garner international attention. Tasting the wine today, it is easy to understand why. The spectacular bouquet offers tones of red currant and Morello cherry layered over toasty oak; the structure is marble-solid, with fine-grained tannins that perfectly compliment the powerful Nebbiolo fruit.

WINEMAKER BIOGRAPHY

Federico Stella is one of those pensive, unflagging producers who has contributed to Piedmont's sterling reputation for wine. Everything he creates is the result of meticulous thought and patience, with his opus of Barbaresco slowly building over time.

ENOLOGIST

Federico Stella



TASTING NOTES

- Color** Deep garnet
- Nose** Dark cherry, balsamic, exotic spice
- Palate** Full-bodied, with chewy tannins and a long finish
- Finish** Firm, complex, long finish



VINEYARD & VINIFICATION

- Vineyard Location** Barbaresco DOCG, Piedmont
- Vineyard Size** 1 ha
- Varietals List** 100% Nebbiolo
- Farming Practices** Sustainably farmed, including dry-farmed; grapes picked by hand
- Elevation** 450 m
- Soils** White tufo (clay) and sand
- Maturation Summary** Bottled for 10-12 months
- Alcohol** 14.0 %
- Acidity** 6.1 g/liter
- Residual Sugar** 3 g/liter
- Annual Production** 3,600 bottles



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PODERI ELIA

Simply put, winemaker Federico Stella is a man with an inner drum. Meticulous beyond belief in the cellar, this talented Barbaresco producer possesses an uncanny instinct for balancing taut structure with smooth tannins and remarkable accessibility. Respectful of Piemontese varietals, but unrelenting in his desire to improve, Stella experimented with over 30 combinations of oak before settling on his cooperage formula (an incredible expense for a small estate)! Consistently, he takes all of his wines right up to the edge of modernity, but then masterfully hovers there, never once crossing the line nor stumbling. Moreover, the partial use of French oak (for most of his reds) aside, Federico employs highly traditional methods - his wines, for example, are neither filtered nor clarified.

Sitting down to taste wine at the family's dinner table, we also get to see the patience and love Federico shows his family. While affable, he always remains serious while discussing his vision. (Indeed, even when the subject of conversation drifts away from Poderi Elia, one always has the distinct impression that, privately, Federico is still thinking about his wine.) With 9 hectares of vines all managed by hand, no corners are cut - yields remain at one bottle per plant regardless of price point. Doubtless, his great grandfather - who founded the estate in 1890 - would be enormously proud.

One of just four villages that comprise the Barbaresco zone, Neive sits perched in the subalpine hills just NE of Alba and some 90 minutes north of the sea. Also, it lies within the Langhe Hills - famous for their Nebbiolo - in the province of Cuneo (which also includes the Alba and Barolo growing zones). Unusually, Neive itself also has some overlap with the Asti designation, which is why we sometimes see Barbara d'Alba or Barbaresco producers making Moscato d'Asti on the same, single estate. Like much of Italy's north, this entire area once lay under the sea, and its "blue tufo" (the shell-strewn, calcareous clay that promotes big tannins and fierce acidity) still bears a name that recognizes its prehistoric, oceanic beginnings.

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.

BARBARESCO DOCG

While Nebbiolo in the Langhe can change markedly from one micro-terroir to the next, the regulations governing Barbaresco and Barolo, the so-called Queen and King of Piedmont, are quite similar at their core. Like its counterpart, Barbaresco must be crafted from 100% Nebbiolo grown on south-facing slopes. Likewise, both renditions of Piedmont's noble grape rely upon a spine of prominent, vertical tannins and acidity to supply their largesse. That established, the hills of Barbaresco do tend to be gentler, and their meso-climate slightly more Mediterranean, with smaller diurnal shifts. This can result in thinner skins and earlier ripening of fruit. In turn, Barbaresco may be slightly less tannic and approachable at an earlier age.

Located on the right-hand side of the Tanaro river and extending from NE of Alba to the communes of Barbaresco, Neive and Treiso, the Barbaresco DOCG also has a bit more uniformity in its soil type. Similar to La Morra and Barolo proper, vines are grown in marl high in calcium carbonates, lending to their huge acidic backbone. Like Barolo, the Barbaresco DOC was created in 1966, then elevated to DOCG in 1980. The size of the zone is much smaller, however, with 578 hectares compared to Barolo's 1428. Regulations require a minimum alcohol content of 12.5 percent (vs. Barolo's 13%) and 26 months of aging, including 9 in the barrel (vs. 38 and 18 months for Barolo).