



Winemaker: Federico Stella
Generation: 4th



PODERI ELIA

Dolcetto d'Alba DOC

From Barbaresco producer Federico Stella comes this truly wonderful, old-fashioned Dolcetto. Clean, stinging rhubarb, pleasant toastiness, and bright red fruits mingle with just a touch of sweet cigar smokiness. Very smooth with "cashmere" tannins. A perfect example of the classic Piemontese style in an everyday, artisanal wine.

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 Ruby red with purple highlights
Nose Dark cherry and red plum
Palate Fresh, young tannins with a bright, balanced acidity
Finish Easy drinking, smooth, medium finish



VINEYARD & VINIFICATION

Vineyard Location	Dolcetto d'Alba DOC, Piedmont
Vineyard Size	4 ha
Varietals List	100% Dolcetto
Farming Practices	Sustainably farmed, including dry-farmed; grapes picked by hand
Elevation	330 m
Soils	White tufo (clay) and sand
Maturation Summary	Bottled for 3 months
Alcohol	13.0 %
Acidity	5 g/liter
Residual Sugar	2 g/liter
Annual Production	15,600 bottles



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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.



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.