



Winemaker: Federico Stella
Generation: 4th



PODERI ELIA

Langhe Arneis DOC

Grown at 280 - 370 meters (high for the varietal), and picked by early morning light, this Arneis may strike you as particularly clean and alpine in style. 35 year-old vines ensure a quaffable, balanced acidity, and the wine has an almost Sauvignon-style freshness in the glass. Try with an herb-crusted pork chop, creamy, mountain cheeses, or anything with white truffles!

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 Straw yellow
Nose White alpine flowers and ripe pear
Palate Fresh, with good acidity
Finish Clean and balanced



VINEYARD & VINIFICATION

Vineyard Location Langhe Nebbiolo DOC, Piedmont
Vineyard Size 2 ha
Varietals List 100% Arneis
Farming Practices Sustainably farmed, including dry-farmed; grapes picked by hand
Elevation 280-370 m
Soils White tufo (clay) and sand
Maturation Summary Bottled for 1 month
Alcohol 13.0 %
Acidity 6 g/liter
Residual Sugar 4 g/liter
Annual Production 6,000 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.

LANGHE NEBBIOLO DOC

Large by Piemontese standards, this DOC was created in 1994 and includes a host of famous sub-regions including Barbaresco, Barbera d'Alba, Barolo, Dolcetto d'Alba, Nebbiolo d'Alba, and Roero. In fact, it canvasses 54 communes in the provinces of (mainly) Cuneo and Asti. Importantly, however, nearly 90% of the vineyards in Langhe qualify as DOC and DOCG! With this particular designation, varietal rules aren't as strict, so producers can offer a wide array of red, white and rosé wines. A few international varieties like Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay are even allowed, making the DOC attractive to winemakers looking to innovate. Similarly, winemakers may elect to use the Langhe DOC to lower the cost of a fine wine - or simply to have it stand out in a crowd. To include the varietal on a label, that wine must be verified at 85%.

Langhe - which is the plural of 'langa' in the local dialect, meaning a long, low-lying hill - is a subalpine area just a morning's drive away from the towering Alps. Slopes rise up to 600 meters and enjoy predominantly clay and marl soils. (Like much of this region, the area was prehistorically under water and the term 'blue tufo' is a nod to those oceanic beginnings.) Fog banks tend to roll in during early autumn, allowing high-acid, slow-ripeners like Nebbiolo the chance to reach their phenolic peaks.