



Winemaker: Various



## Barolo DOCG

With this classic, single estate Barolo from the province of Cuneo, Small Vineyards is proud to introduce the first in our new series of High-end Affordables. One-man show Giorgio Sandrone tends his immaculate, 7-hectare vineyard in the village of La Morra, where a bit of extra altitude lends to his old-fashioned style. Perched at 350 meters, his 35-50 year-old vines are now decidedly in their prime. Driven by its low yields and stem-to-stern display of earthy tannins, this DOCG is a structure-driven beauty, ready to accompany roasts out of the oven, mushroom risotto, and hearty, northern Italian staples like Osso Buco. Enjoy now or over the next 10 years!

### WINEMAKER BIOGRAPHY

For two decades, Small Vineyards has imported single estate, low-yield wines crafted by families and small independent growers. Just like our Gold Seal Discoveries, each Platinum Seal indicates a sustainably-farmed, terroir-driven wine that "tastes just like the place it's made".



### TASTING NOTES

- Color** Vibrant pie cherry with light garnet edge
- Nose** Dark cherry, bright plum, and rich earth with hints of tobacco and porcini
- Palate** Balanced, full-bodied and structure-driven, with dark fruit enveloped by earthy tannins
- Finish** Pleasant, lasting tannins born to go with rich comfort food



### VINEYARD & VINIFICATION

- Vineyard Location** Barolo DOCG, Piedmont
- Vineyard Size** 7 ha
- Varietals List** 100% Nebbiolo
- Farming Practices** Sustainable; dry-farmed; grapes picked by hand; native yeasts
- Elevation** 350 m
- Soils** Tortonian marl (calcareous)
- Maturation Summary** In neutral barrels for 36 months and bottled for 12 months
- Alcohol** 14.0 %



## 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.



## SMALL VINEYARDS BRAND

Two decades ago, when we first began renting cars and driving down the country back roads of Tuscany, our company's name said it all: Small Vineyards. Inspired by all the true blue, soil-to-bottle winemakers Europe had to offer, we played detective, seeking out the best, undiscovered producers in Italy. Today, we proudly use that same name to represent our portfolio of indigenous wines with a unique, small-batch story to share. For estates with their own labels, the Small Vineyards Gold Seal identifies bottles we've certified as low-yield, hand-harvested, earth-friendly, artisanal, and created by a family operated farm. Now, with our new Platinum Seal, we're taking the brand a step further, sourcing premium wines from independent growers with a fantastic cost-to-quality ratio and espousing those same basic tenets.

As anyone who knows us knows, the spirit behind each Small Vineyards bottle remains just as important as the technical details. We look for farmers with a multi-generational reverence for the land – folks who don't irrigate and would rather forego an entire vintage "rather than use man-made pesticides in our grandchildren's soil." Likewise, we partner with producers whose natural instincts lead them to low yields - ten times lower than those of a corporation, in fact, averaging just 1-1 ½ bottles per plant! To achieve this, vines are often grown low to the ground and pruned so they only have 5-6 clusters. Needless to say, green grapes and overripe fruit never make it past the sorting table - just the estate's *crème de la crème* fruit, always audited by hand. In the end, you can taste the results in every Small Vineyards glass: concentration, complexity, and a sense of terroir that in other circumstances would cost twice the price. Quality over quantity in all things – it's why we began seeking out small estates 20 years ago, and why this ethos remains at the core of our company today.