



## 2004 VINTAGE REPORT

### PUGLIA

#### The Vineyards of Milleuna

September 27, 2004



La Villa



Roger Dagorn, Dario Cavallo, Dino, and Jason Miller

We flew directly to Southern Italy this year to avoid risking another car break-in. We landed in Bari and drove directly to Lizzano, near Taranto to meet up with Dario Cavallo of Milleuna. We toured the vineyards and then their new offices, tasting room and Agrotourism rooms located right in the town square. We had dinner at the Osteria Vecchie Storie which was closed that day (Monday) but they opened the kitchen to cook us a private dinner of local specialties. At dinner we tasted their line of wines.

#### **'La Villa' Vineyard**

- 13-14 acres
- Mostly Primitivo, traditional albarello-style planting (small trees)
- Soil Composition: red soil, high in mineral content. Clay.
- Low yield: one grape cluster per shoot
- Vines 70 years old

- No chemical fertilization
- No irrigation
- Harvested September 4, 2004
- Near the Ionian sea (in the province of Taranto)

Conditions of the vineyard during the 2004 growing season: Hot days and cool nights, going back to a more typical climate/condition after 5 years of aberrant weather. A cool, wet spring was followed by an almost completely dry summer. Compared to 2003, this year was much milder and produced an enormous quantity of fruit on the vines. At least one green harvest, two in many vineyards, was necessary, at times eliminating as much as 60% of the crop. This vineyard produces the grapes that will become the powerful *Shahrazad* wine.

### **‘Bardoscia’ Vineyard**

- 17 acres
- Mostly Negroamaro, traditional albarello-style planting (small trees)
- Soil Composition: red soil, high in mineral content. Clay.
- Low yield: one grape cluster per shoot
- Vines 70 years old
- No chemical fertilization
- No irrigation
- Harvested September 4, 2004
- Near the Ionian sea (in the province of Taranto)

Conditions of the vineyard during the 2004 growing season: Hot days and cool nights, going back to a more typical climate/condition after 5 years of aberrant weather. A cool, wet spring was followed by an almost completely dry summer. Compared to 2003, this year was much milder and produced an enormous volume of fruit. At least one green harvest, two in many vineyards, was necessary, at times eliminating as much as 60% of the crop. 12 years ago, this vineyard suffered a ‘night harvest’: under a full moon, thieves entered the vineyard and stole 20 quintals of grapes (they had good taste)! Much of the harvest from this vineyard will become the *Shahryar*.

### **Tasting notes on new wines for future release:**

**Mantonero 2003:** 45% Primitivo, 25% Negroamaro, 15% Sangiovese, 15% Cabernet Sauvignon. Well made, rich, medium- to full-bodied. Nice fruit on the palate, with almonds and figs.

**Bacmione 2001:** 100% Primitivo. From 45-year old vines. 42% extract. 5.6% Acidity. Excellent aromas of molasses and licorice. Round, well-made.

**Maviglia 2003:** 100% Viogner. 45% remained in stainless steel and the rest was transferred to *barrique* for the malolactic fermentation. It remained in *barrique* for 9 months and then after it was assembled, it remained in the bottle for 9 months before its release. 5.1% acidity. Rich, powerful white wine with vanilla sensations. 15.5% alcohol. Production: 300cases (6 bottles per case).

# BASILICATA

## The Vineyards of Paternoster

September 28, 2004



Rotondo vineyard and its namesake Villa Rotondo



100 year old Aglianico vine at Paternoster

We arrived into Barile late at night after dinner in Lizzano. The next day we met with Vito Paternoster and we got to experience true Italian driving as he showed us each of his vineyards. Paternoster is the oldest winery in Barile at the foot of Mt. Vulture. They use a traditional style of vinification, even using some of the cement tanks in their old cellar from the 1960's that are coming back into style. Historically they would leave the Aglianico grapes to macerate for 20 days, because the Aglianico del Vulture is such a powerful varietal, but recently that have been leaving the must on the skins for only 10-12 days, to develop a more elegant wine. They use old Slavonian oak casks for the *Synthesi* and Don Anselmo (at 50%) and *barrique* for Rotondo. During our visit we had the opportunity to see the construction of the new cantina and tasting room they are building at the Rotondo vineyard. It is an enormous and beautiful space that should be ready in March 2005.

### **'Rotondo' Vineyard**

- 15 acres total
- 100% Aglianico, 160/180cm distance from vine to vine.
- Soil Composition: Volcanic, tuffo
- Low yield
- No chemical fertilization
- No irrigation
- Harvested October 25, 2004

Conditions of the vineyard during the 2004 growing season: Hot days and cool nights, going back to a more typical climate/condition after 5 years of aberrant weather. A cool, wet spring was followed by an almost completely dry summer. Compared to 2003, this year was much milder and produced an enormous volume of fruit. At least one green harvest, two in many

vineyards, was necessary. Five acres in the center of the property contain 20-year old vines that currently are used for the entire *Rotondo* production. Three years ago they replanted the surrounding 10 acres with new clones that will be used for the *Rotondo* in another 2 years.

### **‘Macarico’ vineyard**

- 7 acre
- 100% Aglianico del Vulture
- Soil Composition: mostly volcanic in origin
- Low yield.
- Vines 30 years old
- Traditional-style planting
- No chemical fertilization
- No irrigation
- Harvested early November, 2004

The grapes from this vineyard are used for their most traditional-style Aglianico, the *Don Anselmo*.

### **Tasting notes on new wines for future release:**

**Synthesi 2002:** Still had not been bottled when we tasted it. Big aromas of dried raspberries and chestnuts. Round yet dry, needs a little time to assemble, quite big. 2002 did not produce any *Rotondo* so the grapes went into making a big *Synthesi*.

**Rotondo 2003:** Barrel sample. Not bottled yet. Cloves, cinnamon, very spicy. Round with a full structure, complex, heavy and rich.

**Don Anselmo 2000:** Elegant aromas, with sensations of almond and hazelnuts. Well-balanced with high tannin level, rich, full and complex with a long finish.

# CAMPANIA

## The Vineyards of Monte Pugliano

September 28, 2004



Lunch in the Cantina



Jason, Roger, Dino, Fernando, Cesare, and Rosanna

Cantine Monte Pugliano has a total of 61 acres that they purchased about 5 years ago from a bankrupt cooperative. The coop was corrupt and losing money for many years and they converted many of the vineyards into olive groves in an effort to recuperate funds. Now Monte Pugliano has the arduous and costly task of replanting most of these vineyards. However, many of these vineyards are still viable and they are used to make their selection of wines.

### Aurum Fiano Vineyards

- 4.5 acres
- 30 year old Fiano vines
- Soil Composition: Marn, clay, limestone with high levels of iron, potassium, magnesium.
- No chemical fertilization
- No irrigation
- Harvested late September/early October, 2004

Conditions of the vineyard during the 2004 growing season: Hot days and cool nights, going back to a more typical climate/condition after 5 years of aberrant weather. A cool, wet spring was followed by an almost completely dry summer. Compared to 2003, this year was much milder and produced an enormous quantity of fruit on the vines. At least one green harvest was necessary.

## **Sanacore vineyard**

- 4.5 acres
- 32 year old vines; Mostly Aglianico, some Barbera and Sangiovese
- Soil Composition: Marn, clay, limestone with high levels of iron, potassium, magnesium.
- No chemical fertilization
- No irrigation
- Harvested late September/early October, 2004

### **Tasting notes on future releases:**

**Sanacore 2003:** 100% Aglianico, very nutty aromas, with long finish.

## **The Vineyards of De Conciliis**

September 28, 2004



New Aglianico vineyard at dusk



Fiano at Sunset

Bruno was in the midst of harvesting his new Cabernet Sauvignon vineyard when we arrived. The Cabernet Sauvignon is a new project for Bruno that he started two years ago. A hotel-owner neighbor, a friend of Bruno's, owns a small 5 acre plot planted with Cabernet Sauvignon. Normally he sells the grapes in bulk to several winemakers in the region. Unfortunately, 2002 was a very difficult year and all of his buyers fell through and so he turned to Bruno for help. Bruno said that he would vinify the wine for him and then he could use it as the house label for his hotel. His first trials with the Cabernet proved so successful however that Bruno decided to keep the wine to sell himself and now continues to buy the harvest each year. 2003 and 2004 should be even better since he himself has taken to caring for the vineyards as well. This new wine is called Si:Kjube.

## Cilento Vineyards

- 23 acres
- Mostly Aglianico
- Soil Composition: Argil and sandy resulting in wines with calcium and marn.
- 20% will be dried, Amarone style
- No chemical fertilization
- No irrigation
- Piedirosso clones also grown here
- Late harvest, November, 2004 for the Aglianico

Conditions of the vineyard during the 2004 growing season: Hot days and cool nights, going back to a more typical climate/condition after 5 years of aberrant weather. Compared to 2003, this year was much milder and produced an enormous crop. At least one green harvest, two in many vineyards, was necessary. This vineyard, planted in 1971, faces southwest towards the Mediterranean Sea. Here we find the grapes headed for De Conciliis' flagship, *Zero*.



Dead vine in Naima Vineyard (contracted virus)

## Cannetello + Destri Vineyards

- 18 acres
- Naima vineyard + Donnaluna Fiano and Donnaluna Aglianico
- Soil Composition: sandy and calcareous
- Naima vines are over 32 years old
- No irrigation
- No chemical fertilization
- Fiano harvested September 20, 2004, Perella Fiano harvested October 10, 2004
- Aglianico harvested in early November, 2004

Conditions were the same as for the Cilento vineyards. The bottom part of the vineyard hosts highly productive Fiano vines. These were harvested just prior to our arrival. Here we find the grapes headed for De Conciliis' *Donnaluna*; the vines for the *Donnaluna* were planted in 1987. They had a few days of rain earlier in the season so the grapes had been a little diluted, but with

time spent in the sun, the juice became concentrated and therefore they harvested later than usual. The Perella in particular was harvested late as it needs more time to mature since it is a bigger wine with a higher acidity and pH.

Also planted in this vineyard: Piedirosso and Aglianicone, (Aglianicone is a subclone of Aglianico). We also find the grapes for Bruno's renowned *Naima* in this vineyard. These grapes boast a high sugar content causing a higher level of tartaric acid. The soil composition in this part of the vineyard is (galestro) and (marl). These vines are very old and they lose many plants to disease. One vine had gotten a virus and within a month was dead (see picture above). It's very risky working with old vines.

### **Tasting notes on future releases:**

**Naima 2003:** Historical blend of Naima. Will be bottled in Spring of 2005. Aromas of figs, dried strawberries, and walnuts. 30% new *barrique*, 70% old. Lots of dry extract (44 plus). 16% Alcohol, Acidity at 6. Perhaps the best Naima ever produced. Production: 1000 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Zero 2003:** Outstanding. Aromas of dried apricots and hazelnuts. Big structure with tons of fruit and high tannin. Dry yet concentrated with a long finish. Again, it demonstrates great development of the grapes and unique style of winemaking. Production: 300cases (6 bottles per case).

**Antece 2003:** Not bottled yet. New white wine for Bruno. Fiano with a long maceration period of 7 days. From Vigneto Cannetello. Aromas of peach, apricot, and hazelnuts with hints of oregano. Elegant fruit on the palate, well-balanced with a long finish. Needs time to drink. Won't be released until at least Autumn 2005. Production: 333 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Si:Kjube 2002:** 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. A new wine for Bruno. Aged in *barrique*. Classical Cabernet aromas, with currants and hazelnut. On the palate, very typical of Cabernet, well-balanced with a long finish. Production: 330 cases.

**Donnaluna Fiano 2004:** First juice. Will have high alcohol level of 14%. Tropical aromas, round, full and complex.



# TOSCANA

## CHIANTI CLASSICO

### SAN CASCIANO VAL DI PESA

September 29, 2004

#### The Vineyards of La Sala



Dino with Laura Baronti

We left Campania in the late morning and arrived in Tuscany in the late afternoon. The La Sala winery is reached via dirt roads.

#### Campo all'Albero and other La Sala Vineyards

- 38 acres (65% new vines, 35% vines averaging 15 to 25 years old, replanting more each year)
- 70% Sangiovese, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot
- Merlot was harvested on September 13, Sangiovese on September 27 and Cabernet Sauvignon on October 5, 2004
- Soil Composition: Rocky, calcareous and chalky
- 2003 production: 90 tons
- No irrigation
- No chemical fertilization

Every year, new vines are planted at La Sala. They generally pull out the 20-30 year old vines because they are from clones that were selected for quantity not quality, so each year they are replanting better clones throughout the property. This year they planted 3.7 acres of Sangiovese; we examined their growth and admired their relation with the soil and their overall excellence.

Last year they discovered a natural lake beneath the vineyards and this provides a natural irrigation to the plants, even during impossibly dry years like 2003. Therefore there is a consistency in the La Sala wines that one does not find elsewhere. 2004 was a much milder year than 2003 and they had to do vegetative reduction in order to assure the grapes were ripe, even considering the late harvest dates. The winemaker, Gabriella Tani, sorted the varietals manually, and is predicting an exceptional vintage in 2004 due to the care taken in the vineyards throughout the growing season. The winery also grows a small amount of Trebbiano and Malvasia Bianca to make Vin Santo.

### **Tasting notes on future releases:**

**Chianti Classico Riserva 2001:** Excellent. Aromas of cherries and cloves. Full and complex, well-balanced with great finish and much potential. We foresee this wine having an exceptional future.

**Chianti Classico 2002:** Aromas of plums and cherry. Medium-to full-bodied and delicate. Very good for an off year.

**Campo all'Albero 2001** (85% Cabernet Sauvignon – 15% Sangiovese): Very good. Aromas of currants, tobacco, with tons of berries. Well-balanced, with a full body. Complex.

**Vin Santo 1998** (Malvasia-Trebbiano): Aromas of cherries and orange peel. Complex on the palate with hints of dried fruit. A sweet, dry finish. Production: 250 cases (6 bottles per case).

## **SAN GIMIGNANO**

### **The Vineyards of Baroncini**

September 29, 2004



Vermentino immediately after harvest

This year, with all of the additional wineries on our itinerary, we did not have time to visit any of the Baroncini vineyards. Instead, we had a large dinner of lentichie, pasta with a simple tomato sauce and a beautiful bistecca fiorentina and tasted their entire line of wines. We have included the individual vineyard information below, just for reference. In general, the conditions for 2004 for the vineyards was consistent with what we saw all over Italy: hot days and cool nights, going back to a more typical climate/condition after 5 years of aberrant weather. A cool, wet spring was followed by an almost completely dry summer. Compared to 2003, this year was much milder and produced an enormous quantity of fruit on the vines. At least one green harvest was necessary in order to ensure appropriate ripeness of all of the elements and a high enough alcohol content in the wines.

**Poggio il Castellare** (A tiny Brunello estate in the heart of Castelnuovo dell'Abate)

- 3 acres of Brunello, 12,000 plants per acre
- Vines are 20 to 30 years old and have a very thick bark
- Soil Composition: chalk and marl with a high component of iron.
- No irrigation
- No chemical fertilization

**Tasting notes on future releases:**

**Rosso di Montalcino 2002:** Very interesting quality for a Sangiovese. Complex for an off year.

**Brunello di Montalcino 1999:** Very good. Intense yet elegant. Production: 430 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Tenuta Il Faggeto**

- 11 acres of Prugnolo Gentile, Canaiolo and Mammolo.
- Vines are 15 to 25 years old
- Soil Composition: clay calcareous mixed with rocks
- No irrigation
- No chemical fertilization

**Tasting notes on future releases:**

**Sangiovese 'Gaudenzia' 2003:** The name Gaudenzia means happiness. Aromas of berries and raspberries. Medium- to full-bodied and round. Very good. Total production: 4,000 cases.

**Vino Nobile di Montepulciano 2001:** Rich, complex and well made. Very good. Production: 1,900 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Vino Nobile di Montepulciano 2002:** Aromas of cherries and blackberries. On the palate the wine is delicate and full-structured. You can feel the age of the vines in the wine. Good finish. Production: 800 cases (12 bottles per case).

## **Fattoria Sovestro**

- 11 acres of Vernaccia and Trebbiano
- Vines are 15 to 25 years old
- Soil Composition: chalky and calcareous
- 700 feet above sea level
- No irrigation
- No chemical fertilization

### **Tasting notes on future releases:**

**La Faina 2002** (Trebbiano 100% IGT) 100% stainless steel for 6 months followed by 1 year in the bottle. Fine, dusty. Full-bodied, complex, with a long finish. The grapes for the 2002 vintage were harvested at the end of October. Production: 1000 cases (12 bottles per case).

## **Tenuta Il Puntone**

Tenuta Il Puntone is in Scansano, about 30 kilometers from San Gimignano. The Morellino wines come from this area.

- 4 acres of Sangiovese Grosso, Vermentino, Ansonica, Alicante, and Ciliegolo
- Vines are 5 to 12 years old
- 2003 production: 1.5 tons per acre
- Soil Composition: sandy mixed with pebbles
- 800 feet above sea level
- No irrigation
- No chemical fertilization

### **Tasting notes on future releases:**

**Vermentino Il Puntone 2003:** (90% Vermentino, 10% Ansonica) Aromas of citrus, oranges. Well-balanced, rich, with tons of rich minerals. Medium- to full-bodied. Production: 7,500 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Morellino di Scansano 2003:** Aromas of cloves and tobacco. Full-bodied, complex with a long finish. Production: 15,00 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Morellino di Scansano Riserva 2001:** Aromas of figs and plums and spice. On the palate, the wine has good balance, and a ripe, excellent finish. Production: 450 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Querciaia 2001:** Spicy aromas, very good. Round.

# CHIANTI COLLI SENESI

## SOVICILLE

September 30, 2004



Cabernet Sauvignon (notice the red terroir)



Rimontaggio of the Merlot (punch down?)

### The Vineyards of Tenuta di Trecciano

- 22 acres of Sangiovese, 8 acres of Cabernet Sauvignon , 4 acres of Merlot and 2 acres of Syrah
- Sangiovese plants are 9 years old, Cabernet Sauvignon 14 years old or less.
- Merlot harvested on September 20, Sangiovese on October 5, Cabernet third week of October, 2004
- Soil Composition: argil, mixed with rocks and clay with a high component of iron. The soil is the red color typical of the area -- terra di Siena
- No irrigation
- No chemical fertilization

Tenuta di Trecciano is located in Sovicille, a small town outside of Siena, in the heart of the Chianti Colli Senesi region. The 2004 vintage was a challenging vintage. The start of the vegetative cycle was delayed due to weather conditions and then a general tendency toward excessive production due to the continuous alteration between sunny and rainy periods during the spring and summer seasons. They drastically reduced the volume of the crop with two green harvests in order to ensure the grapes achieved their ideal ripeness with mature phenolic components, stable colors of good intensity and ripe tannins. The grapes also demonstrated a higher acidity, in comparison to that of recent years and should allow for good aging and refining potential. Also, an intense wind storm in the area destroyed several nearby wineries, but fortunately spared Trecciano.

## **Tasting notes on future releases:**

**Chianti Colli Senesi Riserva 2001:** Excellent. Aroma of violets and tar. On the palate the wine has a beautiful body, round, smooth with good balance and a complex, long finish. Production: 1,500 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Cabernet Sauvignon 2002:** Rich, full structure. Very well made. Excellent for 2002. Production: 300 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Campacci 2003** (50% Merlot-50% Sangiovese): Had just been bottled. Rich aromas of cloves, spices, cherry. Full-bodied and round. Still to develop, will be excellent. Production: 500 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Daniello 2001** (50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 50% Sangiovese): Aromas of wild berries. Good balance with a very long finish. Production: 1,000 cases (12 bottles per case).

## **MONTALCINO**

September 30, 2004

We left Trecciano at noon to head to Montalcino to meet up with the Brunello boys. We had lunch at Collemattoni with Marcello Bucci of Collemattoni and Fabio Giannetti of La Fornace and tasted both of their Sangiovese lines together.

### **The Collemattoni Vineyards** (*in Sant'Angelo in Colle*)

- 15 acres of Sangiovese
- Soil composition: calcareous, rocky, marn and silice.
- New plantings: 80cm x 150cm
- Harvested October 1, 2004
- No irrigation
- No chemical fertilization

The grapes were harvested the day after our visit. All the harvesting is done manually. This vineyard, planted in 1983, faces southeast. Each year Marcello Bucci, owner and winemaker, is replanting some of the vineyard and selecting for clones with smaller grape size so there is more surface area of skin per grape and he can therefore extract for color and intensity in his wines. Conditions during the 2004 growing season: hot days and cool nights, going back to a more typical climate/condition after 5 years of aberrant weather. A cool, wet spring was followed by an almost completely dry summer, with a few rain showers. Compared to 2003, this year was much milder and vegetative production was high. At least one green harvest was necessary in order to achieve ideal ripeness.

### **Tasting notes on future releases:**

**2002 Rosso di Montalcino:** Smokey aromas of dried meat, scents of leather and tobacco, medium- to full-bodied with layers of creamy sausage. Long finish. Production: 900 cases (12 bottles per case).

**1998 Brunello di Montalcino Riserva:** Outstanding. Aromas of black cherries and figs. On the palate the wine was completely harmonious -- better than the 1997 Riserva. Production: 450 cases (6 bottles per case).

**2000 Brunello di Montalcino:** Excellent. The outstanding vintage for the area of Sant'Angelo in Colle, Montalcino. We tasted from the stainless steel tank. One of the best Brunellos available. Smooth, complex and intriguing. Extremely well done. Production: 500 cases (12 bottles per case).

**2001 Brunello di Montalcino:** Deep earthy aromas of tar, and tobacco leaves. On the palate, a nutty taste with concentrations of dried fruit. A harmonious and long finish. Production: 500 cases (12 bottles per case).

**2002 Brunello di Montalcino:** Enjoyable. Extensive rainfall resulted in one-half of the 2001 production. The wine showed some qualities of a mature grape with concentrated fruit, very palatable. Production: 200 cases (12 bottles per case)

### **The La Fornace Vineyards** *(In the heart of Montalcino)* September 30, 2004

- 9 acres of Sangiovese, vines are 15 years old
- Harvested September 23, 2004
- Soil composition: calcareous and chalk
- No irrigation
- No chemical fertilization

Conditions at La Fornace were mostly the same as at Collemattoni, however Fabio harvested earlier as the lower elevation and slightly different location caused the grapes to ripen earlier than at Collemattoni. Fabio and his father bottle all of their wines by hand with a small hand-operated machine that they demonstrated for us. They can bottle up to 10,000 bottles in two days. Truly remarkable.

### **Tasting notes on future releases:**

**2002 Rosso di Montalcino:** Tobacco aromas with roses. Great finish. Production: 800 cases (12 bottles per case).

**2003 Rosso Toscano:** Bottled on August 31, 2004. Nutty with great potential, spicy and big. Production: less than 100 cases (12 bottles per case).

**1998 Brunello di Montalcino Riserva:** Exceptional. Aromas of berries and tar. Harmonious on the palate. Complex and vivid finish. Huge potential for a long life. The only *riserva* that you can drink so easily. Production: 200 cases (6 bottles per case).

**1999 Brunello di Montalcino:** Aromas of raspberries and black cherries and flowers. An immediately approachable, medium to full bodied wine. Elements of the soil as well as fruit and sweet tannins on the palate. A beautiful, dry finish. Production: 830 cases (12 bottles per case).

**2000 Brunello di Montalcino:** Outstanding. Aromas of rose petals and raspberries. Spicy and rich, very well-made. Big. Needs time. Headed for a long life. Production: 800 cases (12 bottles per case).

**2001 Brunello di Montalcino:** Aromas of plums and black pepper. Dark berries and tons of fruit on the palate. Great balance. Production: 780 cases (12 bottles per case).

## MONTESCUDAIO

### The Vineyards of Poggio Gagliardo

October 1, 2004



Poggio Gagliardo Gobbo Vineyard

This was our first harvest visit to Montescudaio. Our first stop in the Montescudaio DOC was at Poggio Gagliardo to look at their large estate, the largest on our trip. The estate has 170 acres planted and in production of which almost half is Sangiovese, the king of Tuscan grapes. We drove around the perimeter of the estate and then went directly to the Gobbo Vineyard to get a good look at the vines and terroir. In addition to the property in production, they have additional land that is being planted, as well as old vineyards being replanted. These new vineyards are planted 2 meters x 80cm, roughly 5,000 plants per hectare to allow for maximum quality.



## **Poggio Gagliardo Vineyards**

- Approximately 170 acres in production of Chardonnay, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Cilieggiolo, Malvasia Nera, Colorino, Petit Verdot and Sangiovese
- Vines are 2 to 35 years old, oldest being a the Chardonnay and Cabernet Franc
- Harvest Dates: Merlot, Cilieggiolo, Malvasia Nera on September 15, Sangiovese October 4-5, Colorino October 12, Syrah October 13, Cabernet Franc October 15, 2004
- Soil Composition: gravelly with a tendency toward loose and rocky
- No irrigation
- No chemical fertilization

Conditions for the vineyards during 2004: hot days and cool nights, going back to a more typical climate/condition after 5 years of aberrant weather. A cool, wet spring was followed by an almost completely dry summer, with a few rain showers. Compared to 2003, this year was much milder and vegetative production was high. At least one green harvest was necessary in order to achieve ideal ripeness. The winery only uses medium-toasted French barrels for aging. They use the barrels for 4 years and then dispose of them. They use the first and second passage for the Gobbo and the Rovo (their flagship wines) and then when the barrels are older they use them for other wines. Just this year they began experimenting with the Gobbo by adding Petit Verdot to the Merlot, Sangiovese blend.

### **Tasting Notes on future releases:**

**Malemacchie 1998:** Sangiovese 95% Cabernet Franc 5%. Classical Sangiovese, aromas of earth and blackberries. Mouth-filling red wine with lots of fruit, figs and berries. Round, complex with a long finish. Production: 2,500 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Gobbo 2001:** 70% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Franc and Sagiovese. Sample taken from the barrel. Aromas of sweet, wild berries. Rich, complex with tons of fruit and tannin. Excellent! Production: 1,500 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Rovo Chinato:** Exceptional. Spice, complex, long finish. Very unique.

The Vineyards of Caiarossa (Fattoria Fiamminga)  
October 1, 2004



The newly constructed cellar at Caiarossa as the grapes arrive (in tractor at top)

We next drove towards the tiny village of Riparbella to see the biodynamic property of Caiarossa. The property is roughly 100 acres in size, however only about 1/3 of this is planted with vineyards, the rest is still left as natural forest. When we arrived, they were harvesting the Sangiovese. The production is entirely Biodynamic and they take it very seriously. The property manager (ex-owner), Jan Theys, has done extensive research on biodynamic farming. Jan explained that according to studies, and without always understanding why, biodynamic vineyards had vines with bigger, deeper and more roots and made better wines than their counterparts on chemical and even organic farms. The only fertilizer they use is a specific biodynamically produced product made by placing cow manure in special cow horns and burying it for several months according to the moon cycles. Where most wineries will visit each vine during the year only about 12 times per year, Caiarossa has an average of 30-36 visits. All of the wine is fermented and aged in cement tanks and *barrique*, no stainless steel is used on the property. They believe that stainless steel contaminates the wine with electric and magnetic fields and don't allow the wines to breathe or make contact with the external environment. There is also no heating or cooling or temperature control used in the facilities (they rely on the wine's location in the cantina for temperature control: malolactic fermentation which requires high temperatures is done on the second floor where it is warmer, all aging is done in a basement cellar where temperature is controlled by the cement and earth). No pumps are used and all the wine is moved through its various containers/processes using gravity.

## **Caiarossa Vineyards**

- 30 acres planted with 11 varieties, with 3 or 4 dominant, especially Merlot and Sangiovese
- 3,700 plants per acre
- Western/Southern exposures
- Soil Composition: clay, limestone, sand, rocky (differs throughout the property)
- No irrigation
- No chemical fertilization
- Minimal use of copper and sulfur in the vineyard: less than 1kg per acre.

Conditions for the vineyards during 2004: hot days and cool nights, going back to a more typical climate/condition after 5 years of aberrant weather. A cool, wet spring was followed by an almost completely dry summer, with a few rain showers. Compared to 2003, this year was much milder and vegetative production was high. At least one green harvest was necessary in order to achieve ideal ripeness. The winery only uses French barrels for fermentation and aging. When the grapes are harvested only 80% of the harvest is destemmed. The rest of the stems are left on during the fermentation process since they are as ripe as the grapes; they add antioxidants during the maceration. In general the wines are macerated for 18 days.

## **Southern Italy Vineyards: Fattoria Fiamminga**

- Buy monovarietals from individual, hand-selected vineyards in Puglia and Sicilia.
- Produce a Primitivo, Negroamaro, and Nero d'Avola
- Grapes transported overnight immediately following harvest in refrigeration trucks to Caiarossa.
- No irrigation
- No chemical fertilization

With these wines, they try to express the terroir of the south, the specific winery from which each wine came. As of 2003, they have been doing the alcohol fermentation in the south at the original winery and then transferring the must for aging at Caiarossa. This allows for the minimal disturbance to the grapes and wine during transport.

### **Tasting Notes Fattoria Fiamminga (from the barrels):**

**Nero d'Avola 2003:** Chestnut, wine notes, good extracts, long finish. Good full body.

**Negroamaro 2003:** Good, full body. Nice aromas.

**Primitivo 2003:** Full body with good structure. Complex and has lots of fruit. Extract 38. Needs time.

## **Tasting Notes Caiarossa:**

**Pergolaia 2003:** Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah. Had been in the bottle for two weeks. Medium-bodied, well-balanced rich and simple. Easy to drink. Their most economical wine. Production: 2,500 cases (12 bottles per case).

**La Serra 2002:** 95% Merlot, 5% Petit Verdot. Warm scents of earth and blueberries. Harmonious on the palate, with good balance, rich but delicate. Production: 1,200 cases (6 bottles per case).

## **FRIULI**

### **The Vineyards of Ronco del Gnemiz**

**October 2, 2004**



Dinner at Serena's

We left Caiarossa and drove straight to Friuli, arriving in the late evening for a dinner party at Serena Palazzolo's. In the morning we drove to their Manzano property nearby the main estate where her oldest vineyards are.

### **Manzano Vinyards**

- 5 acres planted with Tocai, Chardonnay and Schioppettino
- Vines are 60-70 years old (Tocai and Chardonnay) and 4 years old (Schioppettino)
- Harvested the Chardonnay on September 12, the Tocai on September 25' and the Schioppettino on October 11,2004
- Soil Composition: clay, slate
- 300 feet above sea level, south, southwest exposure

- No irrigation
- No chemical fertilization, no herbicides, starting to work towards biodynamic

This zone in Friuli where the vineyard is located is considered a 'Red Wine' zone; the terroir produces big wines. Ronco del Gnemiz has mostly white varietals planted here so they have to be very careful in how they care for the vines and in how they work the wines in order to maintain an elegant white. If done poorly or carelessly, white wines in from this area become too big and powerful. Conditions at this site during 2004 were the same as all over Italy, although they received a little more light rainfall during the growing season and at harvest. The problem that Serena encountered with several varietals (mostly whites) was that due to the weather and the large vegetative volume produced, each cluster and even each grape matured at differing rates. So during the harvest, it was necessary to taste each cluster to determine its ripeness before deciding whether to harvest it at that time. Only the most mature clusters were selected and then the others left to mature on the vine for several more days/weeks. This process became extremely time consuming (and nauseating for those who had to taste from hundreds of clusters). However, this year was a great year for the Tocai. It was already at 14% alcohol when we arrived.

### **Colli Orientali Vinyards**

- 30 acres of Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio, Tocai and Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon
- Vines are 8 to 25 years old
- Harvested the Pinot Grigio on September 11, the other whites by September 25, the Merlot September 30, and the rest of the reds by mid October, 2004
- Soil Composition: argil, marl, chalk and rocks
- 300 feet above sea level, southwest exposure
- No irrigation
- No chemical fertilization

Conditions were the same as at the Manzano vineyards. They had some problems with Botrytis this year with the Sauvignon and reduced the yield, as did the differing maturation times between clusters/vines.

### **Tasting Notes:**

**Tocai Friulano 2004** Exceptional. Expected production: cases (12 bottles per case).

**Pinot Grigio 2002:** Aromas of sweet berries with hints of mango. Medium- to full-bodied with good extract, long finish and great balance. 10% was aged in wood, 90% stainless steel. Production: 250 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Rosso del Gnemiz 1988:** We had the opportunity to taste this vintage bottle with Serena before we left. Mostly Cabernet Sauvignon at the time and it shows big Cabernet aromas with chestnut sensations. Full-bodied in the mouth, rich and complex. Excellent!

## MARIANO DEL FRIULI

### The Vineyards of Masut da Rive

October 2, 2004

After finishing up at Ronco del Gnemiz with a marvelous bottle of Rosso del Gnemiz 1988, we headed to the nearby Masut da Rive estate. We met with Fabrizio and Marco Gallo the agronomists and winemakers, and their father Silvano.

#### Masut da Rive Vineyards

- 45 acres of Pinot Grigio, Pinot Bianco, Chardonnay, Tocai, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Refosco and Pinot Nero
- Vines are 23 to 56 years old
- Pinot Nero harvested September 17, other reds starting in mid October, 2004. Whites harvested end September, 2004
- Soil Composition: argil, mixed with marl and chalk.
- 125 feet above sea level, southeast exposure
- No irrigation
- No chemical fertilization

Their vineyards are very mixed up, with an antique feeling, as their Refosco, Merlot and Cabernet Franc (Carmenere) were all planted before 1956 when they planted in a haphazard fashion, not in the organized mono-varietal way we are accustomed to today. Fabrizio commented that this was a very different year than they have been accustomed to and it will produce excellent red wines. They had to cut a lot of grapes from the vines due to the extremely high crop volume produced, including two green harvests. They harvest when the seed is completely brown and the pulp (in reds) is just starting to pull the color from the skin. The alcoholic fermentation is done in stainless steel for whites and stainless and cement tanks for the reds which can ferment at higher temperatures and need less temperature control.

#### **Tasting Notes on future releases:**

**Pinot Grigio 2003:** Aromas of green apples. Crispy, fresh and balanced with a harmonious, pleasant finish. Total production: 800 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Sauvignon 2003:** Beautiful aromas. Full-bodied with good balance. Excellent. Total production: 1,200 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Pinot Bianco 2003:** Peach aromas with hints of pear. On the palate, full-bodied white wine that is rich and complex with a long finish. One of the best Pinot Biancos on the market. Total expected production: 350 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Pinot Nero 2002:** Aromas of roses and raspberries with hints of chocolate. Full body, nice, round on the palate with a chewy tannin. Total production: 500 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Cabernet Franc 2002:** Nutty aromas, especially walnuts. On the palate, the wine is round and balanced with a dry tannin. Total production: 800 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Merlot 2002:** Earthy aromas. Dry merlot with high tannins. Total production: 300 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Base white wines 2004:**

All the white wines were fermenting when we arrived. The verdict after tasting all the base wines: expect a great vintage for Masut da Rive in 2004.

## **VENETO**

### **Vinea (Messapicus)**

October 2, 2004

We left Friuli and headed to Veneto where we met Rodolfo Posinato from Valbella and Biaggio Dovere from Vinea for dinner. We tasted the line of Messapicus wines for the next vintages available.

**Tasting Notes on future releases:**

**Copertino Riserva 2001:** 70% Negroamaro, 10% Malvasia, 10% Sangiovese, 10% Montepulciano. Earthy aromas with hints of fig, cherry and plum. Round, full body. As good as the 1999.

**Salice Salentino Riserva 2000:** 90% Negroamaro, 10% Malvasia Nera. Dusty aromas with dried fruit. Full body, round, with a good finish. Very good.

**Nero d'Avola 2001:** Nutty aromas with jammy fruit. Full body, rich and complex. Very good.

### **The Vineyards of Nicolis**

October 3, 2004



New 'Maso' Vineyard (red soil, in distance notice tuff (chalk) substrata)

On the next morning we went with Giuseppe Nicolis to their newest vineyard acquisition (see photo) situated one of the highest hills of the Valpolicella. The site is called 'Maso' and their 156 acres are located at the top of the hill at 450 meters above sea level and will receive sun all day with the best exposure. It is still mostly undeveloped (currently only 4.5 acres are newly planted, more will be planted each year) but has the potential to double their production in 10 years. The terroir consists of a thin layer of red topsoil with chalky 'tuffo' rock underneath and clay which maintain the temperature and humidity of the soil. They are planning on planting in the high Cordon style, not the typical Pergola-Veneto style.

Before this acquisition, Nicolis already has 100 acres of vineyards in production and we took a look at several of these spots on the way back to the cantina.

### **Vigneto Palladio Vineyard**

- 8 acres: Corvina , Rondinella, and Mollinara
- New vines are 2-5 years old, older vines up to 40 years old planted in Pergola Trentino style
- Started harvest on September 29 and ended at end October, 2004: the best, ripest clusters (loose, airy) for the passito wines like Amarone and Recioto and the Superiore wines, the rest for the Valpolicella Classico.
- Soil Composition: calcareous and rocky
- No irrigation
- No chemical fertilization

These vineyards are out by an old palazzo or villa that was built in the 800s. They are slowly beginning to do renovations on the building, intending to use it eventually for agroturismo. The vineyards are facing Southeast and they are planted (from the 1950's) with their original wooden Pergola Trentino supports and organized like an ampitheater to maximize exposure to the sun. Conditions during the 2004 growing season: hot days, cool nights, lots of rain in the Spring producing a high volume crop that needed to be controlled. They also had a problem with consistent ripeness and had to test each cluster to determine when to harvest. Very time consuming and laborious hand harvest this year, more than usual.

### **Fumane and Giorgio di Nogara and Seccal Vineyards**

- 90 acres of Croatina, Molinara, Corvina, Corvinone and Rondinella.
- Vines are on average, 10 to 25 years old; some 4 year-old vines mixed-in
- Soil Composition: calcareous and rocky
- 800 feet above sea level, southeast and southwest exposure
- No irrigation
- No chemical fertilization

### **Tasting notes on future releases:**

**Valpolicella Classico 2003:** Raisin aromas. Medium- to full-body, round but soft finish.  
Production: 1,600 cases (12 bottles per case).



**Seccal 2001:** No Passimento. Aromas of plum puree' and strawberries. Full-bodied, rich and complex. High quality with a long finish. Production: 2,000 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Seccal 2002:** An intense perfume of chestnuts and hazelnuts. On the palate the wine is generous and warm with a long finish. Production: 3,000 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Testal 2001:** A blend of 94% Corvina, 3% Cabernet Sauvignon and 3% Merlot. One month of drying (passimento). Named for the 'head' of each row, the grapes located the highest that are generally harvested last since they are hardest to reach and therefore are the ripest. Aromas of red fruits like plum, cherry and mulberry. On the palate, full-bodied, rich and spicy, round and well-balanced. Production: 2,500 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Amarone Classico 2000:** Aromas of spices and concentrated dark fruits, plum and cherry. On the palate, the wine is dry, round, rich and excellent! Production: 2,300 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Amarone Ambrosan 2000:** From a 5 acre single vineyard. Typical aromas of raisin and tar. Full, complex and intense and robust. Exceptional. Production: 1,500 cases (12 bottles per case).

## **The Vineyards of Begali**

October 3, 2004

- 15 acres of Corvina, Corvinone, Rondinella, Molinara, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Merlot
- Vines are 10 to 17 years old
- Soil Composition: tuffo, calcareous
- 300 feet above sea level, southeast and southwest exposure
- No irrigation
- No chemical fertilization

We arrived at Begali after lunch at Nicolis. We went to their Monte Ca' Bianca vineyard and Lorenzo hopped the stone fence to pick fresh mushrooms growing nearby which we brought back for dinner. The Valpolicella grape harvest started on September 27<sup>th</sup> and they had almost finished upon our arrival. The first harvest of the most mature, best clusters are for the Amarone and Recioto and the last pass through is for the bigger, less mature clusters for the Valpolicella Classico Superiore. The Merlot had been harvested earlier. The ripest picked grapes are put in baskets and stored in the dehumidification hall before they are crushed and pressed. The Amarone will be crushed in the end December. The grapes for the Recioto will be harvested at beginning of November and crushed at the end of January. The Merlot and the Cabernet Sauvignon are used in the Tigiolo, the super-Veneto wine they make. The grapes for the Tigiolo are dried for one month along with the other Valpolicella grapes and then crushed. Conditions during the 2004 growing season were consistent with the Nicolis and the rest of Italy in general.

### **Tasting notes on future releases:**

**Amarone Monte Ca Bianca 2000:** Aromas of molasses and figs. On the palate the wine is a superb balance of fruit and sweet tannins. Production: 250 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Valpolicella Superiore 2002:** Aromas of cloves and berries. Medium- to full-bodied. Very good. Production: 1,250 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Tigiolo 2001:** Aromas of candied fruit and wild berries. Good balance with a nice sweet tannins and a long finish. 36 extract. Production: 330 cases. (12 bottles per case).

**Amarone Classico 1999:** Aromas of dark fruits, like plums and figs. On the palate, a full-structured wine with a great harmonious finish. Excellent. Production: 3,000 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Recioto 2001:** Aromas of raisins and dried fruit. On the palate the wine is quite sweet, with hints of dryness and a long finish. Total production: 380 cases (12 bottle cases, 500 ml).

## LOMBARDIA

### The Vineyards of Frecciarossa

October 4, 2004



New plantings, foreground and in the distance at Frecciarossa

We left Veneto and headed west for our first harvest trip to Lombardia, to visit one of our most newly acquired wineries. We stayed at the gorgeous, perfectly preserved Villa Odero, the 17<sup>th</sup> century villa on the property. We tasted the wines during an exceptional white truffle tasting dinner (with a bowl of fresh truffles just harvested from their forest) and discussed the history of the winery. The winery was started in the 1920's by Giorgio Odero who began importing French clones of Pinot Nero as well as propagating indigenous varietals. He was one of the first alcohol exporters to the US after the end of Prohibition and became a famous label both here and in Italy (they still have one of the first export numbers, #19, that they still use today). However, their business with the US disintegrated and it has only been since the 1990's that the winery has again begun to rebuild its label under new management and with oenologist Franco Bernebet.

Since 1998, Scaglione has taken over the role of head oenologist and the wines are looking and tasting better than ever.

- 80 acres: Croatina, Barbera, Pinot Nero, Uva Rara, and Rhine Reisling
- Vines are on average 20-25 years old
- New planting is done in vertical rows instead of previous horizontal with a density of 5,500 vines per hc
- Soil Composition: clay, calcareous
- All exposures
- No irrigation
- No chemical fertilization, no herbicides
- Only white wines are filtered

The Frecciarossa philosophy is as follows: most attention is paid to the vineyards and the work in the fields, after that the work in the cellar is easier and secondary in concern. They want to make wines that can be enjoyed everyday, not too oakey, etc. They do not cut the vegetation as it causes a lower yield in the grapes and therefore a higher concentration in the wines. No herbicides are used, only sulfur and copper. Herbs keep the soil held firm and allow the water to drain off to avoid erosion. The vineyards are optimally located in a valley and the wind blows through and keeps the grapes dry during humidity/fog which is very common in the area. They have vineyards facing every direction in order to select the best exposure per varietal which allows them more control. Uva Rara is a local variety from Oltrepo' that dates back to the 1920's- it is used as a blending grape. Frecciarossa tested it for years in *barrique*, etc. on its own. Then in 1999 they did their first bottling of Uva Rara; they are the only winery to sell it as a monovarietal. It is vinified entirely in stainless steel.

### **Tasting notes on verticals:**

**Uva Rara 2003:** Aromas of chestnuts. Medium- to full-bodied, round with a good finish. Production: 2,000 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Uva Rara 2002:** Earthy and nutty aromas. Medium- to full-bodied like 2003 but drier.

**Uva Rara 2000:** Aromas of nuts and fruit, very dry.

**Pinot Nero Giorgio Odero 2003:** Beautiful aromas of cherry blossoms and raspberries. Round, with a nice entry onto the palate, harmonious and very well made. Production: 660 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Pinot Nero Giorgio Odero 2002:** Aromas of chestnuts and berries. Smooth, harmonious (harvested at the end of August, avoiding problems with rain that they faced with other varietals.) Production: 800 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Le Praille 2001:** 60% Croatina, 40% Barbera and Uva Rara. Hazelnuts on the nose, full-body, round, harmonious. Production: 1,250 cases (12 bottles per case).

# PIEMONTE

## The Vineyards of Fattoria San Giuliano

October 5, 2004



Terroir and Nebbiolo at San Giuliano (cemetery in the distance)

We left for Piemonte in the morning, after a brief tour of the Frecciarossa vineyards. We headed to the small Barbaresco town of **Neive** to visit Giulio Pastura, owner and winemaker of Fattoria San Giuliano. He had finished the white grape harvests and the Dolcetto harvest and was very busy (he does everything at the winery himself!), but he took some time to give us a tour.

- 17 acres: Nebbiolo, Barbera, Dolcetto, Arneis, Moscato
- Vines are on average, 8 to 20 years old
- Harvested the Moscato September 16<sup>th</sup>, the Dolcetto and Arneis September 20-25<sup>th</sup>, Barbera October 10<sup>th</sup>, Barbera Marcorino October 15<sup>th</sup>, Nebbiolo late mid-October
- Soil Composition: calcareous and marl.
- 650 feet above sea level.
- Southern exposure between two single vineyards.
- No irrigation
- No chemical fertilization

When we arrived, the Dolcetto was just finishing its alcoholic fermentation. Giulio said that this year's Dolcetto will be very soft. We took a look at the Moscato that he had drying in a large walk-in refrigeration unit in the cantina, half of which had *Botrytis*. He is experimenting with a Moscato passito and he allows the grapes to dry for 40 days. He keeps them chilled to retain the perfumes. The vineyards were still full of red grapes during our visit. The almost white soil was dry and dusty. Giulio said they had not received a drop of rain in Piedmont for 90 days, although while we were there, the fog was heavy: classic Piemontese weather (the Nebbiolo is named for the Italian word for fog, *nebbia*). As we saw all over Italy, the grapes were large and plentiful. Giulio commented on the enormous crop volume this year and said he conducted two green harvests, one in July and one in August. He expected great things from this vintage, however much work still lay ahead of him and he anticipated many nights gone without sleep.

### **Tasting notes on future releases:**

**Barbera d'Alba 'Fiore di Marcorino' 2003:** Aromas of grapy jam, intense fruit. On the palate, harmonious, with a long finish. Excellent. Total production: 250 cases (12 bottles per case).

**III Millennio 2003:** (50% Barbera, 50% Nebbiolo). 14% alcohol, spent 10 months in *barrique*. Aromas of chestnuts, excellent balance, rich and complex. Smooth and balanced finish. Production: 250 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Barbaresco 2001:** Dry, well-made with intense body. Total production: 400 cases (12 bottles per case).

### **The Vineyards of Hilberg- Pasquero**

October 5, 2004

We left Barbaresco and headed to Priocca d'Alba to meet my friend Michele Pasquero and his wife Annette Hilberg for a tour and home-cooked meal. This was Dino's 9<sup>th</sup> visit to these vineyards.

- 15 acres: 2.5 of Brachetto, 10 acres of Barbera and 2.5 acres of Nebbiolo.
- Vines are on average, 8 to 15 years old
- Brachetto end September, Barbera, early October and mid October, Nebbiolo mid October, 2004
- Soil Composition: White limestone. Produces elegant wines that require less aging
- 700 feet above sea level, southeast and southwest exposures
- No irrigation
- No chemical fertilization
- All organic production

Michele was extremely excited about the 2004 vintage. He anticipates an excellent year. By the time we arrived, the Brachetto and the Barbera for the Vareij had already been harvested and we tasted the base juice from the Barbera and it was incredible. Intense fruit, already round. He called it a classic Barbera: big fruit with a bright ruby color. They also had not had any rain since the fairly damp spring and had to do two green harvests to keep the crop volume at a reasonable level to achieve accurate ripeness in the fruit.

### **Tasting notes on future releases:**

**Vareij 2003:** Intense (Miklo decanted it). Very concentrated, rich Vareij. The richest yet. Nice floral nose with roses, good body, rich. Production: 250 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Barbera d'Alba Classico 2003:** Excellent Barbera. Can be paired with anything. This year the wine went through the malolactic fermentation in *barrique* (usually 100% stainless steel) and then was returned to the stainless steel afterward. They were having trouble with microoxygenation of the wine and the 1.5 months in wood curbed the problem. High alcohol and sugar. Big fruit. Rich and complex. Production: 500 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Barbera Superiore 2002:** Barbera from a very difficult year with a low yield. He used different types of wood *barrigue* to try to bring some complexity to the wine and to avoid too much oakiness. He used some Francoise Frere, Vicard, Pauscha, Remtos, etc. Aromas of hazelnuts, full body with good acidity. Balanced with a long finish. Production: 160 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Barbera Superiore 2003:** Tasted from the *barrigue*. Has an excellent future. Complex.

**Pedrocha 2002:** 60% Nebbiolo, 40% Barbera. Latest harvest ever for Pedrocha. Traditional style vintage. Used second passage barriques. Aromas of strawberries. On the palate, medium- to full-bodied, pleasant, with mild spices. Production: 160 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Nebbiolo 2002:** Comes from two vineyards, one facing South, one Southwest. Two years in *barrigue*, 70% new, 30% older. Aromas of strawberries, and roses. Elegant, round Nebbiolo with good extract, well-made. Very good. Production: 350 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Nebbiolo 2003:** We tasted some experimental Nebbiolo 2003 from a large barrel (he uses only *barrigue* in general) and it was very elegant and rich. The 2003 Nebbiolo in *barrigue* is still fermenting! This is a sign of how intense and full the 2003 will be. We can't wait to taste it next year.

## The Vineyards of Paolo Conterno

October 6, 2004



Bric Ginestra (Nebbiolo) in the fog



The Barbera arrives for destemming (Giorgio at far right)



Conterno Barriquaia (with large Barolo tanks)

The next day we went to Monforte d'Alba first to meet with winemaker Giorgio Conterno, Paolo Conterno's son. It was another typically foggy day and they were in the middle of harvesting the Barbera.

### **Ginestra Vineyards**

- 18 acres: Nebbiolo, Barbera, Dolcetto
- Vines are on average, 15 to 25 years old
- Dolcetto harvested September 27, Barbera harvested October 5-6, and the Nebbiolo on October 12, 2004
- Soil Composition: clay and chalk, calcareous with a little sand
- 750 feet above sea level.
- The Ginestra cru has a southeast exposure
- No irrigation
- No chemical fertilization

The vineyards are located along and up to the top of the Ginestra hill (Bric means hill- the cru comes from the top of the hill) and therefore receive maximum sun exposure and have excellent drainage. The slopes of the vineyards are extremely steep with a 40% downgrade making the use of tractors almost impossible (almost- Giorgio still masterly navigates a tiny tractor up the narrow paths along the rows of vines). Giorgio is trying to get rid of all really old vines in order to eliminate ill and undesirable clones and select for better quality. The 2004 harvest went very successfully and he anticipates an excellent vintage. In the cellar, they do no mechanical punchdown during fermentation and maceration in order to disturb the grapes and the must as little as possible. Instead, they have special tanks that turns the must with the movement of liquid. Note: Giorgio's first Barolo vintage was 1990.

### **Tasting notes on future releases:**

Note on 2002 vintage: 2002 was a good year for Paolo Conterno in comparison to other producers. They did not have the rain damage that others experienced and he even produced a remarkably good Barolo in 2002, although they did not produce very much.

**Barbera d'Alba 2002:** Aromas of hazelnuts and berries. Very accessible Barbera, round, balanced, with a good finish. Total production: 800 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Nebbiolo Langhe 2002:** This is a new wine for Giorgio. They produced it in 2002 as only the best of the crop was used for the Barolo. The less ideal portion was used to create this Nebbiolo Langhe, aged in large barrels for 1 year. A good quality, everyday Nebbiolo. Very approachable on the palate with a good finish. Total production: 400 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Nebbiolo Bric Ginestra 2000:** 90% aged in large barrels, the other 10% in barrique for 20 months. Very nice, round, elegant. Total production: 1,600 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Barolo Ginestra 2000:** Extraordinary. Impressive aromas of raspberries and nuts. Sweet tannin, very velvety, with a good equilibrium. This wine will have a very long life. Will be one of the most extraordinary Barolos of all times, reminiscent of the 1988 vintage. Total production: 1,600 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Barolo Ginestra 1999:** Aromas of berries and hazelnuts. Full of fruit, powerful and complex with soft tannins and a great finish. Total production: 1,400 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Barolo Ginestra Riserva 1998:** Limited production. Excellent! Wonderful aromas, full-bodied, smooth, elegant. Total production: 500 cases (6 bottles per case).

#### **Tasted from the Barrels:**

**Barolo Ginestra 2001:** Excellent. Soft tannins, round, with big fruit.

**Barolo Ginestra 2002:** Spicy and young still

**Barolo Ginestra 2003:** Huge! Enormous tannins and fruit. Big wine!

### **The Vineyards of Ada Nada**

October 6, 2004



The vineyards of Barbaresco from Ada Nada (Cichin in the foreground)



We left the Barolo production area for the Barbaresco area again, this time in **Treiso**, to meet Giancarlo Nada, owner of the Ada Nada estate.

### **Cichin, Valeirano and Additional Vineyards**

- 30 acres: Nebbiolo, Barbera, Dolcetto, Moscato
- Vines are on average, 10 to 35 years old, oldest in the Cichin vineyard
- Dolcetto harvested end September, Barbera October 12, Nebbiolo late October, 2004
- Soil Composition: calcareous, marn and clay with some fossils and sand.
- 600 feet above sea level.
- Southern exposure between the two single vineyards.
- No irrigation
- No chemical fertilization

The winery produces 2,000 cases of Barbaresco, 500 to 600 cases of Langhe Rosso 'Bisbetica'. Giancarlo stated how wonderful this 2004 vintage will be. He called it a 'great year for aromas'. He attributed it to the hot days and cool nights, very classic weather. They conducted two green harvests this year, one in July and one in August.

### **Tasting notes on future releases:**

**Barbaresco Valeirano 2001:** Aromas of violets, roses and strawberries. Full-body and fantastic finish. Drink a little now but also save for 25 years. Production: 750 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Barbaresco Cichin 2001:** Excellent Barbaresco. Aromas of violets and strawberries. Full-bodied with rich aromas that linger. Complex with good extract. Production: 700 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Bisbetica 2000:** Aromas of chestnuts and violets. This wine is a 50/50 blend of Barbera and Nebbiolo. On the palate, delicate balance, sweet tannins, and a smooth finish. Production: 375 cases (12 bottles per case).

### **The Vineyards of Scarzello**

October 6, 2004

After a long lunch at Ada Nada, featuring classic Piemonte dishes: bagna cauda (vegetables dipped in garlic sauce) and bollito misto (mixed boiled meats), we headed to the center of the Barolo region to the town of Barolo. Here we met Giorgio Scarzello's 25 year old son Federico, a student at the school of oenology in Alba and the new winemaker for the winery. He toured the vineyards with us.

### **Sarmassa, Papagallo, Rivassi and Vigna Merenda Vineyards**

- 13 acres: Nebbiolo, Barbera, Dolcetto
- Vines are on average, 12 to 25 years old

- Soil Composition: marl and calcareous.
- 600 feet above sea level, south exposure in Sarmassa and Papagallo and Rivassi. southeast for Vigna Merenda.
- No irrigation
- No chemical fertilization

We went to visit the Vigna Merenda vineyard where their Tre Bicchieri single-vineyard Barolo originates. Federico took the opportunity to tell us a bit of the history of the family and the region. The Scarzello family is very large and extended in the area, but they are the only members that make their own, small-production wines, instead of still selling grapes, etc. In 1978 they released their first vintage under the Scarzello label using all their own grapes. Vigna Merenda are the oldest vines they have and reach upward of 40 years in age. It is located in the center of the Barolo region. Federico thinks the name Merenda comes from a small count (many many generations back- perhaps in the family) who owned the plot, one of the only properties in the whole area at that time that was not owned by Marchese Falletto (the baron in the area: he was the one who gave Barolo its name and fixed the winemaking process). They will tear out the whole vineyard in several years to replant it with more desirable clones.

### **Tasting notes on future releases:**

**Langhe Nebbiolo 2001:** Aromas of violets with rich berries. The wine is round with sweet tannins. Complex, with an intense yet smooth finish. Production: 400 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Barbera d'Alba Superiore 2001:** Aromas of brown figs with hints of raspberries. On the palate, the wine displays high acidity after having been bottled for only 4 months. Complex, with great flavors of cherry with a sweet tannin. Production: 500 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Barolo Classico 2000:** Bottled four months ago. Aromas of violets and strawberries. On the palate the wine has a lot of energy. Complex and beautiful tannins with a long, long finish. Production: 400 cases (12 bottles per case).

**Barolo Vigna Merenda 1999:** Round and profound quality wine. Rich and complex. Extraordinary! Production: 400 cases (12 bottles per case).

## **Cascina Ebreo Vineyards**

October 6, 2004

The whirlwind tour day finally ended with our visit to Cascina Ebreo. We arrived after dark to this tiny producer's estate, just in time for a 5 course meal that Romy and Peter had prepared for us as a send-off party.

- 3 acres: Nebbiolo, Barbera
- Vines are on average, 10 to 12 years old
- Soil Composition: calcareous, argyllous, with clay and sand.
- 650 feet above sea level.
- Southeast and eastern exposures

- No irrigation
- No chemical fertilization

Peter Weimer is a cult wine producer. In a good year the winery only produces 600 cases. He makes only 2 red wines: Segreto, a blend of Barbera and Nebbiolo and Torbido, his famous, declassified Barolo. In addition he makes a very limited quantity (enough for himself and a few friends to drink) of a very intense white wine called Sinche made from Sauvignon Blanc aged in *barrique*. We went into their tiny *barriquia* (essentially their garage) where vintages from the last 3 years continued to age (only about two *barriques* per vintage per wine).

### **Tasting notes on future releases:**

**Segreto 2000** Perfect. Aromas of mocha, violets and black cherries. On the palate, a full body, complex, with great structure. A harmonious finish. Total production: 300 cases (12 bottles per case)

**Torbido 2000** Aromas of violets, and hints of cinnamon. On the palate, the wine is round with a full body and layers of concentrated fruit. This wine is going to be bigger than a Barolo. Total production: 210 cases (12 bottles per case)

I would like to thank Roger Dagorn, Master Sommelier from Chanterelle, Jason Miller, Sommelier from Picholine, Rosanna Marshall of Vignaioli and Iacopo Di Teodoro for their interest and dedication on this demanding and rewarding harvest trip. We covered 3,500 kilometers and 24 wineries in 10 days this year. An almost impossible feat. I would also like to thank our producers for their passion and endurance. Their steady effort makes our work possible.

I hope this report will be of use to you as fellow wine lovers. The account was given honestly, without any intentional bias. I offer this to you from my deep appreciation of great wine, and as a tribute to the makers of great wines.

Thank you.

**Dino Tantawi**  
**President, Vignaioli Selection**

