

Molly's BOTTLE CLUB - March 2022

take a walk around Piedmont with my old friend - Nebbiolo
all wines are from Piedmont and showcase how this noble varietal can be such a strong representative of its place in the world - exactly how we like it here at Molly's Bottle Club!

Notes are arranged North to South - not in order of how to taste them

Le Piane

from: Boca

winemaker/ farmer: Christoph Kunzli

facts & random info: 150 years ago, all the Nebbiolo wines in Boca (Alto Piemonte) were considered to be the best in Piedmont - even more than Barolo or Barbaresco but phylloxera plus a couple world wars took its toll. When soldiers were returning home sought to find work, to find partners and possibly, to start families. Being in the country made that decidedly more challenging when factories were offering big money. Abandoned vineyards were slowly reclaimed by the forest and wine traditions were mostly forgotten. A sad demise for a place that is the foundation of all the Nebbiolo grown in Piedmont. But lucky for us, a famed Chianti producer who had been born & reared in Boca convinced his friend to join him on a trip home. Christoph & his partner, Andrew, fell in love with the place. Walking through the forest near an old, dilapidated house, they stumbled across old vines that were still producing fruit and the idea to restore these vineyards was born.

Fast forward years and years later, Christoph is restoring old vineyards - some grown in the old Maggiorina way that dates before the Roman empire. And he is making absolutely stunning Nebbiolo - honoring the old ways while making room for modern ideas like putting the wine in bottles (instead of the jugs for family consumption). There are so many great stories around Le Piane - it would be impossible to tell them all here. I hope that when you taste this truly beautiful wine, you will get your own glimpse of this incredible place and its wine.

tasting notes: finely sketched, lighter with more high-tone red fruits than is found further south in Barolo, Barbaresco

pie cherry, shiro plums with hints of wild strawberries - maybe that's raspberries??

classic hints of leather, licorice and savory herbs follow on the finish so balanced and YUMMY!! oh and that finish goes on and on and on and you get the point!

pairing ideas: venison steak with grilled plums!

hazelnut risotto blew my mind with this wine

Valfaccenda 'Roero'

from: Roero

winemaker/ farmer: Carolina Roggero and Luca Faccenda

facts & random info: across the Tanaro river from the legendary Barolo and Barbaresco regions, there is a magical region called Roero (row-AIR-o). With rolling hills, steep vineyards & sandy soils, it is an amazing place to grow vines and Luca's family has been doing just that for generations.

Think about this - millions of years ago this land was covered by the Mediterranean Sea. Tectonic movements led to the formation of the hills of Roero about 3 million years ago (during the Pliocene Epoch if you wanna really geek out about it) - SO COOL!

Annual production of Nebbiolo here is 1/2 that of Barolo - super small!

The wine laws of Roero forbid vineyard owners from planting this grape on north-facing slopes cuz Nebbiolo needs more sun and warmth.

Wine is bottled in the waning moon of autumn after the required aging in old casks.

From Luca: *"the soils are sandy, the slopes steep, the altitudes reach 400 meters and the gaze is lost in a landscape marked by the vertical cuts of the Rocche, where the viticulture is alternated with woods, hazel groves, fruit trees. Roero is rock'n roll: multi-faceted, strenuous, unconventional. In our wines we try to faithfully translate the vineyards we work, seeking the elegance of the sand and avoiding the unnecessary"*

tasting notes: with 20% (ish) whole cluster, there is a softer red fruit thing going on that I am totally loving! I asked Luca for a tasting note and he literally said "this is a liquid translation of our land, vintage and variety"

he's not wrong - it is minerality for days with glorious red fruity characteristics - cherry pie, floral notes with some hints of anise and pepper.

There is such elegance and soft tannins balanced by tension and acidity.

pairing ideas: cheese & onion tart!

classic roasted chicken with thyme and potatoes

ooooo maybe wild mushroom risotto with some leeks

Cascina Ca'Rossa 'Funsu'

from: Langhe

winemaker/ farmer: Angelo & Stefano Ferrio

facts & random info: In Piemontese dialect, Alfonso is “Funsu” - he is the 1st generation - this wine is dedicated to him from his son and grandson the response from Angelo (Alfonso’s son) when asked why natural wine? *“When someone asks why I answer: that’s the easiest thing in the world, it’s because that’s the way my grandparents farmed so many years ago. The only fertilizer they used was manure. It’s a matter of going back in time. Sometimes I ask myself, why use chemicals when frequently they are put out on the market only to have them pulled off the market a few years later?”*

In summary - chemicals have been used as a substitute for hard work but the vineyards and mankind are alive and ultimately tied to nature. So, with thoughtful consideration we return to the simple and natural.”

Vineyards are located in Canale d’Alba and Santo Stefano Roero planted south, south-west at an elevation of 200-250 meters

calcareous and clayish soil

hand harvested mid-October

stainless steel tanks for aging and then aged in bottle before release

tasting notes: the nose is all dark plum and rose petals - so lovely! the palate follows through with all those plum notes and hints of violets or maybe roses. Softly balanced tannins are super elegant and rich! such harmony of fruit, acid & tannin with a finish that is lovely

pairing ideas: classic pairings such as beef tartare or carpaccio

vitello tonnato (veal with tuna/caper sauce)

aged or super ripe cheese

as in all of Piedmont - wild game (mostly venison)

I loved it with some gooey, perfectly ripe stinky cheese and fig crackers :-)

Ettore Germano

from: Serralunga

winemaker/ farmer: Sergio Germano

facts & random info: Established in 1856, this estate is located in one of the most important crus of Serralunga d'Alba named "Cerretta"

The winery is named after Ettore, Sergio's father, who grew grapes and made a little wine for private customers. Ettore was known throughout the area for his skill in grafting vines.

Sergio went to college to study winemaking - worked for a larger winery then came home to make wine with his father in 1993.

6.6 hectares of vineyards (16 acres or so) mostly facing south-southwest

Very steep vineyards with 15+ year old vines

4-6 day fermentation in open (traditional) wooden fermenters

racked off the skins then aged in old wooden barrels

Hand-harvested end of September

tasting notes: fresh black fruits - think bing cherries, blackberries with tiny hints of the classic Nebbiolo floral violets & rose petals: black pepper tingly dances along with a deeper bodied structure. Tobacco-leaf and cinnamon spice
Not all Langhe Nebbiolo is declassified Barolo, but this one just might be close!

pairing ideas: baked brie in pastry with dark fruit preserves

pasta with ragù sauce and some crusty bread

roasted pork chops with grilled plums (can you tell I'm in love with grilled plums right now?!)