

Alfredo & Luca Roagna

Profile

The Roagna have been winemakers in the village of Barbaresco since the mid 1800's. It was Giovanni and his wife Maria who moved their house and winery to its present location Paglieri hamlet, home to the famous vineyard Pajé. This plot is the foundation of the estate, which in all covers 6 ½ hectares in Barbaresco.

Alfredo and Luca, father and son, now take care of the property. In 1990, they were able to purchase two slices of renowned vineyard sites of Castiglione Falletto in Barolo, la Pira and le Rocche. These came with a 15th farm house they renovated and which became Casa Roagna, a bed and breakfast overlooking the vines.

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The Roagna like to describe their style as traditional and innovative. Luca was born in 1980, and is still pursuing a high degree in oenology. But he sees his academic studies as a way to understand intellectually all the practices he has observed on the terrain and in the cellar, as implemented by his grandfather Giovanni Roagna, father Alfredo and mother, Luigina.

In 2003, Luca initiated a new venture. He hopes to make a wine from each of the great cru sites in Barolo. He has begun with Vigna Rionda, in Serralunga d'Alba, where he has bought grapes from an old *contadino* who has worked the vineyard all his life in more or less organic fashion (no herbicides, minimal treatments.). We have yet to see which other cru from which Luca has managed to find some fruit, but he will continue.

All of the the vines in Barbaresco and Barolo are worked organically, no herbicide was ever used here, grass grows between the rows, and only copper and sulfur solutions are used for treatment.

The Nebbiolo grapes macerate for 30 to 100 days, according to their plot origin and the age of the vines, then are aged for up to 8 or 10 years in large or medium capacity botti of French oak. Because the Roagnas make so many different bottlings, there are many variations in the techniques they use in the cellar. For example, the Vigna Rionda grapes, from vines 40 to 60 years of age, are macerated for 40 to 50 days, then aged in oak botti for 4 years; the grapes that become La Rocca e la Pira riserva macerate for 80 to 100 days, then are aged for a minimum of 5 years and up to 10 years or more.

In addition to the traditional nebbiolo wines, the Roagna also make Dolcetto d'Alba, Opera Prima, a blend of vintages of Barbaresco to make a drinkable, harmonious wine, and a white called Solea, from chardonnay and white nebbiolo (juice without skin contact). Their top Barbaresco is Crichèt Paje which is only made in good vintages from the vines at the top crest (*crichèt*, in piemontese dialect) of the Pajé vineyard where by experience the grapes optimally mature .

Most of the soil in the Langhe part of Piedmont is made of ancient seabed concretions. These are poor soils, where limestone, marl and sands dominate. The shape of the hills determine particular microclimates, and each *terroir* has its own characteristics. That's why the Barolo and Barbaresco areas are unique in the Italian vine world: like in Burgundy, each vineyard has been defined, named,

and is expected to have a particular character. Although all this was known by the Benedictine monks of the 13th century, it is only after the 1970's that the practice of bottling by "cru" became the norm.