

Cascina 'Tavijn

Ruché and Grignolino from Cascina 'Tavijn.



Nadia Verrua.

Profile

Nadia Verrua, la padronina of Cascina 'Tavijn works in an area of the Asti province of Piedmont long forgotten. Fortunately it is an area blessed with old vines and unique varieties. Nadia is young, gifted and very professional. She has taken over the family's estate where her father still manages the vineyard work. The cellar, however, is all Nadia's.

For the moment, Nadia is working only with Barbera, Grignolino and Ruché, the latter two being native indigenous varieties of the area that have seen a small, cultish rise in popularity in recent years, and for good reason. Grignolino is a grape that makes a pale, light red of garnet color and, when finely made, shows the characteristic bitter cherry, or amarena, flavor that goes well with lighter first courses of dried sausages and hard cheeses, like well-aged asiago. Ruché, on the other hand, produces a wine of saturated purple with plum notes and rose petal aromas. It is made to be drunk young and, again is a perfect wine for salumi, dried meats like bresaola or dried cacciorini and hard, aged cheeses.

Nadia uses traditional techniques to produce the wines. The grapes are hand harvested and vinified in large casks, or botti of slavian oak.

Visits

This visit to Cascina Tavijn' took place in November, 2012.



Words by Jules Dressner, photos by Jake Halper and Josefa Concannon.

Blame it on the Louis/Dressner obsession with rare, quirky varieties if you want, but I've always loved the [Cascina Tavijn](#) wines. The Grignolino and Ruché grapes are always so vibrant and fun in their youth, but are still capable of developing complexity with a few years of aging. The estate is also part of our Italian "Gang of Four" (don't sue us Kermit!), the first group of Italian growers we started importing (along with [Vittorio Bera](#), [Cascina Degli Ulivi](#) and [La Bianca](#)).

Cascina Tavijn is headed by Nadia Verrua.



The first independently bottled vintage was in 2001. Nadia took over the estate from her father, who had always sold the grapes to the cave cooperative; at first she only handled the cellar work, but has progressively become completely hands on in the vines. The estate is of modest size, with 6h of vines and 4h of hazelnut trees planted at the bottom of hill.



We arrived in the early afternoon, and immediately set out to the vines. After a much steeper uphill climb than any of us expected, the damn paparazzi started trying to take pictures of us.





The fall colors were once again in full swing.





The first parcel we visited was Southwest facing Ruché planted in 2001, followed by Grignolino. Some of this land has been replanted in massale since 2001, which has proven to be a challenge since very few growers still have have old vines of these almost extinct varieties.

Young vine Grignolino was planted 2.5 years ago in massale.



Walking downhill was a lot easier, and our tasting was accompanied by a large basket of recently harvested hazelnuts (which I ate a lot of). Every year, Nadia does two bottlings of each cuvée, and we tried the second of Grignolino, Ruché and Barbera. All were showing well. We also got to check out the cellar.



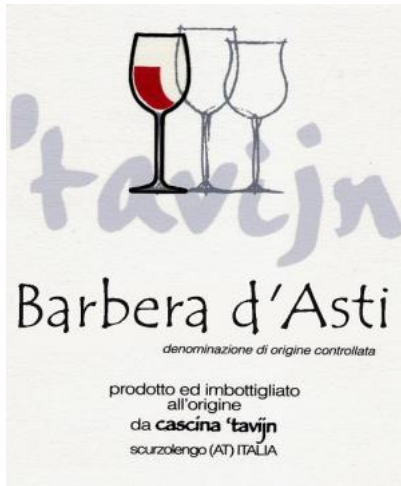
We finished with the sulfur free bottlings of each grape. Nadia bottles these on a tiny scale, and it all ends up at her husband Pietro's restaurant [Consorzio](#). If you're ever in Torino for any reason whatsoever, you have no excuse not eating there. The food is incredible, and the wine list is an impressive who's who of great Italian and French natural wines. Plus it's the only place to drink sulfur free Grignolino by the glass!

We ate there on election night, and Pietro pulled out the big guns with this:



Drawn by a friend and local artist, this poster is a direct reference to [Mauro Vergano's Americano](#).

Wines



D.O.C Barbera D'Asti



D.O.C Grignolino D'Asti



D.O.C Ruché di Castagnole Monferrato