

Fabio Gea

The Fascinating World of Fabio Gea.



Fabio Gea. Photo by Josefa Concannon.

Profile

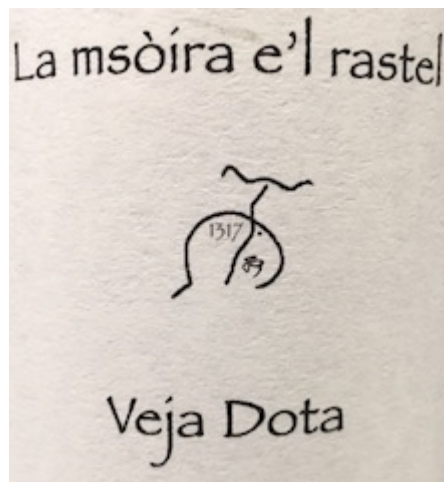
With our special knack for finding new winemakers who have converted their lives from one of slavery to Mammon, God of Money, to that of slavery to Bacchus, God of Wine, we've run smack-dab against one of the craziest, funny, uh-oh and provocative winemakers we've ever met.

His name is Fabio Gea and he is making delicious wines from small parcels in Barbaresco. The land comes from his maternal grandfather Pòtu, (diminutive for Giuseppe in dialect) and is centered around different parts of Barbaresco, mostly near the Bricco. During his grandfather's time, the vines were still in poly-culture, although he was apparently an expert grafter who at one time had over 200 grape varieties on his land. But the winemaking and vineyard care skipped a generation and most of the plots became semi-abandoned. Fabio, after receiving his doctorate and working as a successful geologist for corporate companies for a number of years, decided to leave that world and reprise the family winemaking tradition. He also started bringing the vineyards back into shape.

The whole enterprise is a few lines of Nebbiolo inside and outside of the Barbaresco designation, as well as small patches of Dolcetto and Barbera - in total 0.9 hectare. All vineyard work is done by hand, with minimal treatments of only copper and sulfur. In the cellar, apart from experiments in "toilet" (Gea has crafted his own porcelain amphoras, certainly a first as far as we are concerned), he uses older barrels of 440 liters and 500 liters, glass and stainless. The total production is around

5000 bottles a year of 6-7 different wines. Some wines are traditional, others definitely outside-the-box.

La Msoira e'L Rastel is the name on each bottle and the titular name of the estate. It is represented in the symbol on the bottle and means in Piemontese dialect: The Sickle and the Rake.



This symbol can be interpreted many ways according to Fabio. First, it obviously represents the tools of the contadine, the peasants. It is also a reference to the leftist symbols of the scythe and hammer, but if you look it could also be a corkscrew going into a cork, or, if you look another way, something that is best left to the lewder side of the imagination. Within the symbol is the number of the bottle and the total number of bottles hand written on labels made from handmade paper. It's one of the reasons the price is high, but it is part of Fabio's vision to make the estate truly artisanal in all aspects. Including wood from barrels whose staves were cured in a sauna using volcanic rock. No shit!