

# Castello Conti



The Boca DOC, one of the smallest appellations in the Alto Piemonte, encompasses only twelve hectares spread over five villages (Boca, Maggiora, Cavallino, Prato Sesia, Grignasco) and split amongst eleven different vineyard owners. The story of the Conti sisters, one of the most exciting growers in the DOC, is a twofold triumph: as ultra-committed winegrowers who are reclaiming and replanting old vineyards in this difficult-to-farm zone, they are part of a larger effort to restore the Alto Piemonte to its pre-phylloxera glory and productivity; and, as visionary, trend-bucking women in a deeply conservative rural area, they have gradually overcome the skepticism and resistance of the local old timers, establishing themselves as undeniable leaders in the region. Elena, Paola, and Anna Conti are no newcomers, either; their father Ermanno, from whom they took over between 2002 and 2003, was one of the founders of the Boca DOC in the late 1960s, persisting in eking out wine from his single hectare there even as total production neared extinction during its nadir in the 1980s and '90s. Today, the sisters farm three total hectares in the zone, including a hectare and a half they cleared and replanted beginning in 2015, and their rigorous, biodynamically informed viticultural practices and extreme non-interventionism in the cellar place them squarely in the region's vanguard.

Wines from the Conti sisters announce with authority the potential for absolute greatness—not just greatness “for the region,” but a greatness on par with any Nebbiolo-based wine from anywhere—in this exciting place. Whether tasted in their youth or after decades, these are some of the most enchanting Nebbiolo wines that we have encountered.

## Viticulture:

- **Farming:** Practicing Organic
- **Treatments:** Copper and sulfur only, with no synthetic treatments since 2008. Herbicides have never been used on the property.
- **Ploughing:** Annual ploughing to maintain vineyard health
- **Soils:** Volcanic porphyry, iron-rich limestone-clay, quartz, and sand
- **Vines:** 35-40 years old, trained in Guyot or Maggiorina, and planted at c. 3,000 vines/ha (Boca planted 1973 and 2015.)
- **Yields:** Controlled through pruning and debudding, yields average 50 hl/ha
- **Harvest:** Entirely manual, usually in early October
- **Purchasing:** Entirely estate fruit



## Vinification:

- **Fermentation:** Following total destemming, wines ferment spontaneously in 17-50-hl stainless-steel tanks and open-top tini. Cuvaison lasts 20-23 days.
- **Extraction:** Wines see punchdowns during cuvaison
- **Chaptalization and Acidification:** None
- **Pressing:** Vertical basket press
- **Malolactic Fermentation:** Spontaneous, directly following alcoholic fermentation

## Aging:

- **Élevage:** Boca sees 36 months in 5-8 hl Slavonian oak botti. Spanna sees 24 months. Origini sees 12 months in stainless-steel tanks.
- **Lees:** Wines remain on their fine lees until assemblage prior to bottling.
- **Fining and Filtration:** Wines are unfinned and see plate filtration.
- **Sulfur:** Applied at racking and at bottling, with 40-50 mg/l total sulfur.