

Monsecco



Many years ago, in the late 1970's, I remember drinking bottles of Monsecco Gattinara from the 1960's and early 1970's (most particularly the 1971 and 1974) with extreme glee. Powerful yet graceful wines that shone a bright light on another corner of the world of Nebbiolo, a fitting companion to the Barolos from Brovia, the Barbarescos from De Forville and the Caremas from Ferrando. Then, all of a sudden the wines of Monsecco disappeared from view. The Monsecco estate was history! So, I was pleased when I spoke with Giorgio Zanetta, whose family has a long history of producing wine in the Alto Piemonte, to hear that it was the family's objective to revive the royal name of Monsecco.

For many decades, Lorenzo Zanetta, grandfather to Giorgio, had worked as a négociant in the wine trade, specializing in producing wines from the neighboring zones of "Coste delle Sesia" and "Colline Novaresi" in the area known as the Alto Piemonte. His sons, Sergio (father to Giorgio) and Valter, decided, in 1993, to revive the name and image of Monsecco, dedicating themselves to the task of producing the finest versions of the local wines using only local grape varieties. To that end and over time, they purchased five hectares of vineyards and currently rent an additional three hectares where only Nebbiolo, Vespolina, Uva Rara and Croatina are planted. From these assorted sites, they craft in the most traditional manner a series of wines culminating in their formidable standard-bearer: the grand Gattinara.

Viticulture:

- **Farming:** Practicing Organic
- **Treatments:** Copper and sulfur only
- **Ploughing:** Annual ploughing to maintain vineyard health
- **Soils:** Red volcanic porphyry and granitic glacial moraine
- **Vines:** Trained in Guyot and planted at 2,000-4,000 vines/ha
- **Yields:** Controlled through pruning, debudding, yields average 40-70 hl/ha
- **Harvest:** Entirely manual, usually early-late October
- **Purchasing:** Entirely estate fruit



Vinification:

- **Fermentation:** Following total destemming, wines ferment with selected yeasts in stainless-steel tanks.
- **Extraction:** Wines see pumpovers during fermentation.
- **Chaptalization and Acidification:** None
- **Pressing:** Pneumatic pressing
- **Malolactic Fermentation:** Spontaneous, directly following alcoholic fermentation

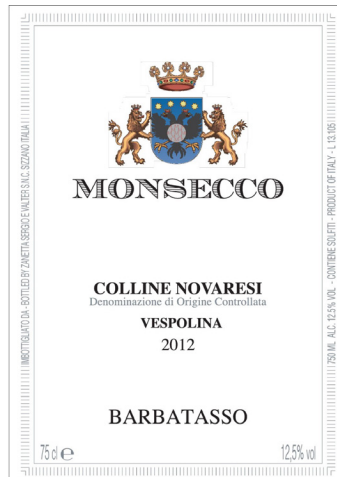
Aging:

- **Élevage:** Vespolina spends c. 6 months in stainless-steel tanks. Other wines spend 18-36 months in large oak botti and a small number of used, neutral barriques.
- **Lees:** Wines are racked off their lees following malolactic and remain on their fine lees until assemblage prior to bottling.
- **Fining and Filtration:** Wines are unfinned and some wines see plate filtration if necessary. Most wines are unfiltered.
- **Sulfur:** Applied after fermentation, after malolactic, and at bottling

Monsecco



Barbatasso Colline Novaresi Vespolina



At a Glance:

- **Appellation:** DOC Colline Novaresi
- **Uvaggio:** Vespolina (100%)
- **Average Annual Production:** 4,500 bottles
- **Average Alcohol by Volume:** 13%
- **Average Residual Sugar:** < 5 g/l
- **Average Total Acidity:**

In The Vineyard:

- **Parcel Names, Slopes, and Locations:** From hillside parcels northeast of Gattinara, overlooking Novarra
- **Soil Types and Compositions:** Red volcanic porphyry and granitic glacial moraine
- **Vine Age, Training, and Density:** Trained in Guyot and planted at c. 3,000 vines/ha
- **Average Yields:** Controlled through pruning and debudding, yields average 70 hl/ha
- **Average Harvest Date and Type:** Entirely manual, usually late September

In The Cellar:

- **Fermentation:** Following total destemming, wine ferments with selected yeasts in stainless-steel tanks. Cuvaison lasts c. 9 days.
- **Pressing:** Pneumatic pressing
- **Time on Lees:** Racked following malolactic, wine remains on its fine lees until assemblage prior to bottling.
- **Malolactic Fermentation:** Spontaneous, in tank directly following alcoholic fermentation
- **Élevage:** 6-8 months in stainless-steel tanks
- **Press Wine:** Blended after malolactic
- **Fining and Filtration:** Unfined, plate filtration if necessary
- **Sulfur:** Applied after fermentation, after malolactic, and at bottling

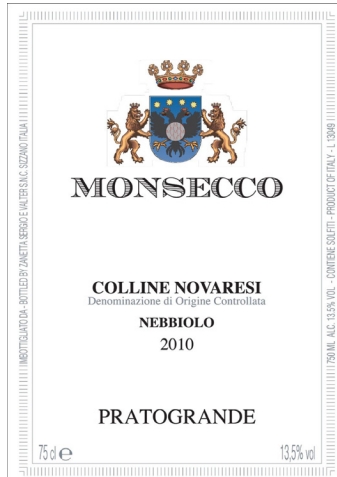
In The Glass:

The early-maturing red grape of the Alto Piemonte, Vespolina gives deeply-colored wines with prominent notes of berry fruits. Well structured, it often is blended with Nebbiolo, but Monsecco's example allows the taster to experience the cultivar on its own terms.

Monsecco



Pratogrande Colline Novaresi Nebbiolo



At a Glance:

- **Appellation:** DOC Colline Novaresi
- **Uvaggio:** Nebbiolo (Spanna) (100%)
- **Average Annual Production:** 20-25,000 bottles
- **Average Alcohol by Volume:** 13%
- **Average Residual Sugar:** < 5 g/l
- **Average Total Acidity:**

In The Vineyard:

- **Parcel Names, Slopes, and Locations:** From hillside parcels northeast of Gattinara, overlooking Novarra
- **Soil Types and Compositions:** Red volcanic porphyry and granitic glacial moraine
- **Vine Age, Training, and Density:** Trained in Guyot and planted at c. 3,000 vines/ha
- **Average Yields:** Controlled through pruning and debudding, yields average 70 hl/ha
- **Average Harvest Date and Type:** Entirely manual, usually early-mid October

In The Cellar:

- **Fermentation:** Following total destemming, wine ferments with selected yeasts in stainless-steel tanks. Cuvaison lasts c. 13 days.
- **Pressing:** Pneumatic pressing
- **Time on Lees:** Racked following malolactic, wine remains on its fine lees until assemblage prior to bottling.
- **Malolactic Fermentation:** Spontaneous, in tank directly following alcoholic fermentation
- **Élevage:** c. 24 months in large, neutral oak botti
- **Press Wine:** Blended after malolactic
- **Fining and Filtration:** Unfined, plate filtration if necessary
- **Sulfur:** Applied after fermentation, after malolactic, and at bottling

In The Glass:

Here, the grand Nebbiolo takes center stage, a wine made exclusively from this noble grape and harvested from vineyards outside of the Gattinara and Ghemme delimited zones but still in hillside sites on the slopes above and around the towns on the eastern shore of the Sesia river. It is a fine and elegant wine with subtle tannins, bright cherry flavors and a persistent finish that again emphasizes the complex mineral composition of the underlying soils.

Monsecco



Sizzano



At a Glance:

- **Appellation:** DOC Sizzano
- **Uvaggio:** Nebbiolo (Spanna) (60%), Vespolina and Uva Rara (Bonnarda Piemontese) (40%)
- **Average Annual Production:** 1,700 bottles
- **Average Alcohol by Volume:** 13%
- **Average Residual Sugar:** < 5 g/l
- **Average Total Acidity:**

In The Vineyard:

- **Parcel Names, Slopes, and Locations:** From the steeply-sloped, west-facing San Clemente vineyard in Sizzano
- **Soil Types and Compositions:** Red volcanic porphyry and granitic glacial moraine
- **Vine Age, Training, and Density:** Trained in Guyot and planted at c. 3,000 vines/ha, vines average 40 years old
- **Average Yields:** Controlled through pruning and debudding, yields average 40 hl/ha
- **Average Harvest Date and Type:** Entirely manual, usually mid October

In The Cellar:

- **Fermentation:** Following total destemming, wine ferments with selected yeasts in stainless-steel tanks. Cuvaison lasts c. 13 days.
- **Pressing:** Pneumatic pressing
- **Time on Lees:** Racked following malolactic, wine remains on its fine lees until assemblage prior to bottling.
- **Malolactic Fermentation:** Spontaneous, in tank directly following alcoholic fermentation
- **Élevage:** c. 24 months in large, neutral oak botti, with some of the wine in neutral barriques
- **Press Wine:** Blended after malolactic
- **Fining and Filtration:** Unfined and unfiltered
- **Sulfur:** Applied after fermentation, after malolactic, and at bottling

In The Glass:

As with all Nebbiolo-based wines from great terroir, the combination of good acidity and firm, sweet tannins, make this ideal candidate for cellaring for up to 20 years.

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Ghemme



At a Glance:

- **Appellation:** DOCG Ghemme
- **Uvaggio:** Nebbiolo (Spanna) (85%), Vespolina and Uva Rara (Bonnarda Piemontese) (15%)
- **Average Annual Production:** 5,000 bottles
- **Average Alcohol by Volume:** 13.5%
- **Average Residual Sugar:** < 5 g/l
- **Average Total Acidity:**

In The Vineyard:

- **Parcel Names, Slopes, and Locations:** From the steeply-sloped, west-facing San Clemente vineyard in Sizzano
- **Soil Types and Compositions:** Red volcanic porphyry and granitic glacial moraine
- **Vine Age, Training, and Density:** Trained in Guyot and planted at c. 3,000 vines/ha, vines average 45 years old
- **Average Yields:** Controlled through pruning and debudding, yields average 40 hl/ha
- **Average Harvest Date and Type:** Entirely manual, usually mid October

In The Cellar:

- **Fermentation:** Following total destemming, wine ferments with selected yeasts in stainless-steel tanks. Cuvaion lasts c. 18 days.
- **Pressing:** Pneumatic pressing
- **Time on Lees:** Racked following malolactic, wine remains on its fine lees until assemblage prior to bottling.
- **Malolactic Fermentation:** Spontaneous, in tank directly following alcoholic fermentation
- **Élevage:** c. 36 months in large, neutral oak botti, with some of the wine in neutral barriques
- **Press Wine:** Blended after malolactic
- **Fining and Filtration:** Unfined and unfiltered
- **Sulfur:** Applied after fermentation, after malolactic, and at bottling

In The Glass:

An extraordinarily age-worthy wine that will mature nicely over 20 years or more in the cellar, in its youth this medium to full bodied wine shows a lovely mélange of red and dark berry fruits, with hints of tobacco and spice and a very long finish. A wine such as this is a testament to the glory and longevity of mountain Nebbiolo. Decant for best results!

Monsecco



Gattinara Osso



At a Glance:

- **Appellation:** DOCG Gattinara
- **Uvaggio:** Nebbiolo (Spanna) (100%)
- **Average Annual Production:** 3,000 bottles
- **Average Alcohol by Volume:** 13.5%
- **Average Residual Sugar:** < 5 g/l
- **Average Total Acidity:**

In The Vineyard:

- **Parcel Names, Slopes, and Locations:** From the prime, historically-acclaimed Osso vineyard high on the eastern section of the amphitheater overlooking Gattinara
- **Soil Types and Compositions:** Red volcanic porphyry and granitic glacial moraine
- **Vine Age, Training, and Density:** Trained in Guyot and planted at c. 3,000 vines/ha, vines average 45 years old
- **Average Yields:** Controlled through pruning and debudding, yields average 40 hl/ha
- **Average Harvest Date and Type:** Entirely manual, usually mid October

In The Cellar:

- **Fermentation:** Following total destemming, wine ferments with selected yeasts in stainless-steel tanks. Cuvaison lasts c. 18 days.
- **Pressing:** Pneumatic pressing
- **Time on Lees:** Racked following malolactic, wine remains on its fine lees until assemblage prior to bottling.
- **Malolactic Fermentation:** Spontaneous, in tank directly following alcoholic fermentation
- **Élevage:** c. 36 months in large, neutral oak botti, with some of the wine in neutral barriques
- **Press Wine:** Blended after malolactic
- **Fining and Filtration:** Unfined and unfiltered
- **Sulfur:** Applied after fermentation, after malolactic, and at bottling

In The Glass:

Gattinara's vineyards form a dramatic amphitheater just west of the Sesia River, and their soils of red porphyry (Gattinara was once the heart of an ancient volcano) give the Nebbiolo grown there a distinctively powerful, penetrating minerality. The Osso vineyard sits near the very top of the amphitheater, and its particularly rocky and poor soils imbue Monsecco's Gattinara (100% Nebbiolo) with a vigorous acidity around which the wide range of flavors and palate sensations are tightly coiled.