

# Cantina Gaggiano

## Alto Piemonte



### The Wines

- *Coste Della Sesia DOC Rosso “Leandro”*: 80% Nebbiolo, 10% Vespolina, 10% Croatina. In 2004 two large denominations were created to help keep the small DOCs in business. They were Colline Novares (covering Boca, Fara, Ghemme, and Sizzano) and Coste Della Sesia (Gattinara and Lessona). These overarching DOCs allow grapes from their regions to be blended and permitted the use of different varieties. Perhaps more importantly, they impose no aging requirement (by contrast, Boca, Gattinara and Ghemme require a 34-month aging period, which can put a substantial strain on a small producer’s cash flow).

Leandro is named for Marco’s grandfather-in-law, who appreciates easier wines. Effectively, it’s the second label of Gervasio, coming from the same vines (mostly planted in the 1970s) and same picking dates. It’s aged six months in wood, mostly large Austrian casks with a third or so in neutral 500-liter French barrels (*demi-muids* in France; *tonneau* in Italy). The 2016 vintage made 3,000 bottles.

- *Coste Della Sesia DOC Nebbiolo “Sandrin”*: Nebbiolo. This comes from the Galizia vineyard in Gattinara, which happens to be the highest and second most northern of all of Gattinara’s vineyards, with excellent drainage and endless wind (fungal diseases aren’t nearly the threat that roe deer and boar are).

This too is essentially a second label—of Timoteo: same vines, same dates of picking, simply a cellar selection. Sandrin is a baby Gattinara, aged 16-18 months in neutral 500L barrels. The 2017 vintage made 2,000 bottles.

Sandrin is Marco’s and Claudio’s father, and Galizia was the first parcel the brothers purchased.

- *Bramaterra DOC “Gervasio”*: 80% Nebbiolo, 10% Vespolina, 10% Croatina. Bramaterra is sandwiched between the hills of Lessona and Gattinara, and it has a mix of Lessona’s sandy soils with a lot of Gattinara’s volcanic soils. Spanning seven communes, it received DOC status in 1979. The appellation rules permit up to 30% Croatina and up to 20% either of Uva Rara or Vespolina to be blended with Nebbiolo to soften the latter’s tannic structure, particularly in under-ripe years. Gaggiano normally harvests its Bramaterra 7-10 days after the Gattinara harvest.

Gervasio was the grandfather who first came to Bramaterra and cultivated grapes. The wine is the product of four small hillside parcels, lower in elevation than Gaggiano’s vines in Gattinara, totaling 5.6 acres. The parcels are farmed without pesticides, harvested by hand, and normally (depends on the vintage) the three varieties are picked at once and co-fermented. The wine is raised in large Austrian casks for around 18 months and racked into steel where it rests for several weeks before being put into bottle. The 2016 vintage made 1,000 bottles.

- *Gattinara DOCG “Timoteo”*: Nebbiolo. Gattinara lies a good 60 miles north of Barbaresco and Barolo, but its soil structure is much closer to Mt. Etna—altogether volcanic, the difference being that the Alps are much older than Etna. The Langhe appellations have limestone and clay, and there’s none of that in Gattinara’s iron-rich red soils. The DOCG is the best known of the historic upper Piedmont appellations. Legend has it that Mercurino Arborio, Marchese de Gattinara, a local nobleman and wine lover who became the last imperial chancellor to the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V in the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, did much to promote the wines of his region. Entering our century, Gattinara had the best-preserved viticulture of the upper appellations, thanks in large part to a couple of prominent wine producing families.

There’s a lot of pride among Gattinara producers. They have the distinct sense that their remote mountain foothill terroir can make an age-worthy wine of noble elegance, one that is very much of a Nebbiolo lover’s Nebbiolo.

Timoteo is named after Marco and Isabella’s son. The wine comes from their 1.7-acre parcel high in the Galizia vineyard, farmed without pesticides and harvested by hand. Aged 24 months in neutral 500L barrels followed by 11 more in steel before bottling. The 2015 vintage made 1,200 bottles.