

Azienda Agricola Nada Giuseppe Barbaresco



Enrico Nada is a rising young star making a range of impressive wines and a downright stunning Barbaresco from a steep, perfectly exposed Cru called Casot near Treiso.

-- Michael Franz, winereviewonline.com, June 2013

On March 27, 1900, a forefather of Giuseppe Nada sealed a deal on a vineyard, orchard, and a small house on a steep hillside in the commune of Treiso. The vineyard was in the *cru* of Casot, and that forefather bought the parcel from a fellow by the name of Gaja.

In 1964 Giuseppe's father, Antonio, made the risky decision to begin to estate bottle a part of his production, requiring him to invest in a small winery (he put it in the basement of that house on the Casot hillside). It was a prescient move: in 1966 the DOC of Barbaresco, named after one of the three villages in the appellation, became established.

In 1968 Antonio moved to the other side of the ridge, but closer to the top so he had a better view. Probably more importantly, the location made it much easier to receive grapes from the Casot parcel as well as his Marcarini parcel on the other side of the hill. He built a new basement winery and put his house on top. For years afterward his son Giuseppe and wife Nella lived there and over the years carefully enlarged the vineyards and production.

At midpoint, Marcarini stands at 325 meters; Casot at 315 (low by Treiso's standards), and the two occupy flanking positions on the same ridge coming down off the spine of Treiso. The Nada holdings in the two constitute six hectares (almost 15 acres), and for a long time this was the sum total of the wines owned by this industrious family. In 2022, Giuseppe's son Enrico increased the vineyard size by a half hectare that he purchased a virgin parcel in the Alta Langa DOCG.

Enrico "officially" became cellar master in 2008 upon graduating from enology school. He quickly eliminated SO₂ additions during fermentation, maceration and malolactic, and reduced the additions used during aging. He moved to employing only one minimal filtration at bottling for the reds. He embarked on what to some eyes seemed a Quixotic quest and planted Riesling--which turned out to be an astonishing success--while convincing his father to go organic

in the vines. (His father worked the vines until the pandemic, and then passed away in 2023, shortly after Enrico's nephew Fabio began working in the vines and cellar.). The red parcels received certification in 2017; the white parcels were certified in 2018 and 2019. All parcels, of course, continue to be hand-harvested, and all the red wines continue to be fermented spontaneously (Enrico uses a selected organic yeast for the white wines).

In 2022 Enrico became president of the Cuneo chapter of the Coldiretti agricultural syndicate, which coordinates between farmers and governments on all levels for just about everything produced agriculturally in Italy. It's a five-year post. As if that didn't make him busy enough (he also has two young daughters), he couldn't pass up the opportunity to buy the half hectare parcel in the Alta Langa in 2022. It's an extremely steep parcel with a 25-30% grade, just cleared, in the middle of a forest. There is only one other parcel nearby, some thirty yards away, newly planted and of roughly the same size, owned by Gaja. Immediately on the other side of the ridge from these two parcels is the ambitious new winery Gaja completed just before the pandemic to make wines from this appellation. Despite its name (*high language*, referring to the language of these hills), the Alta Langa isn't based on altitude but rather on its location outside of the Barbaresco appellation and on its dedication to sparkling wine. Regardless, Enrico's parcel *is* about elevation; it's why he bought it. The church in Treiso sits at 410 meters, considerably higher than Barbaresco's church, let alone Neive's. Enrico's new parcel reaches nearly 680 meters. Plus, it's east-facing and surrounded by cooling forests. Here, once the ground is replenished by grasses and legumes that have been seeded, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir will be planted for sparkling wine, along with Riesling. The success of Enrico's Riesling in the Marcarini vineyard has made him a convert.

The three towns comprising Barbaresco DOCG are Treiso, Neive, and Barbaresco (there's also the hamlet of San Rocco Seno d'Elvio, which anchors the commune of Alba's small sector in the southwest of the appellation). They form a triangle: Barbaresco in the west, Neive in the east, and Treiso—the smallest in acreage and highest in elevation—in the south. Innately, Barbaresco and Treiso lean toward elegance while Neive can pack more power and structure, but the differences can be readily rendered mute by the hand of man. It is worth noting, however, that if it snows, it snows first in Treiso, and Treiso's altitudes give it the widest diurnal swings. Treiso has around 1,000 inhabitants, including three wine producing families with the name Nada. They are producers known as Ada Nada, Fiorenzo Nada, and of course Giuseppe Nada.

Down in the river valley is the small, ancient city of Alba, effectively separating Barbaresco from Barolo, Piedmont's two great regions for Nebbiolo. They sit about ten miles apart, but much more than distance separates them.

To begin, Barolo had a head start over Barbaresco by several generations. Its reputation was built in the 19th century by selling slightly sweet Nebbiolo wine to the French court of Savoy in Turin. Toward the end of that century, the farmers in Barbaresco petitioned to have their region's crop included into the production of Barolo but were denied. In 1894, an enologist from Barbaresco got nine families to form a cooperative, and Barbaresco, the wine, got its first real push. The cooperative closed in the 1920s under restrictive economic rules issued by the Fascists and only reopened, thanks to the village priest, in 1958 under the name of Produttori Del Barbaresco.

In acreage, the DOCG of Barbaresco is just over a third of the size of Barolo at roughly 1,200 acres versus Barolo's 3,000. It has three communes to Barolo's eleven. It is ever so slightly warmer during a normal growing season, and its grapes typically ripen a bit earlier than in Barolo. The soils are similar and similarly quite diverse, but, generally, Barbaresco, being closer to the Tanaro River, has more alluvial soils with more sand whereas Barolo has a bit more limestone and clay (these are generalities; specific sites can quickly counter them). When it comes to wine, alluvial soils translate into elegance and perfume; clay translates into structure and power, hence Barbaresco's reputation as the Queen and Barolo's as the King—in her you find Nebbiolo's rose petals, in him you find its tar. Lastly, legally, Barbaresco must be aged for a minimum of two years, with at least nine months of that in wood; Barolo must be aged for three years, with at least two of them in wood (for both wines, the remainder of time can be spent in vat or bottle). Note that the rule mandating length of time in wood for Barbaresco changed in 2010--it used to mandate 12 months in wood--and what Enrico Nada does is age his Barbaresco in various sizes of barrels for two years before bottling and puts the wine on the market shortly thereafter.

www.nadagiuseppe.com