

# Teobaldo Cappellano

## *The Legacy of the Langhe's Philosopher King*

**B**arolo is an area where fiercely independent people make extraordinary wines. Yet, even in such company, Teobaldo Cappellano, who passed away on February 21, 2009, stood out for his unique philosophy, his meticulous winemaking and the profound character of his wines.

A legend in Barolo—and among artisanal growers throughout Italy—Cappellano was one of the last of the region's great traditionalists ... and he was one of Barolo's most compelling personalities. In 1983 he banished journalists from his cellar, unless they reviewed his wines without scores. (He saw ratings as divisive among growers.) And he may have been the only person who, during his lifetime, made Barolo from ungrafted vines.

### Revered in the Langhe

The near-universal admiration accorded to Cappellano was striking, given that his attitudes were often controversial. Various described as a "wine artist," a "professional polemist," and a "poet, philosopher and winemaker," he was president of the influential Vini Veri (or "true wine") group. He was also a longtime leader of Italy's sustainable agriculture movement.

Cappellano made fewer than 800 cases of Barolo per year, all vinified traditionally: a fermentation of 14 to 21 days with indigenous yeasts and aging in well-seasoned *botti* for at least three years. His tiny production quickly disappeared into collectors' cellars in Italy, Switzerland and Germany. As Antonio Galloni once wrote, "Cappellano's wines are impossibly hard to find, even in neighboring Alba."

### Classic Winemaking

The Barolos that Cappellano made are classic "old-style" Barolo, marked by a haunting scent of dried roses and a hint of truffle. Yet, because of his stance on ratings, his wines remain almost



Teobaldo Cappellano  
(1944-2009)

unknown in America.

Cappellano made two Barolos—both from the mythic Gabutti vineyard on Serralunga's best slope. Yet, you will not see "Gabutti" on his labels. This prestigious name was removed years ago to protest the expansion of the appellation to include inferior sites.

Two-thirds of his Barolo production was **Barolo "Rupestris,"** from a parcel planted on grafted rootstock in the 1940s. The grapes from this parcel produce a Barolo of superb depth of color and remarkable richness and length.

His other Barolo was the mythic "**Piè Franco,**" from a parcel planted on its own roots with Nebbiolo's "Michet" clone in 1989. The ethereal delicacy of this great wine made Cappellano wonder if it tells us what Barolo tasted like before Phylloxera.

And he continued his family's tradition of making the legendary elixir, **Barolo Chinato.**

For Cappellano, winemaking was an art. As he told Maurizio Rosso in *The Mystique of Barolo*, "Making Barolo is hedonism, it is art. Wine is hedonism. But wine, too, needs identity: I need to be able to say 'This is Barolo.'"

### The Past and the Future

For the last three years of his life, we represented Cappellano in California, and we considered it a great privilege to share the beauty of his wines with Americans. He was a once-in-a-generation winemaker who not only made great wine, he encouraged us all to expect more of ourselves.

His talented son Augusto is carrying on Teobaldo's legacy, assuring us of many more great Cappellano Barolos. Schooled by his father not only in the art, but the philosophy, of winemaking, we can expect nothing less.

# CAPPELLANO

Piedmont, Italy

## OVERVIEW

Proprietor: Emma Orsi and Augusto Cappellano (mother and son)  
Winemaker: Augusto Cappellano

Cappellano was founded in 1870 by Filippo Cappellano, and came to be a dominant force in Serralunga. The family controls the estate to this day, and its tiny production of wines emerge from Serralunga's mythic Gabutti vineyard.

Teobaldo Cappellano ran this estate until his death in 2008, and he was an early and vocal champion of sustainable viticulture and traditional winemaking.

## VINEYARD INFORMATION

Soils: Grey and white calcareous marls.  
Zone: Serralunga d'Alba  
All the wines come from the Gabutti cru in Serralunga. The estate's holdings total a mere 3.7 hA. Most of the vines were planted at the start of the 20th century.

## RECENT VINTAGES

2007 – Very good to excellent vintage. Wines are extremely fresh and aromatic.  
2006 – An superlative vintage at this estate. Expressive wines of great purity and richness.  
2005 – A strong year with classic, backwards, “very Serralunga” wines.  
2004 – Another great vintage. Classic wines in the style of 2001.  
2003 – A hot, dry year that produced uncommonly lush, forward Barolo and excellent Barberas and Dolcettos for near-term drinking.

## ADDITIONAL WINEMAKING NOTES

Traditional and natural winemaking, with macerations exceeding 30 days and long aging in *botti grandi*, is employed  
No artificial chemicals or treatments are used in the vineyards.  
The Cappellano estate is credited with inventing and popularizing Barolo Chinato.

## THE BAROLI

### Barolo “Rupestris”

Fruit Source: Gabutti cru in Serralunga  
Avg. Yield: 40 hL/hA  
Fermentation: 15 days in wooden vat with regular breaking-up the cap.  
Aging: 4-5 years on large cask.  
Avg. Production: 300-400 cases  
US retail price: \$75.00

### Barolo “Pie Franco”

Fruit source: 100% ungrafted Michet clone from the Gabutti Cru in Serralunga.  
Avg. Yield: 40 hL/hA  
Fermentation: No destemming. The cap is submerged and maceration extends for 30-60 days.  
Aging: 4 years in large cask.  
Avg. Production: 100-150 cases  
US retail price: \$120.00

### Barolo Chinato

Fruit source: Cappellano Barolo.  
Avg. Production: 400 cases  
US retail price: \$75.00  
Note: Chinato is an infusion of Barolo with quinine bark and other spices. The recipe dates to the late-1800s and is passed down only from father to son. The steward of the recipe today is Augusto Cappellano.