

Giacomo Conterno

The Gold Standard for Traditionally Made Barolo

For 45 years, until his death in 2004, Giovanni Conterno forged a reputation as the greatest of all Barolo producers, irrespective of style. The wines he made were the quintessence of “traditional” Barolo: rich, powerful, massively structured, and capable of long development in bottle.

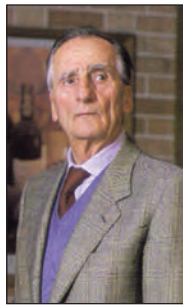
For many, his heroic **Monfortino**—the product of wild temperature swings during fermentation and 6 to 8 years in barrel—is the most perfect expression of the Nebbiolo grape. As for his glorious **Barolo Cascina Francia**, it has long been the benchmark against which other producers measure their own efforts.

Giovanni left the world many great vintages of Barolo, including 1964, 1971, 1978, 1985, 1990, 1996, 1999 and 2001. But possibly his greatest legacy was to hand over his important work to his gifted son Roberto. A talented winemaker in his own right, Roberto not only shares his father’s brilliance but is equally determined to uphold his family’s traditions. He could follow other young Langhe winemakers into modernism, but he never will. In his words, the wines of Giacomo Conterno will always belong to the generations that came before him.

The First Important Barolo

The Conterno crown jewel, Monfortino, is not only arguably the greatest Barolo; it was also the very first Barolo made in what has come to be known as the classic style.

At the time that Giovanni Conterno’s father Giacomo served in World War I, Barolo was generally sold in either cask or demijohn, meant for early drinking. But when Giacomo returned from the war, he decided to create a Barolo with immense aging potential. His first wine was a 1920 Barolo Riserva, and he soon adopted the name Monfortino



At left, the late Giovanni Conterno and, at right, his son Roberto, who is carrying on the Conterno family legacy.

in honor of his home village Monforte d’Alba.

For the next 54 years, Giacomo—and then his son Giovanni—made Barolo in much the same way. Two Barolos were made, always from purchased grapes, the main distinction being fermentation technique and time in cask.

A Noble Vineyard

Then, in 1974, Giovanni acquired the Cascina Francia vineyard in Serralunga. With its fabulous exposure, the site was perfect for the powerful Conterno style, and Giovanni immediately stopped buying grapes, relying on approximately 5 hectares of Nebbiolo to produce about 600 cases of Monfortino and 1500 cases of Cascina Francia. The ownership of Cascina Francia also made it possible for Giovanni to produce a tiny amount of some of the Langhe’s finest, and most sought-after, Barbera.

Like his father, Roberto is patient in raising his wines. Consequently, the period from harvest to release is two years for his **Barbera “Cascina Francia,”** four years for Barolo “Cascina Francia” and seven years for Barolo “Monfortino.”

The Next Era

Two thousand eight marked a milestone for Giacomo Conterno: Roberto Conterno purchased land in Serralunga’s prized **Cerretta** vineyard. Roberto chose to increase his holdings in the commune he knows best—Serralunga d’Alba—home, of course, not only to his iconic Cascina Francia vineyard, but also to the legendary Rionda, Gabutti and Arione crus.

In the Ceretta cru, whose owners include Bruno Giacosa, Roberto purchased two hectares of Nebbiolo and one of Barbera. Roberto’s new wines from these plots undoubtedly top the short list of Barolo’s most highly anticipated new releases ever.

Giacomo Conterno

Piedmont, Italy

OVERVIEW

Proprietor & Winemaker: Roberto Conterno

The Conterno Barolos have been famous since the 1920s, and Roberto Conterno is the third generation to run the firm founded by his grandfather, Giacomo. Roberto's father, Giovanni, purchased the great Cascina Francia *cru* in Serralunga in 1974. This *cru* was the *cantina's* sole source of fruit for *all* their wines until 2008, when Roberto Conterno purchased three hectares in Serralunga's prized Cerretta *cru*, from which he produces a Barolo and a Barbera.

RECENT VINTAGES

- 2008** – A potentially classic, structured, and focused vintage, with early comparisons to '96 and '89.
- 2007** – Very good to excellent Barolo vintage. Wines are extremely fresh and aromatic. A masterful Barbera vintage.
- 2006** – An excellent vintage. Expressive wines with great purity and richness.
- 2005** – A mixed vintage with potential for strong wines, but not at the level of '04 or '06.
- 2004** – A great vintage. Classic wines in the style of 2001.

The Vineyards

Soils: Many variations of calcareous marls.
Zone: Serralunga d'Alba

Cascina Francia

In 1974, the Conternos acquired the Cascina Francia *cru* in Serralunga. With its fabulous exposure, and predominately calcareous soil, the site is perfect for the powerful Conterno style.

Cerretta

In 2008, Roberto Conterno purchased three hectares of southwest- to west-facing Nebbiolo and Barbera vines in the sheltered Cerretta Piani section of the prized Cerretta

cru. Compared with Cascina Francia, the key difference lies in Cerretta's soil—which has more white clay—and the fact that Cerretta is sheltered by a ridge, which cools temperatures despite the vineyards warm western exposure.

The Wines

Barbera d'Alba "Cascina Francia"

Fruit Source: Cascina Francia *cru* in Serralunga
Avg. Yield : 30-35 hL/hA
Fermentation : 2-3 weeks in wooden vats with regular breaking-up of the caps
Aging: 2 years in large cask.
Production : 1,800-2,100 cases

Barbera d'Alba "Cerretta"

Fruit Source: Cerretta *cru* in Serralunga
Avg. Yield : 30-35 hL/hA
Fermentation : 2-3 weeks in wooden vats with regular breaking-up of the caps
Aging: 2 years in large cask.
Production : 600 cases

Barolo "Cascina Francia"

Fruit Source: Cascina Francia *cru* in Serralunga
Avg. Yield : 30-35 hL/hA
Fermentation : 3-4 weeks in wooden vats with regular breaking-up of the caps
Aging: 4 years in large cask.
Production : 1,800 cases

Barolo "Cerretta"

Fruit Source: Cerretta *cru* in Serralunga
Avg. Yield : 30-35 hL/hA
Fermentation : 3-4 weeks in wooden vats with regular breaking-up of the caps
Aging: 4 years in large cask.
Production: 300 cases

Barolo "Monfortino"

Fruit Source: Cascina Francia *cru* in Serralunga
Avg. Yield : 30 hL/hA
Fermentation : 3-4 weeks in wooden vats with regular breaking-up of the caps. No temperature control
Aging: minimum 7 years in large cask
Production : 580 cases