

Elio Perrone

"Readers looking for light-bodied, gorgeously fruity, pure sparklers with unobtrusive levels of effervescence should check out these ...brilliant efforts from Elio Perrone." Robert Parker, Jr.

As more Americans have discovered its extraordinary lusciousness, vivid fruit, soft mousse and captivating perfume, it is no surprise that the following for Moscato d'Asti has grown dramatically in recent years.



As a summer sipper, Moscato is without peer. Ambrosial with melon and prosciutto (a classic combination), it is also a superb light dessert wine, perfect with melon, pears or strawberries (especially if the fruit has been steeped in Moscato beforehand!).

Not as Easy as It Looks

Yet, because of its delicacy and its dependence on perfect balance, great Moscato is hard to make, and only a few producers have mastered the craft. One of these is Stefano Perrone who has quickly emerged as one of the region's stars.

In 1995, we set out to discover the Great New Moscato Producer. We organized a tasting in Italy of the Moscatos of over a dozen producers, all of whom had top reputations locally. We tasted them blind and came up with a short list of growers whose wines we thought were outstanding. We then visited them and tasted not only the 95's again, but also their 94's (to see how the previous year's wines were holding up).

Ultimately, we chose the Moscato of Stefano Perrone, who had taken over the duties of the family domaine named for his father. A retired champion motocross racer, Stefano's formidable reputation rests squarely on his two Moscatos: Sourgal, released in late November, and his best wine, Clarté, which is released in April. A mere 650 cases of Clarté are made.

Barbera, Brachetto & Bigaro

By the late 90s, Stefano was looking for new challenges. He recognized that the Asti zone possessed many old Barbera vineyards, and he purchased two of them, one forty years old and the other an amazing 70 years old.

From both vineyards, Stefano produces Barbera that captures the ethereal freshness for which the Asti zone is noted.

At the same time that he was branching out into Barbera, Stefano produced his first vintages of Bigaro—a softly sweet, gently effervescent salmon-colored sparkler made from Brachetto and Moscato. Robert Parker called the debut 2001 Bigaro “beguiling.”

Our faith in Stefano has been rewarded by an unbroken string of sensational wines since we began working with him in 1995. While the Moscatos go from strength to strength, we can only wait to see what other marvels emerge from his cellars.

Moscato d'Asti “Sourgal” - Vinified for immediate consumption and bottled in November.

Moscato d'Asti “Clarté” - From Stefano's oldest vines (most 50-70 years old). Clarte is usually bottled in April, and consistently ranks among the appellations top 2-3 wines.

Bigaro is an innovative blend of Brachetto and Moscato. Similar to Moscato, it substitutes red fruits for Moscato's typical tropicals fruits.

Barbera d'Asti “Grivo” - Made from a parcel of vines planted in the 1960s, Grivo is a pure example of the Asti zone's magical Barbera.

Barbera d'Asti “Mongovone” - The Mongovone vineyard was planted in 1932. It demonstrates the purity and freshness of the region, with the massive impact of old vine fruit.

ELIO PERRONE

Piedmont, Italy

OVERVIEW

Winemaker/Proprietor: Stefano Perrone

Stefano Perrone is a former motorcycle racer who took over his father's domaine in 1989.

VINEYARD INFORMATION

Appellation: Moscato d'Asti

Harvest: by hand

Vine Age: 25-60 years old

Note: Perrone's vineyards are northwest-facing. He believes that ripeness is easy to achieve, if yields are kept reasonable. His vineyards cool down faster in the evening, and retain more acidity and "freshness."

RECENT VINTAGES

2007 – This is a great vintage for Moscato, with tremendous balance of sugar and acidity. Barberas are also very fresh.

2006 – A very strong vintage, with ripe Moscatos and rich, aromatic reds.

2005 – Rains hurt some late-harvesting varieties, but Moscato and Barbera enjoyed nearly perfect conditions.

2004 – A classic vintage, with extended hang time. Wines are balanced and pure.

2003 – Extreme heat led to riper than normal wines. A great Barbera vintage for near term drinking.

ADDITIONAL WINEMAKING NOTES

Sourgal is released in late November. Clarté is held back as refrigerated juice for March fermentation and April bottling and release.

THE WINES

Moscato d'Asti "Sourgal"

Fruit Source: Estate and purchased grapes

Grapes: 100% Moscato

Ave. Yield: 40 hL/ha

Production: 6,000 cases

"Clarté"

Fruit Source: Estate grapes (oldest vines)

Grapes: 100% Moscato

Ave. Yield: 30 hL/ha

Production: 400 cases

Note: Clarte is the Perrones' attempt to push Moscato d'Asti to its ultimate limit.

"Bigaro"

Fruit Source: Estate and purchased grapes

Grapes: 50% Moscato, 50% Brachetto

Ave. Yield: 40 hL/ha

Production: 4,000 cases

Barbera d'Asti "Tasmorcan"

Fruit Source: Section of the Mongovone vineyard planted starting in 1999.

Grapes: 100% Barbera

Ave. Yield: ~40 hL/ha

Elévage: 6-10 months in large barrel

Production: 600 cases

Barbera d'Asti "Mongovone"

Fruit Source: Steep hillside vineyard planted in 1932.

Grapes: 100% Barbera

Ave. Yield: ~20 hL/ha

Elévage: 15 months in French barrique (80% new)

Production: 800 cases