

## **BERGAMOT WINE co**

All Red Wine Club

May 2021

WINE NO. 1

Ercole

Barbera

Monferrato, Piedmont 2019

**GRAPE: BARBERA [bar-BEH-rah]**

Barbera has been a mainstay of the Piedmontese diet for... well, ever, but it went through a major identity evolution in the late 1970s. The grape variety has got acid and color to make any other grape varieties blush with envy, but it is most often very low in tannin, hence the aforementioned tradition of simple, juicy, and sometimes shrill Barberas. For balance, many producers both in Italy and domestically have played with deepening the structure of their Barberas with extended maceration, longer cellar aging and even blending in other varieties. Instead of the ubiquitous light and quaffable everyday glou-glou it had happily been, it was created for the first time to be a more refined and serious wine: more tannic and structured, aged in new barrels and built to last.

**WINEMAKER:**

Ercole is a project based on bringing the market delicious, fresh, varietally correct and, most importantly, affordable wines from the Monferrato area of Piedmont. This is in cooperation with an wonderful small importer aptly named 'The Piedmont Guy.' There are a growing number of these types of projects to be had out there and it is a great trend. The opportunity to contract out high quality juice made by talented winemakers, but as a cooperative side label, creates a great market for everyday wine. One taste of this Barbera and it's easy to see why it could and should be on hand everyday.

**GLASS:**

A mouth watering rainstorm of berries: blackberry, boysenberries and fresh-from-the-field strawberries. Super-fresh from the start, easy to pair with food due to the electric acidity persistent finish. Subtle layers of peppery pop and vibrant violets make this a tantalizing Tuesday wine (and Wednesday, and Thursday, and Fri...)

WINE NO. 2  
Castello di Verduno 'Basadone'  
Pelaverga  
Verduno, Piedmont, Italy 2019

**GRAPE: PELAVERGA [pel-ah-VER-gah]**

Pelaverga Piccolo is as clandestine a grape variety as it comes. Remarkable anything this good can still be hiding in Piedmont of all places. There is only about 30 acres of it planted today and we in the states import maybe four or five different examples, total. There exists another biotype of the grape, Pelaverga Grosso, but that is designated for adding acidity to blends or at most delivering a thirst quenching rosato. The locals also say that Pelaverga wine is an aphrodisiac... I'll just leave that out there for you to do with what you please.

**GROWER:**

Verduno is located in the northern hills of Barolo and the "Castello" sits right atop the village overlooking some of the most picturesque views available. This certainly helps their image as an iconic Barbaresco producer for the area and they do take that role very seriously. Along with that role, they are also amongst the very few that champion this unique grape, Pelaverga, as it is truly indigenous not only to the area but specifically to the town of Verduno. Castello di Verduno approach is one that marries the two "schools" of the area - modern vs traditional. Finding a balance between modern approach and traditional technique has created the thumbprint of amazingly approachable yet undeniably complex wines year after year.

**GLASS:**

Cranberries, strawberries, raspberries. Just a big old bowl of crunchy berries... tossed on the grill. And furthermore, they're seasoned! Aromatic spice holds a vital role in Pelaverga as the grape always flaunts the scent of white pepper. Don't know the difference between white pepper and black pepper? They are surprisingly distinct. Grind up some peppercorns and give yourself an olfactory lesson someday. Then, of course, sprinkle that fresh pepper atop some Tagliatelle ai Funghi for a memorably perfect Pelaverga pairing.

### WINE NO. 3

Capezzana Conte Contini Bonacossi  
Sangiovese + Cabernet Sauvignon  
Carmignano, Tuscany, Italy 2016

GRAPES: 80% SANGIOVESE [san-GEE-OH-vay-say]  
+ 20% CABERNET SAUVIGNON [kah-behr-neh sow-vuhn-yown]

Sangiovese is Italy's most planted grape and clearly its very most famous, hands down, and Tuscany is the very heartland of Sangiovese. It is suited to grow well in lots of different soils throughout the country with outstanding results that beautifully reflect different terroirs. Consumers know this prolific chameleon grape throughout Tuscany in the form of endless expressions of Chianti, but also in the small subregion of Carmignano. Here DOCG rules require Sangio to be blended with 10-20% Cabernet Sauvignon, which contributes substantial body, dark fruit, and sturdy structure. This marriage was founded long before the Super-Tuscan craze made Sangiovese and Cabernet inextricable partners in crime.

GROWER: Located just north of Florence, the Carmignano sub-region is among the four oldest wine producing areas, and is the smallest DOCG region in Tuscany. Ancient Etruscans were growing and making wine here in pre-Roman times more than 3,000 (!) years ago, as evidenced by wine jars and drinking vessels discovered within their tombs.

Tenuta di Capezzana is a regal estate tucked into the Tuscan hills that dates back to 804 A.D. The Contini Bonacossi family have owned and operated the estate since 1920 and they've been a pre-eminent producer of Carmignano for decades. In recent years, their wines are better than ever. Capezzana's 670 acre property (197 acres under vine) is hilly with clay, limestone, schist and marl soils. The vineyards are organically farmed and native yeasts are allowed to ferment their wines. *Villa di Capezzana*, their flagship wine, is made from 20-40 year old vines and undergoes 13 days of extended maceration, post-fermentation. Ageing takes place in a combination of French tonneaux and Slavonian botti for 12 months before bottling.

GLASS: This wine is as steadfast and sturdy as a Medieval village and as timeless as the centenarian estate it comes from; but with a modern flair. Here are two of the world's most powerful juggernaut grapes joining forces to build upon each other, to amplify their inherent intensity, density and elegance. Rich and dark like pure cacao chocolate, the fruit is all mountain blackberries, black plum, black licorice and dark-roast coffee beans. Past this core of inky fruits and roasted richness there is an old school leather strap shaving kit and allspice-soaked overalls.

SIDE NOTES: Tenuta Capezzana's cellar holds dusty bottles of *Villa di Capezzana* dating back to 1925. Cool.

WINE NO. 4  
Tenuta di Gracciano Della Seta  
Sangiovese + Merlot  
Vino Nobile di Montepulciano, Tuscany, Italy 2016

GRAPE: SANGIOVESE [san-GEE-OH-vay-say]

Not only is Sangio Italy's #1 most planted grape, it's also the most mutated, with 102 different registered clonal selections. Some of these produce light, floral, aromatic wines, but many others have been selected to produce brawny, burly wines. The noble clone that makes Vino Nobile di Montepulciano goes by the name Prugnolo Gentile, meaning the "gentle plum," a spin-off of Sangiovese grosso that lives up to its name: often making full-bodied and fruity wines that have gentle pleasant and plush tannin.

GROWER: Situated halfway between Florence and Rome, the hillside town of Montepulciano (which has no relation to the grape of the same name) currently produces some of the highest quality Sangiovese for the money. When you consider it's an ancient growing region with loads of pedigree, the value is even greater. Vino Nobile (often just called "Nobile") is the flagship wine of the region. Stylistically, Nobile strikes a deft balance. It tends to have more heft than Chianti Classico but avoids the raw power and opulence of Brunello di Montalcino.

Tenuta di Gracciano Della Seta is a 19th century estate that's been in the della Seta Ferrai Corbelli family's hands since the mid 1900's. A new generation of the family took over in 2011 and continues to push quality and sustainable practices forward. Their 50 acres of organically farmed vineyards are set in fertile alluvial soils (silt and clay) at 1,100 foot elevation in the Gracciano hills. Della Seta's Nobile is aged for 18 months in a combination of large Slavonian oak botti and French tonneaux (double the size of a standard barrel).

GLASS: Sangiovese is truly a smorgasbord of cherries, capable of expressing all the fruit's colors, varieties and culinary manipulations. This Nobile is a bing cherries jubilee en flambée served up in a brandy snifter, and generously topped with sweet suede sprinkles. All the fruit is tempered by a brickish, wet clay grittiness and velvety leather texture, like Birkenstocks fresh out of the box. The fruit is so effusive and perky, but has major after-hours staying power, as it slowly fades into its beautifully structured tannin.

SIDE NOTES: Truly noble among Italian wine regions, Vino Nobile di Montepulciano was given DOC status in 1966 and was among the first Italian wine regions granted DOCG status in 1980. In recent years the better producers in Montepulciano have distanced themselves from a lush, oaky international style and instead focused on highlighting the natural charm of their regional clone, Prugnolo Gentile.