

Paolo Conterno in Monforte d'Alba

In Monforte there's Giacomo Conterno, Aldo Conterno, Paolo Conterno, what are the family bonds? Conterno name is one original from small Monforte d'Alba village where 2000 people, an important one because it's not in Barolo a different grand cru completely. We have a specific place "Conterni" (not a cru, vineyards are small, all inside Mosconi) - but in the front of Ginestra is that place Conterni aka a group of houses?? This means origin of the name in Monforte generation after generation we are no longer related but it's a name that started from our area and the name we are recognized for. We have different vineyards in different crus so Conterno's are different but all are making high quality wines.

In the same way Burlotto is associated with Verduno - common name in the area. Piemonte/Langhe/Barolo area is also where people/farmers stay in the area. 13 hectare is small but in that area the farms are small anyway so it's limited. Land is expensive, occupied, not available for purchase as supply is so little.

Generations over generations vineyards are kept to the family.

You sold to export markets - American's appreciation to Barolo over time? More than more people know Barolo, but export market only opened up 30 years ago. Now in our area it's mainly producers bottling the wine. People are more open to drink Barolo early whereas in the past people buy it and keep it. Diffusion of Barolo and Italian wine in general makes it no better than in history. Now it's more balanced - traditional vs modern. 5 years before I started they started the modern style (I'm a traditionalist) ?what year?. The market was not ready for modern style as it's always been for traditional style because in the past the traditional style also means not perfection - too rustic because every winery did Barolo in the right way - perhaps not the right barrel or vinification technology was not there. It was time for innovation. At the beginning it might be too innovative but now it's more balanced. They started the modern style - I don't think they changed the traditional style but I think they changed the direction of winemaking even if traditional style, because in the last 7-8 years the market changed a bit - they like approachable wines more now than before, and they appreciate wine of somewhereness - wine of a special terrior, aka the market moved a bit more traditional than 10 years ago.

Vinification: when I started there was no technology, now I learnt both ways. When you have the best grapes, it doesn't change much in terms of vinification. Its question what to do if you are careful in a short time - if you are not careful, you need technology for correction. I didn't want to change the style - I make wine without mechanic, leave on skin longer for extraction for aging potential. Temperature control and air control during fermentation are important, esp for perfection we need to keep an eye on the machine all the time to make sure it does not crush something from the stems or rack the wine after fermentation to keep the wine fresh from fermentation - important and not something paid much attention to in the past.

Last 10 years vs earlier in viticulture? Warmer vintages 1997, 2000, 2003, 2007 when we finished harvest abnormally early end of September, but this in general -20C in our area 1m snow when usually usually much less. Not sure if climate change is changing things a lot - perhaps a bit we also change our harvest timing and vegetation but we wait to see what happens because there's not much changed so far (2014).

How is Barolo perceived in Italy? Sometimes people are not that aware in Italy despite its reputation - we learnt a lot from those in foreign markets who appreciate Barolo. Mentality in Italy: more important Barolo is a special occasion wine whereas Dolcetto's opening up as an everyday wine but because of the name Dolcetto people sometimes think it's sweet. US folks are more open to every good wine, as opposed to Italy. Lastely you got awards from Gembera Rosso, I heard about it changing a bit perhaps different in Piemonte than Tuscany - the split of slow food might be different? How does it compare to /traglasses TG/?

In the last few years GR wanted more coverage of more areas. TG has more important wines now. It's always better when wine is selected, better for a good track record to be established for us.

Consulting oenologist vs own oenologist? Wine is personal - I think each winery should its own personal stamp. It'd be diluted by a consulting oenologist shared between many estates. If you don't know what kind of wine you want to make, it's good to have a community oenologist but the distinct personality of particular estates gets blurred that way. I don't like general taste but rather personal wine with character.

I remember when we started Langhe Nebbiolo in 1991, when it was important to give customers opportunities to drink Nebbiolo in order to teach them to drink Barolo. At the beginning we had vineyards in the east exposition dedicated to Langhe Nebbiolo but we soon declassified Barolo (south exposition, clay calcareous white soils) because it was necessary so that we could make ginetra Langhe Nebbiolo - a special offering from our declassified Barolo.

Barolo Ginestra 2006: 2006 was an ideal vintage: easy spring, clear sky, hot summer, fresh beginning of Sep (wide diurnal), harvest at beginning/mid of October. Nebbiolo in Barolo has strong skin to resist problems. Ideal concentration, ideal perfume, when it's warmer you get a different perfume - more dried fruit.

Hallmark of Venestra: 2007 warm vintages you can enjoy sooner. The tannins of Ginetra is soft - not many grand crus have such soft tannins with such complexity. Do you think the soft tannin is complemented by the French oak better that you sometimes use in the winery since it's not as harsh? French oak barrel doesn't change the expression of vineyard Ginestra. You can enjoy earlier esp in warmer vintages. In 2006, you can

start after 5 years for sure, 10 years old is one of the best moments. Eat with great meat (cooked with a glass of wine for braising), great cheese.

Characters of fruit in Riserva vs Normale: grapes from top or middle of the hill depending on weather/rain for Riserva for balance, always the oldest wine for Riserva, more aging, stricter selection of Barolo grapes quantity wise in a specific area.

Riserva only when its a great vintage - last difficult 2002, now vintages are much better 7-8 out of 10 esp in good steep sites. Sometimes in difficult vintages you select more strictly and increase the number of green harvest from 2 to 3. 2002 no Riserva only Barolo but it was very good.

Barolo labeling changes? Now priority is Barolo vineyard, still confusing due to historical labeling that was different but good change. Now if you dont own the vineyard in Barolo, you cannot buy or call your wine Barolo. Changes started in 2010.