

Nervi-Conterno



There is no name more revered in Piemontese wine today than Roberto Conterno. Roberto is descended from two Barolo giants, grandfather Giacomo and father Giovanni. He is the third generation of the Conterno family to fashion what are, for many, the ultimate and purest expressions of Barolo.

He has worked tirelessly to build on what his family had accomplished; helping the already legendary Barolo Monfortino Riserva become, in the words of *The Wine Advocate's* Monica



Larner, “the ultimate benchmark for *vino italiano*.”

Roberto has also slowly expanded the Conterno estate with purchases in Serralunga d’Alba’s Cerretta and Arione crus, carefully limiting his selections to *terroirs* that are of comparable quality to the family’s hallowed Francia.

So, for Roberto to venture outside Barolo, it would have to be somewhere very special—a place of great *terroir* with real history and,

most importantly, the ability to grow Nebbiolo of the highest caliber. And that’s exactly what he found in Gattinara’s ancient Nervi estate, which he purchased in early 2018.

A RARE OPPORTUNITY

Founded in 1906, Nervi is the oldest cantina in Gattinara, and it has impressive holdings to show for it in two of the appellation’s greatest crus—Molsino and Valferana—as well as the top sites of Garavoglie and Cassace.

Roberto came to know Nervi’s potential well before the purchase. Nervi was acquired by a group of Norwegian investors in 2001, and Roberto’s friend and Barolo connoisseur, Erling Astrup, was the lead partner. Through Erling, Roberto visited the estate often and came to be friendly with the winemaking team.



When the group decided to sell the estate, Astrup wanted to see it in the hands of someone with a true appreciation of its history, tradition and potential. And so, Roberto was given the first opportunity to acquire Nervi – an offer he found irresistible.

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A UNIQUE TERROIR

The magic of Nebbiolo lies in its expression of *terroir*. But its sensitivity to site means there are very few places where its genius is fully articulated.

Everyone knows the standard set in Barolo and Barbaresco, but the forgotten appellations further north in Alto Piemonte also have vast potential. It's why Antonio Galloni describes it as "one of the most glorious, under the radar regions in the world."



And of Alto Piemonte's cluster of nine appellations, Gattinara is surely the greatest. The key is its *terroir*—a rare vein of volcanic gravel, on steep, high-elevation slopes. The climatic conditions ensure wide diurnal temperature swings that produce exceptionally long-lived Nebbiolos of kaleidoscopic complexity and stunning minerality.

Furthermore, Nervi's collection of old vineyards is Gattinara royalty. The south-facing amphitheater of Molsino is one of Piemonte's great sites, revered since the 15th century as a source of wines with power and finesse. Valferana's west-facing slopes can trace an even longer history, as documents dating back to 1231 attest. This cool *terroir* produces a very elegant and mineral Gattinara to complement the more potent Molsino.

THE WINES

In recent years, Nervi has made three Gattinara cuvées—the two *grands crus*, **Molsino** and **Valferana**, and a blended **Gattinara** including fruit from these two, plus grapes from the excellent *crus* of Garavoglie and Cassace. In addition, a crisp, fruit-driven rosato named **II Rosato** is made from Gattinara-sourced Nebbiolo.

Made by strictly old-school methods, including lengthy fermentations and three to four years aging in neutral Slovenian oak *botti*, the Nervi Gattinaras have consistently been among the great Nebbiolos of the Alto Piemonte.

With characteristic humility, Roberto doesn't intend to change the classic style in which these wines have long been made. He says: "Instead, I hope to learn from these wines."

Yet, Roberto's incessant drive to improve—and his masterful touch and perfectionist attention to detail in both vineyard and cellar—are already taking this historic Gattinara estate to new heights. In the process, he is alerting the world's collectors to the potential of this great wine region.

