

**TRAVEL CURATOR**  
**A WINE JOURNEY THROUGH PIEMONTE, ITALY**  
**JANUARY 2022**

# TRAVEL CURATOR

WORTH TRAVELING FOR



Truffles, Barolo, Barbaresco, and the Slow Food Movement all come from Piemonte, Italy. With ancient villages and castles perched on hills overlooking vineyards, Lonely Planet crowned Piemonte as the world's top region to visit. Yet Piemonte is still a relatively undiscovered gem and the best way to experience it is through a curated wine journey as expert wine writer Allison Levine discovered during a recent visit.

## DISCOVER PIEMONTE



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Piemonte, which translates to “the foot of the mountains”, sits in Italy’s northwest corner at the foot of the Alps, bordering France and Switzerland. Piemonte, the second largest region in Italy, borders Liguria to the south, Lombardia and Emilia-Romagna to the east, Aosta Valley to the northwest and Switzerland and France to the west. The primary cities of Piemonte include Torino, the capital, as well as Alessandria, Asti, Cuneo, and Alba, each surrounded by wine country. Wine is made all across Italy, but Piemonte is one of the country’s greatest wine regions. Piemonte only produces around five percent of Italy’s wines, yet it is home to most DOCGs and DOCs (guarantees of quality) in the country, so yep, the wine here is incredible.

### THE WINE JOURNEY



Image Courtesy of La Raia

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Piemonte is famous for Nebbiolo, Barbera, Dolcetto, and Moscato d'Asti, but there are many other indigenous grapes grown in the region. For red wines, there is also Brachetto, Freisa, Grignolino, Pelaverga, Ruche, Albarossa, Uva Rara, Vespolina, and more. For white you have Arneis, Cortese, Erbaluce, Faborita, Timorasso, and Nascetta. There are five zones where wine is produced in Piemonte, but the majority is in the southern part of the region around the towns of Alba, Asti, and Alessandria. My wine journey through Piemonte took me to Monferrato, Roero and the Langhe (which includes Barolo and Barbaresco) where I got to literally taste the natural beauty through the vino.

## MONFERRATO



Monferrato includes the areas around Asti and Alessandria and is where you can find excellent Barbera with wines like Barbera d'Asti, Barbera del Monferrato, and Nizza, a highly regarded subzone of Barbera d'Asti. Other indigenous grapes including Grignolino, Ruché, Arneis, Freisa, and Bonarda are also planted in Monferrato.

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While Piemonte is primarily known for its incredible red wines, one sub-region in Monferrato is known for its stunning whites. The Gavi region is in the southeastern part of Piedmont, in the province of Alessandria. Eleven towns form the Gavi appellation. And the wines of Gavi are made from 100 percent Cortese grapes. The Cortese grape produces wines that are crisp and refreshing with lemon, green apples, honeydew, floral, and nutty aromas. Gavi wines are usually drunk while young and fresh but also have the potential to age for a few years.

#### WHERE TO SIP



Image Courtesy of La Raia

Located in the hills of Gavi, [La Raia](#) is a family-owned winery established in 2022 by the Rossi Cairo family. Giorgio Rossi Cairo, a businessman in Milano, purchased the 180-hectare property and today La Raia is a Demeter certified biodynamic farm with 48.5 hectares of grapes planted, 40 of which are planted to Cortese. Giorgio's son Piero runs the business, which includes the winery, accommodations on the estate, an art foundation, the raising of Fassone cows (a Piemontese breed of cow), and the production of honey, spelt, and rye. La Raia produces three different Gavi wines. The Gavi DOCG is made with all estate fruit and is fresh and bright with a pretty floral and stone fruit nose. The Gavi Riserva Vigna Madonnina is a single vineyard wine that has a rich nose of apple, crisp pear, and lime pith and a more intense mouthfeel. The Pisé is fermented in neutral oak resulting in a rich wine with notes of baked apple spice and lemon.

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#### WHERE TO STAY



Image Courtesy of Allison Levine

There is no need to go far as La Raia has two apartments, as well as Locanda La Raia, a twelve-room boutique hotel located in a former mail station on the estate. The rooms blend tradition with modernity and are integrated into the natural landscape. Enjoy breakfast and dinner in the restaurant which serves traditional dishes and relax by the pool, read in the garden, stroll the property in search of artwork, or visit surrounding wineries.

#### ROERO



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The Roero is north of Alba and separated from the Langhe by the Tanaro River. This hidden gem of a region lies close to Barolo and Barbaresco. It is a hilly region made up of 19 municipalities. There are 147 producers and 86 growers in Roero, which was named a UNESCO heritage cultural site in 2014. While most regions in Piemonte are known for their red wines, and Gavi is known for white, Roero has both a red and a white grape. The two primary grapes of the Roero are Nebbiolo and Arneis and the wines of the Roero are all about elegance.

#### WHERE TO SIP

##### **Azienda Agricola Negro Angelo e Figli**

The Negro family has been cultivating vineyards on the Roero Hills for more than three centuries and the Azienda Agricola Negro Angelo e Figli estate's two most important vineyards, Perdaudin and Prachiosso, were first planted in 1670. Angelo Negro began making Nebbiolo and Barbera in 1946 and his son, and current owner, Giovanni Negro, was the first producer to make a dry Roero Arneis in 1971. Today, the Negro family farms 64 hectares organically and offers an exquisite line up of wines. The Roero Arneis and Nebbiolo are beautifully elegant, and they also make two sparkling wines from Arneis and Nebbiolo. While based in Roero, they also produce Barbera d'Alba, Dolcetto d'Alba, Barolo, Barbaresco and more.

##### **Monchiero Carbone**

Fourth-generation Francesco Monchiero's family has been in Roero for 200 years. Located in Canale, in the center of town, Monchiero Carbone was born through the marriage between Marco Monchiero and Lucia Carbone and the merging of their vineyards. Honoring his parents, Francesco, with his father Marco, started Monchiero Carbone in 1990. Offering a range of wines, standouts include the 2020 Recit Arneis with very pretty aromatics of white peach, white flowers, and grapefruit and the single vineyard 2018 Srü Nebbiolo with aromas of red fruits, licorice, and spice. Monchiero Carbone also produces Favorita, a grape that was almost extinct, which produces a delicate, fresh wine that is light with bright acidity.

##### **Malvira'**



Image Courtesy of Malvira'

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Established in the 1950s, Malvira' was one of the first vineyards in Piemonte to recognize the importance of Arneis. Run today by brothers Massimo and Roberto Damonte and their sons Giacomo and Francesco, Malvira' is an organic winery with 106 acres of Arneis and Nebbiolo. A visit to the winery can include a tour through the underground cellar, a walk in the vineyard, and a tasting of a selection of wines. Or enjoy the wines paired with food in the restaurant at Villa Tiboldi.

#### **Azienda Agricola Giovanni Almondo**

The Almondo family's history in Roero dates to the fourteenth century. Domenico Almondo graduated with a degree in Agriculture Sciences and returned with a focus on high quality viticulture. He founded the Azienda Agricola Giovanni Almondo winery in 1978 and named it after his father Giovanni. The family has 57 acres planted in Montá in the southern part of Roero where the clay soils produce bigger style wines, and a vineyard in the northern part of Roero where the soils are sandy, as well as less than 10 acres in the north where the sandy soils result in pretty, elegant style wines.

#### **Antica Cascina dei Conti di Roero**



Image Courtesy of Antica Cascina dei Conti di Roero

The Olivero family purchased Antica Cascina dei Conti di Roero in the 1950s and started the winery in 1970. Today Daniele Olivero and her husband Luigi Roagna manage the winery and the sustainably farmed thirty-three acres of vineyards located in three areas of Roero – Vezza d'Alba, Canale, and Monteu Roero. Specializing in the traditional grapes Arneis, Nebbiolo, Barbera, Favorita, and Bonarda, Antica Cascina dei Conti di Roero also produces Traditional Method sparkling wines, including one from Nebbiolo.

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#### Enrico Serafino

Established in 1878, Enrico Serafino is the oldest winery in the area and has been in continuous operation in its original location for 140 years. While based in Roero, Enrico Serafino also harvests grapes from Barolo, Langhe, and Monferrato. And in addition to still wines, Enrico Serafino has been producing sparkling wines since its start. Today, Enrico Serafino is the most awarded producer of Alta Langhe sparkling wines.

#### WHERE TO STAY



Image Courtesy of Villa Tiboldi

Villa Tiboldi is an elegant ten room hotel overlooking the vineyards of Roero. Formerly an 18<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse, then the 20<sup>th</sup> century vacation home of a wealthy Genoese family, the Damonte's of Malvira' renovated the abandoned property in 2003. Located next door to Malvira', the hotel also has an elegant and delicious restaurant, a swimming pool, and gardens.

#### THE LANGHE



Images Courtesy of Allison Levine

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The Langhe is the hill country around the city of Alba. Both Barolo and Barbaresco regions, synonymous with Piemonte, are in the Langhe. And what Barolo, Barbaresco, and the Langhe, are most famous for is Nebbiolo, the king of the grapes. Barolo, in the Province of Cuneo, is made up of eleven communes and one of the communes is Novello. Novello is a quiet little hill-top village in the southwest of Barolo. Less touristy than its neighbors La Morra and Barolo, the town has an authenticity to it. And, while Nebbiolo reigns here, another grape is also cherished. Novello is home to the indigenous white grape Nas-Cetta, the only white grape native to the Langhe. While once almost extinct, Nas-Cetta was classified as a DOCG wine in 2010 and is championed by the producers in Novello.

#### WHERE TO SIP



Images Courtesy of Allison Levine

#### **Cantina Comunale Nascetta di Novello**

The [Cantina Comunale Nascetta di Novello](#) is the municipal cellar in the town of Novello. A one-stop-shop, the tasting room offers an opportunity to familiarize oneself with twelve wineries in Novello who produce Nascetta, as well as Barolo and Barbera. In addition to tasting wines, it is possible to purchase wines as well.

#### **Elvio Cogno**

Elvio Cogno was a restaurateur in La Morra when he started making wine for the restaurant. In the 1960s he left the restaurant business to produce wine full time. And, in 1990, at the age of 60, he bought property in Ravera, a single vineyard in Novello, where the winery is based today. Today the winery is run by his son-in-law Valter Fissore and his wife Nadia. A visit to [Elvio Cogno](#) will take you to the top of the Ravera Cru where you can taste through an exceptional selection of Barolos, as well as Barbera and Dolcetto. But do not miss tasting the Nascetta that Valter and Elvio spent 25 years saving from extinction.

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#### **Azienda Agricola La Strette**

Winemaker brothers Mauro and Savio Daniele bought the La Strette property and began restoring it in 1993 into Azienda Agricola La Strette. Their first harvest was in 1997 and today they have 16 acres, primarily in Novello. Le Strette produces the indigenous varieties Nebbiolo, Barbera, and Dolcetto and one of the vineyards, Pasinot, is where they grow Nascetta. First planted in 1948, Pasinot is home to the original planting of Nascetta and Savio Daniele and Elvio Cogno have worked together since 1999 to revitalize the grape.

#### **Luca Marengo Viticoltore**

After graduating with a degree in agronomy, Luca Marengo spent almost five years working in a cellar in Barolo. In 2015, with the support of his parents, Marengo started his namesake winery Luca Marengo Viticoltore. He has 25 acres planted between Barolo and Novello to make Nebbiolo, Barbera, Dolcetto, and Nascetta del Comune di Novello. In 2018, Luca and his parents moved into their current winery which welcomes visitors who can taste the fresh, elegant wines while overlooking the vineyards.

#### **WHERE TO STAY**



Images Courtesy of Allison Levine

Casa di Langa which sits on more than 100 acres of rolling hills, working vineyards, and natural landscape, is a 39-room luxurious resort. The property is committed to sustainability, which is reflected in all aspects of the resort, including the organic materials in the room, the low-energy LED lights, the biodegradable key cards and coffee pods, and the lack of single-use plastics. Located 20 minutes from Novello, Casa di Langa is located in a hamlet between Barolo, Barbaresco and Alta Langa. It is a central location to relax and regenerate as you journey through Piemonte.