



Valmaggiore 2016

Nebbiolo d'Alba

ESTATE

Sandrone's wines are sometimes described as straddling the modern and traditional styles in the region: elegant, attractive and easy to appreciate right from their first years in bottle, but with no less power and structure than traditional Barolos.

WINE

Valmaggiore is the product of Luciano's incredible passion for the Nebbiolo grape variety and its different expressions. Just 15 miles away from Barolo, in the Roero region, Nebbiolo produces a lighter structure and ripe, smooth tannins that are not unlike those of Pinot Noir. This is not a "baby Barolo" or a second wine at all – it is a distinct interpretation of Nebbiolo from a completely distinct geographic zone.

VINEYARD

The grapes used to make this wine are cultivated in one of the historical cru vineyards in the Roero district – Valmaggiore – situated in the municipality of Vezza d'Alba. The Valmaggiore hill itself is incredibly steep: a 100% grade (45 degrees) in places. The soil is comprised almost entirely of sand from shallow sea and beach deposits – fossils are common.

Grape Variety: 100% Nebbiolo

WINEMAKING

Fermentation: Each block is vinified separately. After destemming and light crushing, the must is covered with CO₂ for a gentle warm maceration of approximately a day. Alcoholic fermentation begins about 24-36 hours later from native yeasts. A gentle maceration takes place in upright open-top steel tanks for the first 7-9 days of alcoholic fermentation. Immediately after alcoholic fermentation, which takes around 25 days, malolactic fermentation takes place in 500 liter French oak casks.

Aging: The wine is aged in these casks for 12 months, followed by 9 months bottle aging. Around 1,400 cases are produced in a typical vintage.

VINTAGE

The lack of winter cold caused an early budding but after its early start, the vegetative cycle decelerated. Flowering and fruit set took place slightly later than average, but occurred evenly, thus positively influencing the productivity of the vintage. The slowing of the vegetative cycle was consistent through the summer, and therefore the veraison began 13-15 days later as compared to 2015. Each parcel had to be monitored and harvested individually for maximum quality.

WINE ADVOCATE

"About ten producers make wine in the Valmaggiore cru in Roero (many of whom are reviewed here), and these wines get better each year I return to taste them. The 2016 Nebbiolo d'Alba Valmaggiore is particularly beautiful, thanks to ideal growing conditions during that year. The Sandrone family counts 3.5 hectares in this location. As an alternative to Barolo, this wine presents a soft and graceful side of Nebbiolo with delicate fruit nuances and distinct mineral etchings. Indeed, the wine is almost salty in taste. The sandy soils of Valmaggiore contribute to shaping the wine's lively ruby appearance and those tangy wild berry aromas. This wine is only aged in neutral oak."

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