



The Renato Corino Vineyards

Another Day in Piemonte

THE LAST WINERY ON DAY ONE of our trip was Mauro Veglio. This is a very special winery for me to visit, not only because of the wine quality, but because of my connection to it. Friend and fellow Barringtonian, Gerry Kraemer, and I imported these wines, as well as another producer, Curto. The Curto wines, while not as famous as Mauro Veglio's, are also excellent in quality. Prior to our importing them, Curto wines were not available in the U.S. and to a large degree were sold directly to winery visitors.

When we arrived in the courtyard by the Mauro Veglio winery, we were met by Daniela Saffirio, wife of Mauro Veglio, and Nadia Curto, who has recently assumed leadership of the Curto Winery. I can only imagine my guests' thoughts as I bounded off the bus and the three of us went into a major group hug with



Mauro Veglio and Jim Bryant

tears of joy galore. We then went inside the Mauro Veglio tasting room for an extravaganza. In addition to the host's wines, Nadia was generous in bringing comparable vintages of wines and Sylvia Altare who has assumed responsibility of Elio Altare's operations likewise furnished comparable vintages of similar wines. Unfortunately, Sylvia could not join us as she and her team were harvesting in Monforte d'Alba and could not get back in time.

We started the tasting with Mauro Veglio's Dolcetto 2015, which was 'big' in style—both muscular and tannic in nature—to accompany first courses. Next, we enjoyed the Curto Barbera D'Alba 2015. The wine is medium-bodied with both fruitiness and tannins sufficient to marry with second course offerings. Sylvia Altare had provided a bottle of Elio Altare's Larigi 2012. This wine is made from 100 percent Barbera from a vineyard planted by her grandfather in 1948. It is starting to evolve, but shows influence of dark red berries, spices, mint, and anise. Only 1,900 bottles were produced and it is a great example of Barbera. Mauro Veglio's L'Insieme 2013 was next. Mauro Veglio was one of the original L'Insieme producers.

Initially produced by a consortium of seven producers (now more), it was originally the dream of my good friend Elio Altare. In fact, Elio gave me a bottle of the first vintage even before the wine had

a name. He autographed it for me and wrote "Minestrone" (*insieme* in Italian) as its name which means "together". The wine is a field blend from the producers' vineyards. It is principally Nebbiolo with Barbera and Cabernet Sauvignon or Merlot. In its early years, part of the profits went for preservation of sites in Piemonte, but now other worthy causes worldwide benefit. This wine marries well with main meat courses, but can also be enjoyed by itself.

We then moved to the Mauro Veglio's Nebbiolo "Angelo" 2015. It is an excellent example of Nebbiolo and is made from the delicate grapes from the owner's youngest and most vigorous vines in both La Morra and Monforte d'Alba. The nose detects fresh fruits and floral influences as well as cherry, rose canes, and raspberry. It is a relatively light Nebbiolo, but true to its DNA and can be drunk younger in age. The Mauro Veglio Barolo Arborina 2012 was next. It is a more serious wine. It has great intensity, but everything is in balance with notes of black and red currants, red fruits, and spice. Complexity is added by forest floor, black cherry, anise, and cocoa nuances. This wine was followed by two of Curto's Nebbiolos. The first was the Curto Barolo La Foia La Morra 2012. It is a very good example of Nebbiolo. It has good fruit, richness, and concentration. Fruit influences are blackberry, cassis, strawberry, and raspberry, as well as spices, graphite, and slight pepper. The last wine we enjoyed was the Curto Barolo La Foia Arborina 2011. Ruby in color with a spicy, dark fruit nose, this was a worthy wine to end a vinous affair. It was with a sad heart we had to leave these wonderful people who had so lovingly and generously shared their great wine treasures.

The next day we started where we left off in La Morra at the Silvio Grasso Winery. The Grasso family began selling grapes in 1927 and started bottling all



Scott Dawson of Minneapolis



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The owners of the Silvio Grasso Winery.

their grapes in the mid 1980s. This place is special to me because I harvested Nebbiolo here for an afternoon in 2000. Being in La Morra, the wines are known for their elegance, but can stand the test of time. We began our tasting with the 2015 Barbera D'Alba. A typical Barbera from Piemonte, it presents a nose of Morello cherries and bitter herbs. With good acidity, it is an excellent food wine, generally with the second course following Dolcetto with the first course of antipasti. Next was the Silvio Grasso Turne Barolo 2012 which was rich with notes of cherry and rose petals. It was full of body, yet warm and elegant with tannic structure, but approachable due to silky overtones. This wine pairs well with duck, red meat, or white truffles on pasta or risotto. Then we were treated to a 17-year-old wine, the Silvio Grasso Barolo Ciabot Manzoni 1999. This wine was redolent of many great older Baroli—rose petals and canes, earth, mushrooms, tar, and cherries. This would be a perfect match with a rack of lamb, filet, duck, or tagliatelle or risotto with white truffles. We finished with the Silvio Grasso L'Insieme 2010. This wine contains mainly Nebbiolo with field grapes of Barbera, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Merlot. It is pleasing to drink by itself or with big meat entrées.

We moved just up the hill toward La Morra to the Renato Corino Winery. Our first wine was the Renato Corino Babera D'Alba Pozzo 2014. It had a nose of both cherry and blueberry fruits, and was soft and silky in the mouth. This was followed by the Renato Corino Barolo Vecchie Vigne 2001, a great year for Nebbiolo. This wine was quite resolved, but will keep well for another decade. It was typical Barolo, but with more fresh fruit than many such wines at this age. What a match it would be with red meat or great pasta, risotto, and white truffles! Finally, we were served the Renato Corino Barolo Arborina from 2010. This was another from the same vineyard and vintage as the Mauro Veglio and Curto from the previous day. Although soft in tannins, these wines are immensely appealing even in their youth. They are all made in a more modern style, but will age for several decades. We all enjoyed our visits to the wineries and were pleased with the wines. I promise I shall return soon. A vôte santé! U

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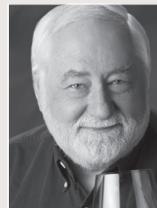


PHOTO: THOMAS BALSAMO

Barrington resident Jim Bryant is pursuing his passion and love of wine as an international wine consultant. This follows a 30-year career in senior financial and general management positions at two Fortune 100 companies. He is the owner of James R. Bryant L.L.C.; contact him at profwino@comcast.net.