



PIO CESARE

2022 HARVEST: early but excellent!

Despite the early picking and difficult weather conditions throughout the growing season, the quality results achieved during the 2022 harvest were excellent, partly due to the rigorous vineyard management realized by our team and to the surprising resiliency of the Nebbiolo vines growing in the Langhe hills.

Weather conditions

The most remarkable agronomical aspect of the 2022 vintage was the lack of proper water reserves in the soil—especially during winter and spring—indispensable to face the summer temperatures spikes.

The most significant rainfalls arrived partially in November 2021 (almost 100 mm). Thereafter, winter was mild and dry without rain and snow, causing a very early start of the growing season, and spring was unusually warm and with no significant rainfalls until the end of May, when intense storms finally gave the soils some much needed water.

Summer was very hot and dry and with temperatures during June and July reaching much higher levels than in the past, accelerating even more the vegetative cycle of the vines; flowering took place 10 days earlier than usual. August was milder with fresher temperatures and sporadic rainfalls.

Similar to recent years, September was characterized by sunny days and significant shifts of temperatures between days and nights, ideal conditions for the ripening of Nebbiolo. We can say that most of the important rainfalls arrived during summer, which were undoubtedly a welcome replenishment for our plants. Thanks to our team's work preparing the vineyards earlier in May and June (rotating the soil, supplying the soil with mineral elements and organic matter), the soil was able to capture the rainwater from these intense water storms. Without those intense activities, during these quick and very intense rainstorms, the soil – so stressed because of the draught- would not have been able to absorb the water.

We even implemented particular agronomical choices to preserve the well-being and the balance of our plants: we followed a very careful and strict green management, we kept the bunches well protected by the leaves to facilitate the growth and to avoid overheat and sun bruises, we are using since a few years the net against the hail to cover instead the canopy to provide extra shade and we intensified green harvesting to reduce the stress of the plants, caused by the lack of water and the very high temperatures (we completed the last round of the Nebbiolo's green harvest just a few weeks before harvest started).

Our strict interventions in the vineyards enhanced the vegetative development of the plants, indispensable for the growth and the ripening of the grapes. As such, our vineyards were at their prime at harvest time—green leaves and healthy, balanced grapes.

The Whites

We started the harvest of our white grape varieties on August 22nd with Sauvignon Blanc and we finished on August 29th with the last bunches of Chardonnay. Eight days of “tour de force” without any rest.

The grapes were very ripe and, despite the heat, exhibited good acidity levels and luckily we didn't have any significant drops in yield (Chardonnay: -6%, Sauvignon: +1.5%).

In fact, we are growing these grape varieties in the freshest and highest exposures of our vineyards, which usually do not suffer too much the heat.

The Reds

We started the harvest of our red grape varieties on August 23rd with Pinot Noir, soon followed by Dolcetto on September 5th. Dolcetto grapes were very healthy and perfectly ripe, with very good sugar levels.

On September 12th we started to pick Barbera grapes in our vineyards at Treiso, in the Barbaresco region, then we moved to Sinio, Serralunga d'Alba, Roddino and Diano d'Alba and we finished the Barbera harvest in Monforte d'Alba at the Mosconi vineyard, in the Barolo area, where we grow very old vines of Barbera, dating back to the 1950s. The grapes were very ripe with great acidity and freshness.

Nebbiolo

The flowering of Nebbiolo started around mid-March—about 15 days earlier than the 2021 vintage—and showed a very early ripening until the harvest.

During the year we had significant differences in weather conditions between the Barolo and the Barbaresco region, the latter characterized by slightly fresher temperatures and more intense rainfall through the summer. Despite the differing weather patterns, the fruit reflected the typical characteristics of its respective location and exposure... all the more reason to pick quickly! The Nebbiolo harvest was particularly short and intense, with very close picking times for vineyards which differ in terms of exposure, soil, terroir and position.

Due to the high temperatures and lack of water, we had decreases in yields and therefore in the quantity levels (especially in warmer regions like Serralunga or Monforte, where we had less than 55 tons per hectare) but the production was not as low as we expected at the beginning of summer. As always, even in such a dry vintage, we completed very intense green harvest interventions, which allows us to achieve every year consistent production both in terms of quantity and quality, regardless of the weather conditions of the specific growing season.

Here below please find the picking dates of the Nebbiolo grapes divided between the Barbaresco and the Barolo region, keeping in mind that in the meantime we harvested also the vineyards dedicated to the production of Langhe Nebbiolo, located in very similar positions of the Barolo and Barbaresco ones:

Barbaresco

September 21st 2022– San Rocco Seno d’Elvio, Rocche di Massalupo vineyard

September 22nd 2022– Treiso, Il Bricco di Treiso vineyard– where the picking required a longer window, being a very large vineyard (almost 5 hectares planted only with Nebbiolo for Barbaresco) and very wide-spread, with different clones and age.

October 4th 2022– Treiso, San Stefanetto and Bongiovanni vineyards

Barolo

The massive vineyard management realized by our team during the summer and the rigorous grape samples and analysis before the harvest allowed us to pick at the right time, starting our harvest in fact later than in other warmer and drier vintages, like 2017 (when we started to pick Nebbiolo on September 15th):

September 25th 2022: Serralunga, Ornato vineyard

September 27th 2022: Monforte, Mosconi vineyard

September 28th-29th 2022: Grinzane Cavour, Gustava and Garretti vineyards

September 30th: Serralunga, Lirano and Serra vineyards, and in Novello, Ravera vineyard

October 3rd 2022: Serralunga, Briccolina vineyard

October 5th 2022: La Morra, Roncaglie vineyard

Grapes were healthy, with great structure and very nice color, great balance between acidity (not very high) and sugar, intense and sharp tannins and perfect concentration.