SMALL VINEYARDS®

# Langhe Nebbiolo DOC

Harvested at the end of October, this traditional-style Nebbiolo from Piedmont's Langhe Hills offers up layers of dark cherry, cranberry, and earthy forest floor. The grape's naturally bold tannins are tamed in this instance by older vines and extremely low yields. Produced by three sisters - Rosanna, Daniela, and Antonella Lequio - this Nebbiolo was selected for its high cost-to-quality ratio - and is picked by hand and sustainably farmed to boot!

Winemaker: Various

**WINEMAKER BIOGRAPHY**

For two decades, Small Vineyards has imported single estate, low-yield wines crafted by families and small independent growers. Just like our Gold Seal Discoveries, each Platinum Seal indicates a sustainably-farmed, terroir-driven wine that “tastes just like the place it's made".

**TASTING NOTES**

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| **Color** | Dark, dusty purple |
| **Nose** | Black cherry, tobacco leaf, and forest floor |
| **Palate** | Powerful tannins up front, tempered by elegant, earthy notes |
| **Finish** | Slightly dry, with integrated tannins |

**VINEYARD & VINIFICATION**

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|---|---|
| | 12 |
| **Vineyard Location** | Langhe DOC, Piedmont |
| **Vineyard Size** | 2 ha |
| **Varietals List** | 100% Nebbiolo |
| **Farming Practices** | Certified members of The Green Experience in Piedmont (sustainable, eco-friendly practices with no chemical herbicides); grapes picked by hand |
| **Elevation** | 150-250 m |
| **Soils** | Calcareous clay |
| **Maturation Summary** | In neutral barrels for 2 months and bottled for 6 months |
| **Alcohol** | 14.0 % |
| **Acidity** | 2.3 g/liter |
| **Residual Sugar** | 5.5 g/liter |
| **Annual Production** | 6,000 bottles |

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## SMALL VINEYARDS BRAND

Two decades ago, when we first began renting cars and driving down the country back roads of Tuscany, our company's name said it all: Small Vineyards. Inspired by all the true blue, soil-to-bottle winemakers Europe had to offer, we played detective, seeking out the best, undiscovered producers in Italy. Today, we proudly use that same name to represent our portfolio of indigenous wines with a unique, small-batch story to share. For estates with their own labels, the Small Vineyards Gold Seal identifies bottles we've certified as low-yield, hand-harvested, earth-friendly, artisanal, and created by a family operated farm. Now, with our new Platinum Seal, we're taking the brand a step further, sourcing premium wines from independent growers with a fantastic cost-to-quality ratio and espousing those same basic tenets.

As anyone who knows us knows, the spirit behind each Small Vineyards bottle remains just as important as the technical details. We look for farmers with a multi-generational reverence for the land – folks who don't irrigate and would rather forego an entire vintage "rather than use man-made pesticides in our grandchildren's soil." Likewise, we partner with producers whose natural instincts lead them to low yields - ten times lower than those of a corporation, in fact, averaging just 1-1 ½ bottles per plant! To achieve this, vines are often grown low to the ground and pruned so they only have 5-6 clusters. Needless to say, green grapes and overripe fruit never make it past the sorting table - just the estate's crème de la crème fruit, always audited by hand. In the end, you can taste the results in every Small Vineyards glass: concentration, complexity, and a sense of terroir that in other circumstances would cost twice the price. Quality over quantity in all things – it's why we began seeking out small estates 20 years ago, and why this ethos remains at the core of our company today.



## REGION

### PIEDMONT

As the name might suggest, Piedmont (trans. 'foot of the mountain') lies in the NW corner of Italy, with Alps shielding it on two sides. 40% of the region is in fact mountainous, and an additional 30% covered in subalpine hills. Borders are shared with Switzerland to the north and France to the west, with the Mediterranean coastline just 90 minutes south. This dual proximity lends itself to bold, structured wines that stand the test of time: ice-cold air from the Alps blows down at night, replacing the warm afternoon temperatures afforded by Mediterranean breezes. These significant diurnal swings allow grapes to develop over longer periods of time, often deepening their natural tannic structure.

Often described as the "Burgundy" of Italy, few would fail to place Piedmont among the world's very finest wine regions. This reputation has been earned in part thanks to its numerous small-scale, family-operated wineries and a near obsessive focus on quality. With entire villages dedicated to the production of wine, it's not unusual to hear stories of winemakers who "sleep amongst their vines", or profess goals such as "making better wine than the French".

Importantly, the region is home to more DOCGs than any other in Italy. Barolo and Barbaresco (accounting for just 3% of Piedmont's production) are just the tip of the iceberg. The Nebbiolo grape alone makes up 13 DOC/DOCG certified wines, and, thanks to topographical variation, the differences between one tiny town and the next can be astounding. With their different altitudes and expositions, for example, the Langhe hills around the town of Alba are Italy's answer to the Côte d'Or. Even though Nebbiolo has a reputation for big tannins and long-term aging, many of the sub-regions (i.e. Langhe, Alba) produce softer styles with a similar weight to whole-cluster Pinot Noir. Single vineyards in close proximity can produce very different wines, which is also why we see so many single-vineyard bottlings.

### LANGHE DOC

Large by Piemontese standards, this DOC was created in 1994 and includes a host of famous sub-regions including Barbaresco, Barbera d'Alba, Barolo, Dolcetto d'Alba, Nebbiolo d'Alba, and Roero. In fact, it canvasses 54 communes in the provinces of (mainly) Cuneo and Asti. Importantly, however, nearly 90% of the vineyards in Langhe qualify as DOC and DOCG! With this particular designation, varietal rules aren't as strict, so producers can offer a wide array of red, white and rosé wines. A few international varieties like Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay are even allowed, making the DOC attractive to winemakers looking to innovate. Similarly, winemakers may elect to use the Langhe DOC to lower the cost of a fine wine - or simply to have it stand out in a crowd. To include the varietal on a label, that wine must be verified at 85%.

Langhe - which is the plural of 'langa' in the local dialect, meaning a long, low-lying hill - is a subalpine area just a morning's drive away from the towering Alps. Slopes rise up to 600 meters and enjoy predominantly clay and marl soils. (Like much of this region, the area was prehistorically under water and the term 'blue tufo' is a nod to those oceanic beginnings.) Fog banks tend to roll in during early autumn, allowing high-acid, slow-ripeners like Nebbiolo the chance to reach their phenolic peaks.