Winemaker: Damiano Sicca
Generation: 3rd

PRODUTTORI
IN CLAVESANA

Dogliani DOCG

Although the Cantina Clavesana's HQ is located just 25 km from Alba, this community of small growers benefits from additional altitude and an overall cooler, fresher mesoclimate - utterly ideal for taut, traditional wines like this one. Bright, vertical, and correct, this everyday DOCG delivers dark cherry (developed further through the use of concrete tanks) and dark earth in a wine that is simultaneously friendly and clean. 92 points JS

WINEMAKER BIOGRAPHY

Against a backdrop of snow-covered Alps, this collective of 150 small, sustainable farms focuses their efforts squarely on the Dolcetto grape, and most especially the Dogliani DOCG. Clean and correct - yet highly accessible - wine remains their mantra!

ENOLOGIST

Damiano Sicca

TASTING NOTES

Color	Ruby with violet highlights
Nose	Dark cherry and cherry blossom, with hints of both white and dark earth
Palate	Bright and vertical, but with ripe, developed berry-driven fruit
Finish	Clean, food-friendly

VINEYARD & VINIFICATION

	12
Vineyard Location	Dogliani DOCG, Piedmont
Vineyard Size	120 ha
Varietals List	100% Dolcetto
Farming Practices	Sustainably farmed, including dry-farmed; grapes picked by hand
Elevation	300-500 m
Soils	Clay-limestone mix
Maturation Summary	In Steel for 6 months and Bottled for 3 months
In Steel	6 months
Alcohol	13.5 %
Acidity	4.5 g/liter
Residual Sugar	1.9 g/liter
Annual Production	500,000 bottles

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PRODUTTORI
IN CLAVESANA

CANTINA CLAVESANA

With 150 members and roughly 320 combined hectares under vine, this hard-working, multi-generational co-operative is based in the town of Clavesana – in turn located just south of Monforte d'Alba in the province of Cuneo. Here, plants typically enjoy more altitude than the next-door Barolo district (the co-op's vines span 280 to 600 meters), and while Nebbiolo exists, Clavesana's focus lies firmly on their beloved Dolcetto grape. While the average member's farm is tiny (less than 2 hectares), as a collective, Cantine Clavesana has positioned themselves as the largest producer of Dolcetto in the Langhe. Beyond this, small amounts of Nebbiolo, Arneis, and Pinot Noir are also grown – and in true Piemontese form, they also count honey and hazelnuts amongst their agricultural products.

Despite the geographic proximity to Alba, Clavesana's hilly sub-zone has a cooler, fresher mesoclimate and is known for its streak of white clay which contributes to the acidic and tannic structure of Dolcetto. (Overall, the Dogliani DOCG is considered to be ground zero for more substantive, complex expressions of the small, tannic grape.) In a landscape of increasingly expensive Piemontese wines, we found theirs to have a fantastic cost-to-quality ratio, and we applaud their tendency to create wines of a clean, traditional style.

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.

DOGLIANI DOCG

Spanning 21 communes and 76 crus in the Cuneo province of southern Piedmont, this subalpine appellation is steeped in history and considered to produce the region's loftiest rendition of Dolcetto. Devoted wholly to a single native grape, wines from this DOCG must be still, monovarietal reds aged for a minimum of one year before release. While the zone enjoys more altitude than the adjacent Barolo district, vines are not permitted to grow above 800 meters. Soils tend toward a telltale white clay-limestone mix, with concentrations located mainly in the hills (so valley floors and flat areas are largely excluded). While the number has fluctuated over the years, roughly 500 hectares are devoted to the DOCG today. Certain towns, including Clavesana, Dogliani itself, and Farigliano were founded in Roman or pre-Roman times, with others such as Bastia, Rocca Cigliè, and Somano built high on hilltops during the Middle-Age to thwart invasion.

While the cultivation of Dolcetto in Dogliani likely goes back much further, the first written evidence can be traced to 1593, when a municipal ordinance warned that harvesting early ("before the feast of San Mateo") came with a penalty of having one's entire crop confiscated! Flashing forward to modern history, the sub-region was thrust into the spotlight as the birthplace of Luigi Einaudi, first President of the Italian Republic (1948-1955) who both helped restore Italy's postwar economy and himself owned vineyards there. The original Dolcetto di Dogliani DOC was established some 20 years later, in 1974 - and was ultimately combined with the Dolcetto delle Langhe Monregalesi DOC and Dolcetto di Dogliani Superiore DOCG in 2011 to create the current designation.