

## **DOLCETTO DI DIANO D'ALBA**

The little town of Diano d'Alba is one of the eleven villages located south of Alba where Nebbiolo is grown for the production of Barolo. Yet this is one village where Nebbiolo is not the most important grape. For Diano d'Alba, that distinction goes to the Dolcetto grape. The vineyards are planted to more than four times Dolcetto than Nebbiolo in this commune and one reason for that is the altitude of the vineyards, some 500 meters above sea level (only La Morra among the eleven communes is slightly higher). As Nebbiolo is a very late ripening grape, it may not ripen at high altitudes in cool years. Dolcetto, which ripens earlier, is a better choice then for these elevations.

An interesting fact about Dolcetto here is that it may be labeled as Diano d'Alba or Dolcetto di Diano d'Alba. Producers here naturally take pride in this grape and many local vintners produce two or three different bottlings each year. Here are notes on new releases tasted in Diano d'Alba this past September. Please note that many of these releases will only be found in Piemonte or in the town of Diano d'Alba itself, so there is a great reason to visit this lovely hillside town!



**Vineyards stretching out from Diano d'Alba**

Photo by Tom Hyland ©2003

### **RATING SYSTEM**

**\*\*\*\*\* OUTSTANDING    \*\*\*\* EXCELLENT    \*\*\* VERY GOOD    \*\*GOOD**

## THE WINES OF GIOVANNI ABRIGO

Although I only spent a short time in Diano d'Alba, I was able to visit the estate of one of the town's best producers, Giovanni Abrigo. The estate is run by Paola Abrigo and Giorgio Abrigo, who is the winemaker. I first tried their wines at the Alba Wines Exhibition this past May and was very impressed with their 2001 Nebbiolo d'Alba. I decided I would like to try their range of wines after that and so visited Paola and Giorgio in September. Here are notes on a few of their wines:

### **2002 FAVORITA**

Favorita is a little-known white grape grown in Piemonte. Straw color with a hint of yellow. Citrus, lemon, pear and a hint of banana in the nose – no oak. Medium-body with good concentration. Tangy acidity in the finish. Enjoy over the next year. (5 Euros) \*\*\*

### **2001 DOLCETTO DI DIANO D'ALBA "GARABEI"**

Bright garnet-light ruby red with an aroma of cherry, a hint of currant and brown spice. Medium body with good concentration. Round and elegant with balanced acidity and tannins. Enjoy over the next 2-3 years. \*\*\*

### **2001 BARBERA D'ALBA "MARMINELA"**

Deep garnet-light ruby red with an aroma of ripe red cherry, thyme and light oak. Medium body with very good concentration. Round, ripe and elegant with a light spiciness in the finish. Enjoy over the next 2-3 years- perhaps longer? (6.60 Euros) \*\*\*\* Note- because of the difficulties of the 2002 vintage throughout Piemonte, the winery will not bottle any Barbera from that year; it will instead be bottled as a Vino da Tavola.

### **2001 NEBBIOLO D'ALBA**

Light ruby red with an aroma of thyme, orange peel, persimmon and oak. Medium-full with excellent concentration. Rich, ripe fruit and supporting oak. Balanced tannins and lively acidity along with a nice spiciness in the finish. Very fine complexity and a nice persistence of fruit throughout. Drinkable now, but this will be at its best in another 5-7 years. Excellent value. (6.75 Euros) \*\*\*\*\*



**Giorgio and Paola Abrigo**  
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