

MARIO MARENGO

La Morra

Mario Marengo, Marco's father, was a rare individual. We were introduced by Elio Altare (another rare one!) who spoke with wild enthusiasm about Mario's vineyard, saying it was the finest he had ever seen! I discovered Elio was not exaggerating. It is truly a sight to behold: old vines (some 75 years of age) high-up on a full, south-facing slope of the great Brunate cru of La Morra. After tasting several vintages, I knew I was in the presence of greatness of a sort one rarely experiences, part of this greatness being a reserve of potential that was as yet unexploited.

I also learned that although Mario devoted much care to his wine and took great pride in it, he was in fact quite occupied by other activities and thus unable to carry his winery further forward; nor was he aware of the need for changes. Thus, Elio and I were faced with an unpleasant task we have faced many times before: tactfully informing a wine producer that, although his wine was splendid in many ways, it could and should be improved, and that this would require some significant alterations.

Mario listened, and was perhaps a bit perplexed at first, but only at first. He then thoughtfully conceded a few possibilities, and soon began experimenting, and tasting with a born again palate. He approved our plan with a bright smile and announced that he

suddenly felt 20 years younger - and he acted it, too!

What a pleasure it is to work with a man of such an open and



quick mind and unwavering dedication. Within a year, he had remade his cellars and is turning heads all around. Mario's Barolo bears the character of his extraordinary vineyard, but equally apparent is the stamp of the producer: on all twelve thousand bottles he makes from his mere five acres.

Mario's son, Marco, is now managing the estate, since his father passed away in 2001, with the same passion and dedication.

Barolo "Brunate" bears the character of the extraordinary vineyard it is made from, but equally apparent is the stamp of Mario Marengo that it continues to have on all the 6000 bottles made from the estate's 1.5 hectares.

The estate also makes another single vineyard Barolo from a tiny plot, Bricco Le Viole, in the township of La Morra, and small quantities of Nebbiolo d'Alba and Dolcetto.

Piedmont

Dolcetto d'Alba

Nebbiolo Valmaggiore

Zone: *Veza d'Alba*

Cru: *Valmaggiore*

Varietal: *Nebbiolo*

Vineyard Ext.: *0.4 hectares*

Average Prod.: *2,800- 3,000 btl/s*

Barolo Brunate

Zone: *La Morra*

Cru: *Le Brunate*

Varietal: *Nebbiolo*

Vineyard Ext.: *1.5 hectares*

Average Prod.: *6,000 bottles*

Barolo Bricco Viole

Total acreage: *5 acres*

Soils: *Chalk-clay*

Varieties: *Nebbiolo, Dolcetto*

Average production: *1,000 cases*

Vinificatory highlights: *Tank-fermented; two years in seasoned barriques for the Baroli*