



primavera

- S E L E C T I O N S -



**PODERI
LUIGI EINAUDI**

LOCALITY: Dogliani,
Cuneo

WINEMAKER: Beppe
Caviola

poderieinaudi.com



PIEDMONT

PODERI LUIGI EINAUDI

It would be fair to say that in recent times the gap between extreme traditionalists and modernists has closed somewhat and Luigi Einaudi, in my eyes, is a good example of this. In this shipment we ordered a concise selection of what I found most impressive when visiting the winery. The selection includes two single Cru 2012 Baroli, Terlo and Cannubi, both from the commune of Barolo, and starts price-wise with the Dogliani Dolcetto 2015. So far, what a terrific year for Dolcetto and Barbera! Einaudi are no exception.



Luigi Einaudi mulling over Italy's post-war reconstruction; or something more important – maybe the next Dolcetto harvest?

THE MAN HIMSELF

In a country where politicians are (at best) objects of amusement, the high regard for Luigi Einaudi, the inaugural President of Italy's First Republic after World War II, is unusual and a mark of a man of vision and quality. The beautiful Einaudi property at Dogliani in San Giacomo, south of Alba, remains with the family, as both HQ and a stylish guesthouse, but also the haven for a raft of classic Langhe wines. He achieved this through vision, thrift and also a quality eye and evidently a strong and ethical character.

THE VINEYARDS

Along with the home property San Giacomo, the Estate has some 4 hectares of prime Cru vineyards in the Barolo commune (Cannubi and Terlo) and a sizeable chunk of San Luigi, acknowledged as the premier parcel of Dogliani for Dolcetto. The recent addition of a Monforte site adds depth to the quality of Nebbiolo for Langhe bottlings, as well as for Barolo.

WINEMAKING: UNFORCED & TRADITIONAL – BUT UP TO DATE

Luigi Einaudi was always an Italian, and even though the job as Italy's first President must have been incredibly demanding, legend has it that he was always on hand for a seemingly equal priority, vintage time – a story confirmed and shared by the winery oldies even now. This was clearly his (other) passion and it is reflected through to today.

For every bottle produced there is a deliberate thought for each wine's existence and an application of care and resources to its growing and making. Starting with Luigi, there has always been a desire to make wine that is essentially traditional, but also a recognition that some innovations will only help and ensure the wine is made properly.

While each of the reds start in controlled fermentations, the Barolos go on for macerations of up to 4 weeks and into larger oak for 2–3 years. Langhe Nebbiolo has just a year in wood, and it's the same for Dogliani (Dolcetto) Superiore. The other Dolcetto and Barbera finish in steel for freshness and earlier drinkability. These wines are not made to be or look like something else or somebody else's style. They are especially not meant to have that blue-black and saturated, oaky international style! They do represent the contemporary face of the best of Langhe DOCs.

For a final word on the Einaudi ethos, why not testimony from the late, great artisan anarchist of Barolo himself, Bartolo Mascarello:

Luigi (Einaudi) owned many vineyards but none in Barolo (village): in fact, he use to buy barrels from us and bottle them himself. The bottles of wine he produced himself bore the script: 'from Einaudi's estate' but not the bottles of Barolo of course. So one day he came to my father and asked him to mediate the purchase of a Barolo vineyard. The Vigano vineyard was for sale, for seven million lira. Luigi Einaudi was a great President and economist but he was also a great...penny-pincher and the deal didn't go through! Luigi's son, Roberto, had always nurtured the same ambition as his father though and when the property came up for sale again in 1998 he bought it, some say for the price of three billion lira, although I don't believe it. But I'm happy things turned out that way. Roberto is a good friend of mine and one of the very few business magnates I've ever admired in my life" ¹

CONSISTENCY & LOCATION (& LOCATION)

The recent acquisition by Einaudi of 9 hectares of prime (and expensive) Monforte land – including 4 hectares of the Barolo sub-plot of Dardi, at the centre of Bussia – underlines Matteo Einaudi's (Luigi's grandson and current custodian) intention to build on the legacy formed by Luigi Einaudi.

An equal billing for Dolcetto

And what of Dolcetto? The wine the Langhe winemaker drinks every day. The wine described by Eric Asimov as the choice "offcut that the butcher takes home for himself..."² As the relatively few superb exceptions, scattered throughout Barolo, Barbaresco and Roero, and in the other Dolcetto DOCs attest, it's only in Dogliani that Dolcetto routinely offers complexities, texture and structure of a quality to sit comfortably with the best of Barbera and Nebbiolo.

With Einaudi recognised amongst the small handful of Dolcetto's elite makers, it's interesting to wonder which are the crown jewels of Einaudi's wines. Is it the structured, radiant and red-fruited Barolo off their Cannubi, or the layered, fleshy and elegant Dogliani? And how will the 'little sweet' sibling cope with the newest Monforte addition to the family?

THE WINES



2015 Dolcetto

Dogliani is the sole DOCG for Dolcetto, and the San Pietro fraction of it, in turn, with its wonderful south exposures and classic calcareous marl and clay, is the place to be.

This is elevated in steel and showcases radiant red fruits of classic sour cherry, with classy underlay of forest floor and violet and a wonderful core of fruit.

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2013 Langhe Barbera

Barbera thrives really well around Dogliani, and some of the best south-facing exposures of San Giacomo and San Pietro are allocated to it. Their calcareous, marl and clay soils result in a lively, high (but very fine) acid Barbera, with gorgeous, red and blue fruits and a stylish sappiness. 12 months in large and small wood is a touch that adds the finishing touch for a complete and stylish Barbera.

2014 Langhe Nebbiolo

This is drawn from Neive in Barbaresco country, for a vivid, fresh, red-fruited style of Nebb, which was almost unknown not so long ago. The typically lean Neive calcareous marl, is a pedigreed locale and delivers notable body and Neive structure, and extra dimensions of fragrance and cinnamon-like spice, and a relatively short time (for Nebbiolo) in large and small wood, is complimentary. Drinks superbly now, but worth hiding a bottle or two away.

2013 General Commune Barolo

Produced from Terlo (60%) and Zuncai crus (40%) in the commune of Barolo. Zuncai is one of the smallest crus, with Einaudi being a major landowner. Tucked down in the south-east section of the commune (bordering Bussia, and sharing a similar soil profile), it sits at around 270m and is west/south-west in exposure. It typically produces a firm style of Nebbiolo, and certainly plays a big part in the classic Barolo structure we see in this wine. Fermented in stainless steel, 15 days fermentation/maceration, 30 months in oak.

A great expression of this vintage, approachable now but showing the backbone and balance to ensure a rewarding cellaring life. Dark-berried fruit the initial impression on the bouquet, elements of licorice, anise, fennel seed and dried rose petals all emerging as sits in the glass. Builds momentum slowly as you taste it, a little austere initially, and then the velvet texture and persistence of flavours evolve into a deliciously complex and mouth-filling experience, all the while underpinned by the outstanding tannin profile that provides the framework.

2013 'Terlo' Barolo

Terlo is one of the more atypical Barolo commune crus. A beautiful site overlooking the town of Barolo itself, it's steep and high at 350-400m, and faces prevalent east. In cool years it can have difficulty ripening, but as the climate in this part of Italy has warmed, it has come into its own. As the principal owner, Einaudi have quite a gem on their hands with this vineyard. Around 25 days of fermentation/maceration and Austrian oak from the highly regarded cooperage of Klaus Pauscha is employed with this wine.

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Plenty of impact on the bouquet here, with black cherry, just-ripe blueberry and sweet tobacco aromas to the fore. Typically 'Terlo' in style, with a sense of graphite-like minerality a key element. Terms like 'muscular', 'tannic' and 'intense' come to mind, but the generosity and fruit richness make it easily approachable. Layers of texture and ripe tannins provide dimension and length through the palate, which is underpinned by fine but lingering acidity. It's no crime to drink this wine now – it's absolutely charming – but it has the depth and structure to handle some time in the cellar with ease.

2013 'Terlo Vigna Costa Grimaldi' Barolo

Sitting at around 350m, Costa Grimaldi is one of the lowest parts of Terlo, but it also boasts the oldest vines, dating back to 1977. This section is owned entirely by Einaudi – a fantastic resource. Winemaking and oak treatment is as it is for Terlo, as mentioned above.

The all-round depth and complexity imparted by the old vines is very much in evidence here, all the way through the wine. Terrific richness in the bouquet, with quite a heady assortment of red and black fruit (cherry, strawberry, plum) combined with elements of licorice/anise, wood smoke, rose perfume and alpine herbs. Outstanding texture on the palate, succulent and deep, the flavours carried easily by the finely muscled tannins that run long through the finish and linger in the aftertaste. Despite all the fullness this wine is offering now, there's a real sense that it is yet to really hit its stride, and there's so much more to come. If you can wait that long, give it five years, and then enjoy it for at least another ten plus.

2013 'Cannubi' Barolo

This famous cru really needs no introduction, but the Einaudi holdings are worth looking at in a little detail. The precise delineation of Cannubi has been a bone of contention for many years, and has resulted in claim and counter-claim being fought out in courts of law. What is not in dispute is that the 'sweet spot' is the middle of the famous hill. As you head further north-east down the hill (towards Alba) it can become too hot, further south-west (as this cru curls around towards the town of Barolo), possibly too cold. At approx. 260m, with its south/south-east exposure and perfect sand/clay/limestone soil, the Einaudi vineyard is right there, in the heart of the dress circle.

Gorgeous aromatics – so typical of Cannubi – are to be found as you nose this wine. Rose oil, white flowers, mint, ripe berries and the sweet scent of freshly mown hay all play a part. Quite juicy and expansive in flavour, plummy and almost plush you could say, but supported by the firm hand of powdery, graphite-like tannins. Complexity is there in spades on the palate, and with all the...

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THE WINES CONTINUED...

...elements still falling into place, its best days lie ahead, no doubt. That said, the vibrancy and seductive nature of the fruit is so appealing you can enjoy this now, and matched with food and given some air it offers superb drinking and a great window into this memorable vintage.

2008 'Cannubi' Barolo

On my most recent shipment, I was able to source a final allocation of 2008 Cannubi. This is showing all the hallmarks of the ethereal, perfumed characters you would expect from the cru, but maybe the highlight is the approachable drinkability – a great example of the 2008 vintage. Being jammed in between two warmer years ('07 & '09), 2008 in general terms was a cooler year with a relatively late harvest. Most picked their Nebbiolo from mid-October through till the end of the month. Einaudi picked towards the end of the month, resulting in a wonderfully medium-bodied wine, with higher toned, fragrant notes. Please let me know if you're interested.

1 The Mystique of Barolo - Omega Arte, pg. 123

2 New York Times, Jan 3 2013