



# primavera

– S E L E C T I O N S –



**LOCALITY:** Castiglione  
Falletto, Barolo

**WINEMAKER:** Alberto  
Racca

[tenutamontanello.com](http://tenutamontanello.com)

## TENUTA MONTANELLO – THE ALMOST MONOPOLE...

One thing apparent from the surge of interest in Nebbiolo is a growing preference for the more laid-back styles of wine – the unforced, those not trying to be something, the more traditional expressions. On my visits to Barolo, one of the calmest people I've met is the low-key Alberto Racca, the 5th generation at this estate (the Montanello Cru) founded by Bartolomeo Racca's purchase of it from the Earl of Castiglione Falletto in 1864. Alberto is about as unforced a character as you'll meet – a man of the land. In my opinion, this helps explain why you seldom see reviews or much written about Tenuta Montanello in recent times. Older Barolo references, like the Wassermans' 'Italy's Noble Red Wines', and 'Barolo, Tar and Roses', chronicle the slope of Montanello as an important cru of Castiglione Falletto, and his current wines are an embodiment of that.



**PIEDMONT**

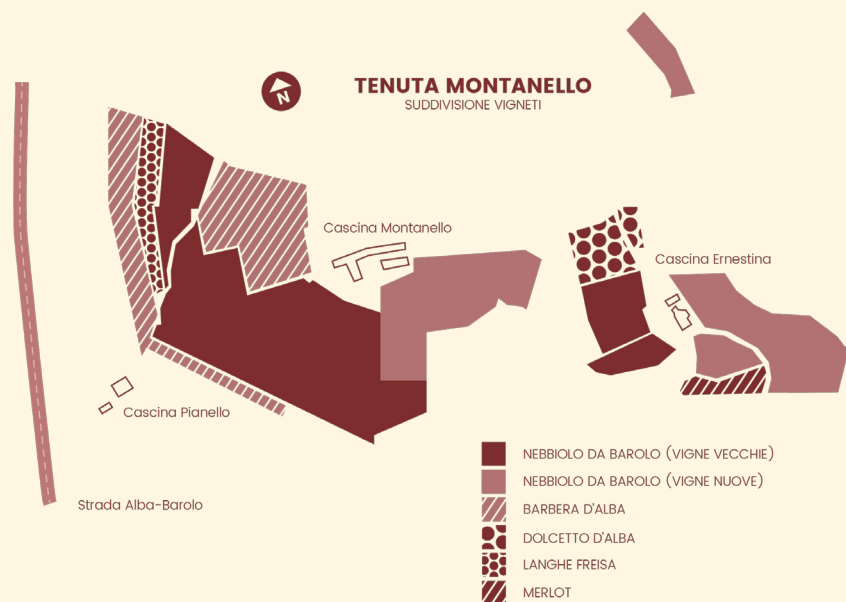


Bartolomeo & Alberto Racca

Alberto wants the authenticity of his wines to find a level of recognition at pace with his own growing experience in handling the Montanello Cru's pedigreed grapes. I've titled this newsletter 'The Almost Monopole', as their winemaking was interrupted from 1979 to 1999 when the Monchiero brothers leased a portion of the Montanello vineyard from Alberto's dad. Today, the Monchiero's holding is just 2% of the entire Montanello Cru, otherwise making it a monopole for the Racca family.

It was early in that 20-year period that some vintages of Montanello appeared in Australia, in a tough, slow to mellow style that just didn't gain traction here – as mentioned above, possibly more a reflection of the lack of understanding of this style/variety at this time.

Alberto resumed after this 20-year gap to gradually master the taming of Montanello's tannins into today's beautiful and fascinating wines. Along with consultant oenologist Pierro Ballario, all varieties/wines come off the Montanello Cru. They follow a number of the region's more traditional practices, including maintaining plantings of Dolcetto and Barbera. But the bulk of this cru faces south to south-west and so Nebbiolo is the main focus, and Tenuta Montanello devote utmost respect to its importance. Alberto is fully aware of the market and our growing infatuation with Nebbiolo, but he also believes in the importance of Dolcetto and Barbera. And he turns out wonderful, approachable, table-friendly versions of all three varieties.



The Montanello Cru and its plantings

Langhe Nebbiolo, mostly from the younger vines planted in 1992, and Barbera and Dolcetto are fermented and finished in steel and usually see no oak. Nebbiolo for Barolo 'Montanello' (there is no normale) comes mostly off their vigne vecchie 1943 plantings, and is fermented in steel with fermentation/maceration up to 26°C for 25–30 days. The wine is then racked off into Allier casks for generally up to 24 months or so – ideal for the Nebbiolo tannins.

This moderate and generally traditional ethos is reflected in Alberto's entire approach, with modest pricing, a traditionally styled label and by the fact that he rarely offers the wines for reviews. The whole estate, with its lovely down-to-earth accommodation (and beautiful, central Castiglione Falletto views!) is really worthy of a stay when you're next in the Langhe.

## THE WINES



### 2015 Tenuta Montanello Dolcetto d'Alba

Taking full advantage of this brilliant vintage, this is the perfect advertisement for Dolcetto. At just under 13% alcohol and 100% stainless steel, it's entirely a self-contained wine and ready for immediate consumption. Deeply coloured and flavoured, it's juicy and shapely, but due to its modest alcohol, its essentially tight and savoury cherry-fruit personality is ideally suited to lots of food, not just Piemontese inspired.

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## THE WINES CONTINUED...



### 2014 Tenuta Montanello Barbera d'Alba

From a season not noted for Barbera, this is a triumph that very few others managed. It opens lean and tight but is all Barbera, with characteristic red plum, delicious crunchy cranberry and violets. It stays fresh with a crisp line of acidity on the palate.



### 2015 Tenuta Montanello Langhe Nebbiolo

A good sneak peek at an upcoming super-vintage, this is the essence of the Montanello approach. This wine sees a much shorter time fermenting/macerating (around 8 days), and to retain freshness, post fermentation only spends time in stainless steel, before being racked off and bottled. Showing some sweet cranberry notes and some light spices, this is a spot-on model for approachable Nebb, finished with beautifully ripe and fine tannins.

CONTINUED OVER...

## THE WINES CONTINUED...



### 2012 Tenuta Montanello Barolo 'Montanello'

An incredibly aromatic Barolo with very typical Castiglione red fruits, tart currants and strawberry, with anise and complexing sappy notes. This wine is made from the oldest vines off the Cru (planted 1943) and some more recent plantings in 1992, and a mix of both the Lampia and Michet Clones. Post a 30-day Fermentation /Maceration, the 2012 spent its first 12 months in French Barrique (mostly used), then its second period in Slavonian Botti. Sweet, persistent and long with focus, it then opens to roses and liquorice. There is an earthy, fennel seed undertone, inviting you to go back and forth from a fascinating, evolving nose to an expansive, but focused palate.