

## RIZZI

### *View From The Cellar – John Gilman July/August 2020 – Issue 88*

I should take a moment, while lauding the superb quality of the 2016 vintage in Piemonte to again make a pitch for readers to go out and discover the beautiful Barbaresci from Cantina Rizzi, located in the township of Treiso. Cantina Rizzi has been owned and directed by the Dellapiana family now for two generations, with Enrico Dellapiana currently the winemaker of the estate. This is not an old estate by the region's standards, as it was formed in 1973, when Enrico's father, Ernesto Dellapiana came back to the town of Treiso to start a winery on the family land that they had owned since the late nineteenth century. His first vintage was the 1974.

Ernesto further expanded upon the family's original farm by purchasing the nearby Villa Manzola estate in 1997, giving Cantina Rizzi a very fine vineyard foundation of nearly forty hectares, with almost all of these vineyards located in the township of Treiso. With forty hectares under vine, this makes Cantina Rizzi one of the largest estates today in the entire Barbaresco DOCG. I first became acquainted with the wines from Cantina Rizzi when their American importer at the time sent me two samples of their 2001 Barbaresci, which had been made by Ernesto Dellapiana at that time. They were both very good and I have made an effort to follow the wines since that time, but they have not always been widely available here in the US, so I had not tasted the wines with any regularity since those auspicious pair of 2001 Cru Barbaresci.

Happily, the estate now has a new importer here in the states that has a very good foundation in the market and I hope that these wines, which have remained such well-kept secrets here in America may now start to get wider distribution and become better known by lovers of classically-styled, high quality Piemontese wines. Ernesto's son, Enrico Dellapiana finished up his oenological studies in time to craft the 2004 vintage here at Cantina Rizzi and has been at the winemaking helm at the estate since that fine vintage. I had the pleasure to meet Enrico in person in Düsseldorf at one of the Prowein events I attended, and I had a chance to taste his first vintage of 2004 at that time. But, from that time forward, I had not crossed paths with any subsequent vintages of Barbaresco from Cantina Rizzi and I wondered if they were still in the US market. When I started working on this feature, I did a quick Google search for the winery and was very happy to find that they had a new American importer with The Sorting Table (who represents Domaine Dujac and Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils amongst other producers, so merchants and restaurateurs are always happy to talk with their salespeople) and I hope that the Dellapianas' superb wines will now be able to find a wider audience here in the states. Presently, Enrico Dellapiana is producing four different Cru bottlings of Barbaresco: Nervo, Rizzi, Pajoré, and a Riserva bottling called Vigna Boito which is made from a filet section of the larger Cru of Rizzi. All are located in the township of Treiso, which is the coolest of the villages that comprise the DOCG of Barbaresco. The estate owns the entirety of the fourteen hectare cru of Rizzi (from which they take their name), and has recently succeeded in purchasing some new vineyard parcels across the border in the neighboring township of Barbaresco, so we may see further Cru bottlings from the Dellapianas down the road. Cantina Rizzi also produces lovely, traditionally styled Dolcetto, Barbera, Nebbiolo d'Alba bottlings, as well as an excellent Moscato d'Asti, so one does not have to focus solely on their Barbaresci to enjoy Enrico's fine winemaking skills. This is an up and coming estate in Barbaresco and currently one of my absolute favorites in the region.



### 2017 Barbera d'Alba- Cantina Rizzi (Treiso)

Enrico Dellapiana has some nice old parcels of Barbera that go into this bottling, as two of his three plots of Barbera were planted in were planted in 1965 and 1971. The third parcel is a bit younger, having been planted in 2008, but the blend of the three produced a fine wine in 2017. The bouquet here is bright and nicely ripe, offering up scents of red and black cherries, woodsmoke, nutskin, spit-roasted gamebird and a fine base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and complex, with a very good core of fruit, a bit of chewy tannin, fine focus and grip and a long, impressively complex finish. This comes in listed at 14.5 percent octane, but carries its alcohol very well and does not show any backend heat. This is a ripe, but very good Barbera that should age quite nicely. 2020-2030+. **90**

### 2016 Barbaresco "Nervo"- Cantina Rizzi (Treiso)

The Dellapiana family first began bottling this Cru in 1999, with the first several vintages bottled under the name of Fondetta. The Cru of Nervo lies in the village of Treiso, on the same south-facing ridge that houses the vineyards of Rizzi to its west and Bernadot to its east. Nervo is the crown of this ridge, with elevations ranging from 250 to 370 meters above sea level, with a soil composition of white marl. It is very steep. The Dellapianas' vines are at the top of the ridge, with altitudes of 310 to 370 meters. Enrico Dellapiana gives the wine about three weeks of maceration, racks it into five thousand liter botti for their first year of elevage and finishes the wines with another year of aging in cement tanks. The 2016 Nervo offers up a fine young nose of red and black cherries, woodsmoke, gamebird, a bit of road tar, a fine base of soil and a lovely array of spices in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with fine focus and grip, ripe, chewy tannins and a long, complex, well-balanced and very promising finish. The Cru of Nervo is known to make wines with serious stuffing and this is clearly the case here with this excellent 2016 from Enrico Dellapiana. 2030-2080. **92**

### 2016 Barbaresco "Pajoré"- Cantina Rizzi (Treiso)

The steep hillside Cru of Pajoré lies at the northern end of Treiso, right near the boundary with the township of Barbaresco, and just over the border from Pajoré one finds the equally fine Crus of Montaribaldi and Roncaglie. The first vintage for this Cru at Cantina Rizzi was the 2004, which also happened to be Enrico Dellapiana's first year in charge of the family estate's winemaking. Most of the family's vines here were planted between 1960 and 1965, with a small section replanted in 2008. The wine is handled similarly in the cellars to the Nervo, with one year in botti and eight to twelve months in cement prior to bottling. The 2016 Pajoré is aromatically outstanding, wafting from the glass in a complex blend of cherries, bonfire, red curry, a bit of spit-roasted pigeon, a lovely vein of minerality, just a touch of fresh oregano and incipient notes of orange peel in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully transparent in personality, with a fine core of red fruit, excellent soil signature and grip, tangy acids, ripe, buried tannins and lovely focus and grip on the long and complex finish. The soils here are thinner than in Nervo and this comes across in a more minerally interpretation of Barbaresco. This is an absolutely first class bottle in the making! 2028-2080. **94+**

### 2016 Barbaresco "Rizzi"- Cantina Rizzi (Treiso)

The Cru of Rizzi is beautifully-placed on the same ridge as Nervo, in the heart of the village of Treiso. The altitude of the vineyard runs from three hundred meters to two hundred and twenty, with the exposition running southwest to due south. The Dellapianas' vines were planted between 1967 and 2004, so they have a nice range of ages to work with. The soils here are a bit whiter than in Nervo and Enrico Dellapiana will often give this wine fifteen months of aging in botti prior to racking it over to cement tanks to finish its elevage. Like all of the Rizzi Cru Barbarescos, it is given three years of bottling aging in the cellars as well prior to release. The 2016 Rizzi offers up a superb bouquet of red and black cherries, a bit of roasted meats, a lovely foundation of soil, camphor, lovely spice tones, anise and a gentle topnote of fresh oregano. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully refined on the attack, with a rock solid core of fruit, fine soil signature, ripe, firm tannins and excellent focus and grip on the complex, beautifully balanced, long and tangy finish. This will need plenty of cellaring to blossom, but all of the pieces are in place for this to be absolutely stellar when it is ready to drink! 2030-2080. **93+**

**2015 Barbaresco “Nervo”- Cantina Rizzi (Treiso)**

The 2015 vintage of Nervo from Cantina Rizzi is very good. It comes in listed at the same 14.5 percent of the 2016, but the harvest was earlier here in 2015 and one can sense this a bit in the more red fruity personality of the wine, but without quite the superb depth of the latter vintage. The bouquet is already quite expressive, offering up scents of cherries, pomegranate, curry, a fine base of soil that seems likely to get nicely autumnal fairly briskly, gamebird and a pleasant combination of fresh oregano and gentle spice tones. On the palate the wine is deep, ripe, full-bodied and complex, with a touch of confiture to the fruit tones, a good core, a fine base of soil, firm, chewy tannins and a long, focused and complex finish. This is a very good bottle of Barbaresco, but it cannot quite keep pace with the 2016 version- though it will drink sooner. 2025-2065+. **90**

**2015 Barbaresco “Pajoré”- Cantina Rizzi (Treiso)**

The 2015 Pajoré from Cantina Rizzi is again, beautifully transparent in personality, which is most impressive coming from the torrid summer of 2015. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a refined blend of cherries, incipient notes of orange peel, gamebird, a beautiful base of soil tones, a touch of black licorice, curry and a topnote of fresh oregano. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and has a lovely sense of sappy fruit at the core, with good soil signature, chewy, well-integrated tannins, good acids (particularly for the vintage) and a long, focused and very well-balanced finish. This is already showing excellent complexity and will age long and gracefully. Because of the hot summer and shorter growing season of 2015, the tannins here are not quite as sophisticated in texture as in the 2016 Pajoré, but this is a very, very good Barbaresco in the making. 2025-2070. **93**

**2015 Barbaresco “Rizzi”- Cantina Rizzi (Treiso)**

The 2015 Barbaresco “Rizzi” from Enrico Dellapiana is an excellent example of the vintage. The bouquet is deep, impressively pure for 2015 and complex, wafting from the glass red and black cherries, roasted squab, bonfire, a touch of wood ash, complex soil tones, celery seed, camphor, fresh oregano and a lovely topnote of red curry. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, rock solid at the core and impressively pure for the vintage, with fine focus and grip, ripe, firm and chewy tannins, very good balance and a long, complex and very promising finish. This is a fine, fine bottle in the making. 2027-2065+. **92**

**2014 Barbaresco “Nervo”- Cantina Rizzi (Treiso)**

The 2014 growing season in Barbaresco was far it was in Barolo, as it was spared hailstorms and some of the rain of the summer next door in the townships of the Barolo DOCG. And like Barolo, it benefited from the perfect fin de saison of September and early October in the region, so the 2014 Barbaresci are very much worthy of attention. The 2014 bottling of Nervo from Cantina Rizzi is an excellent and quite classic bottle of Barbaresco. The bouquet delivers a refined and complex aromatic constellation of red and black cherries, spit-roasted venison, a bit of anise, woodsmoke, red curry and fresh oregano. On the palate the wine is deep, complex and full-bodied, with a good core of fruit, excellent balance and grip, ripe, well-integrated tannins and lovely focus on the long, complex and classic finish. This is maturing at a nice pace and is almost approachable already paired with the right dish. I would still give it a half dozen years or so in the cellar, but this is one quality Barbaresco that does not have to be buried in the cellar for a decade before it starts to hit its plateau. 2024-2055+. **92**

**2014 Barbaresco “Pajoré”- Cantina Rizzi (Treiso)**

The cool and wet midsummer in Piemonte can be felt a bit more here in the Pajoré than in the Nervo bottling from Enrico Dellapiana, as this wine is much more black fruity in personality than is the case in most vintages. That said, it lacks for nothing, delivering a pure and complex bouquet of black cherries, a bit of dark berry, curry, bonfire, roasted meats, beautiful spice tones, autumnal soil elements and a topnote of cigar smoke. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and rock solid at the core, with good soil signature, ripe tannins, very good focus and grip and a long, complex and classy finish. This will want just a few more years in the cellar than the 2014 Nervo bottling, but will be every bit as good in due course. 2026-2055+. **92**

### 2013 Barbaresco Rizzi Riserva “Boito”- Cantina Rizzi (Treiso)

Vigna Boito is one of the best sections of the Cru of Rizzi, with this two hectare parcel located up at the top of the slope, with a south by southwesterly exposition. The Dellapianas' vines were planted between 1972 and 1995, so even the youngest vines in this section are now fully twenty-five years of age. This bottling sees a slightly different elevation in the Rizzi cellars than the other Crus, as it spends fully two years in botti, followed by eight months in cement or stainless steel tanks prior to bottling. It then receives three more years of bottle aging in the cellars before release. The 2013 Boito Riserva is a beautifully refined and complex, wafting from the glass in a lovely blend of cherries, pomegranate, gamebird, red curr, gently autumnal soil tones, camphor and a topnote of dried rose petals. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and beautifully balanced, with a fine core of fruit, lovely mineral drive and grip, ripe tannins and a long, pure and very promising finish. This is an outstanding and utterly complete, young Barbaresco that is fully worthy of the high quality reputation of the 2013 vintage. Superb juice. 2026-2075. **94**

### 2017 Nebbiolo della Langhe – Cantina Rizzi (Treiso)

The 2017 vintage in the Langhe is another ripe year and the Nebbiolo bottling from Enrico Dellapiana comes in listed at the same octane as the 2018, a robust 14.5 percent. The wine is a touch darker in color than its 2018 sibling and shows its alcohol a bit more than the younger wine, offering up a complex bouquet of baked cherries, hung game, a nice base of soil, bonfire, lovely spice tones and roses in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, fullbodied and just a touch heady on the backend, with a lovely core of fruit, chewy tannins, fine soil signature and grip and a long, complex and youthful finish. I really like the personality of this wine, which is really quite Barolo-like in 2017, but one has to work around the alcohol a bit when selecting food to match it, as it seems a bit higher in octane to me than the 2018. But, with roasted meats on a winter's evening, this would work just fine. It has a similar level of tannin to the 2018, but I do not think it will age quite as long, as the balance is just a touch more precarious from the slightly riper personality. 2020-2030+. **88**

### 2018 Nebbiolo della Langhe - Cantina Rizzi (Treiso)

The Nebbiolo della Langhe from Enrico Dellapiana is made from three different parcels of Nebbiolo, with the plots planted in 1976, 2005 and 2012. The wine is given a three week maceration during fermentation and then aged for one year in cask prior to bottling. The 2018 version is pretty ripe, coming in at 14.5 percent octane and offering up a pretty nose of cherries, camphor, woodsmoke, a good base of soil, just a wisp of fresh oregano and a topnote of rose petal. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely soil-driven, with a good core of fruit, ripe tannins and a long, tangy and nascently complex finish. This carries its alcohol pretty well and does not show any overt heat on the backend, but it is a young and structured wine and will need a few years in the cellar to start to soften up and blossom. 2023-2035. **89**

### 2017 Dolcetto d’Alba- Cantina Rizzi (Treiso)

The 2017 Dolcetto d’Alba from Rizzi is a bit riper than the 2018 version, as this hot summer produced a Dolcetto at fourteen percent octane. As a result, the wine shows more sappy depth on the nose, wafting from the glass in a fine blend of sweet dark berries, black cherries, woodsmoke, a bit of roasted gamebird, a fine base of soil, a hint of road tar and a topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and plush on the attack, with a fine core of fruit, good soil signature, a bit of backend tannin and a long, complex and well-balanced finish that closes with a touch of balsamic overtones. This has far more stuffing than the 2018 version, as well as a bit of tannin, and is a fine example of Dolcetto. It is quite different stylistically from the classic 2018 Dolcetto here, but both are fine examples. 2020-2035. **90**

### 2018 Dolcetto d’Alba- Rizzi (Treiso)

Enrico Dellapiana is one of my absolute favorite producers in Barbaresco, and his Dolcetto d’Alba bottling (all produced from vineyards in their home township of Treiso) is lovely. The 2018 comes in at a very civilized thirteen percent octane and offers up a pure and classic bouquet of black cherries, a touch of sweet cranberry, violets, a lovely base of chalky soil tones and a topnote of bonfire. On the palate the wine is bright, fullish and crunchy, with a lovely core of fruit, just a trace of backend tannin and a long, wide open and bouncy finish of nice complexity and grip. 2020-2028. **89**

## VIEW FROM THE CELLAR



### **2019 Moscato d'Asti**

The 2019 Moscato d'Asti from Cantina Rizzi is a very pretty example of this wine. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of pear, casaba melon, a nice touch of minerality and a floral topnote redolent of honeysuckle. On the palate the wine is bright, fullish and succulent, with good bubbles, bright acids and lovely balance on the long and zesty finish. This is so refreshing! 2020-2022. **89**