

GAJA

2016 BARBARESCO AND BAROLO

The winter 2016 was mild with low level of rainfall during January and February. Starting from the end of February the temperatures dropped and remained below the average until the end of March. This late winter led to a delayed bud break of about 10 days. The rest of the spring, from April, was rainy and mild, especially in the Barbaresco area. During the summer, the temperature growing trend was steady without any particular heat peaks. There was a couple of hot weeks in July, with temperatures around 30°C but never exceeding 35°C, a hailstorm hit a good portion of the Cerequio vineyards in the Barolo area, causing some damages to the grapes, luckily only partially.

In particular, the climate trend was determined by remarkable and intense variations in temperature between day and night and positive rainfall, especially occurring during spring in the Barbaresco area and significantly in August and September in Barolo. Bright, sunny and fresh days characterizing the harvest period, allowed the perfect ripeness of the grapes and enhanced the elegance of Nebbiolo. The harvest was regular, started on August 25th with Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay and finished on October 12th with Nebbiolo grapes. We picked healthy grapes, evenly ripe, with thick skins, balanced concentration of sugar and good phenol characteristics (colour and tannins), characterized by low pH and high acidity combined with generous fruit expression. Overall, 2016 is considered a rich vintage, comparable to 2001, the wines are powerful, with great structure, they need time in order to express at best their potential and they are optimally suitable for a very long ageing. A bit more privileged was the Barbaresco area if compared to Barolo, due to the regular maturation trend and lower amount of rainfall during the last part of the season. Both Nebbiolo wines from Barbaresco and Barolo are deep coloured, seriously structured and compact but also very fine and gracious with rich and complex bouquet, juicy and gentle tannins, and a well-controlled mouth feel. 2016 is among the best vintages that the region had during this century and it has all the potential to become outstanding.

2017 BARBARESCO AND BAROLO

600 mm of rain fell over from November 2016 to April 2017, thus creating the ideal water supply for the entire growing season, which combined with the warm second half of March (average temperatures of 30-35°C), led to an early bud break of 15 days. On April 17th a hailstorm unusually hit the Barbaresco region, but luckily none of our vineyard got damaged. The drop of temperatures favoured three days of frost, that combined with strong cold winds (temperatures around -3°C) severely damaged many of the Nebbiolo grapes in the Barbaresco area, causing the loss of 10% of the overall production and slowing-down the vegetative cycle. From June, one of the warmest and driest summers of the last 10 years set off. The average daily temperature was 33-34°C, with peaks up to 41°C in July. In Barbaresco there was no rain for 73 days, these warm temperatures and drought slowed down the vegetative growth. During spring our vineyards in Barolo suffered a bit from frost as well, but luckily no hailstorm occurred. The hot summer was more humid than in Barbaresco, with 40 mm of rain fallen on September 2nd, which decreased temperatures and it has been providential to reach a full ripeness of grapes even if slightly irregular. Overall, 2017 was a year of thermal stress, firstly due to the spring frosts and secondly due to the very warm temperatures during summer. Despite these thermal and water stress, the vines optimally reacted adapting to these extreme conditions by decreasing the size of their canopy, bunches and berries. The vines have naturally produced a lower quantity, the drop of the production has been estimated around 30%. The grapes increased their concentration, developed thicker skins, higher acidity and tannins, intense aromas and flavours and colours, without reaching excessive levels of potential alcohol. The early harvest started on August 17th with Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay and finished on October 4th with the Nebbiolo grapes. Generally speaking, the 2017 vintage has created both red and white wines with surprising freshness.

COSTA RUSSI 2017

NEW RELEASE

2017 is a vintage of low quantity and an overall “concentration” of: fruit, structure and acidity.

Climate and harvest

After the abundance of rainfall at the end of 2016 and beginning of 2017, a suitable amount of water combined with the warm spring, led to an earlier than anticipated bud break, which occurred 15 days earlier than usual. By the half of April 2017, three days of frost hit the Barbaresco area, leading to a strict selection in the vineyards which resulted in the loss of 10% of the overall production. However, the sudden drop in temperatures led to a positive slow-down of the vegetative growth. The remaining spring months showed temperatures and rainfall on average. Whereas, the summer proved to be one of the warmest in the last 10 years. The average temperature in June was 33°-34°C, two degrees higher than the average. The rainfall trend has been low, with Barbaresco experiencing 80 days without any rain shower. In Barolo the last part of the season has been more humid, with 40mL of rain, thus leading to more tonic skins and higher acidity. Overall, 2017 will be remembered for the healthiness of the grapes, due to the dry growing season; likewise, for the overall drop of the production, which the Gaja Estate has estimated around 20%.

The harvest began on September 13th with Merlot, then Barbera and ended with Nebbiolo on October 20th.

Tasting notes

At first glance, Costa Russi 2017 is a super fruity wine, with waves of blackberry, black cherry and plum forming the core. Polish and refine, it features notes of licorice and marzipan, but that is all background to the impressive core of fruit. The good structure drives the energetic and refreshing finish, the tannins are ripe and sweet.

Vineyards

The Costa Russi vineyard is situated in the municipality of Barbaresco, at the foot of a hill where, a little above, sits Sori Tildin. The land, facing south-west, consists of clayey-calcareous marls and covers a surface of 4.35 hectares, with an average altitude of 230 m above the sea level. The vines are 65 years old on average.

Appellation Barbaresco D.O.P.

Grape varieties 100% Nebbiolo.

Winemaking method

Fermentation and maceration for around three weeks followed by ageing in oak for 24 months.



SORÌ TILDIN 2017

NEW RELEASE

2017 is a vintage of low quantity and an overall “concentration” of: fruit, structure and acidity.

Climate and harvest

After the abundance of rainfall at the end of 2016 and beginning of 2017, a suitable amount of water combined with the warm spring, led to an earlier than anticipated bud break, which occurred 15 days earlier than usual. By the half of April 2017, three days of frost hit the Barbaresco area, leading to a strict selection in the vineyards which resulted in the loss of 10% of the overall production. However, the sudden drop in temperatures led to a positive slow-down of the vegetative growth. The remaining spring months showed temperatures and rainfall on average. Whereas, the summer proved to be one of the warmest in the last 10 years. The average temperature in June was 33°-34°C, two degrees higher than the average. The rainfall trend has been low, with Barbaresco experiencing 80 days without any rain shower. In Barolo the last part of the season has been more humid, with 40mL of rain, thus leading to more tonic skins and higher acidity. Overall, 2017 will be remembered for the healthiness of the grapes, due to the dry growing season; likewise, for the overall drop of the production, which the Gaja Estate has estimated around 20%. The harvest began on September 13th with Merlot, then Barbera and ended with Nebbiolo on October 20th.

Tasting notes

Sorì Tildin 2017 features showy fruit, with black cherry, blackberry, raspberry and wild strawberries flavours that are nicely melted, with freshness provided by mint and licorice notes. It has a shot of sweet tobacco lining the finish, with hints of iron giving this range and length. The net of tannins is quite thick, but they are ripe and velvety. This wine is persistent and defined.

Vineyards

The Sorì Tildin vineyard is situated in the municipality of Barbaresco, on top of a hill where, a little below, there is Costa Russi. The land, facing south, consists of clayey-calcareous marls and covers a surface of 3.38 hectares, with an average altitude of 260 m above the sea level. The vines are 45 years old on average.

Appellation Barbaresco D.O.P.

Grape varieties 100% Nebbiolo.

Winemaking method

Fermentation and maceration for around three weeks followed by ageing in oak for 24 months.



SORÌ SAN LORENZO 2017

NEW RELEASE

2017 is a vintage of low quantity and an overall “concentration” of: fruit, structure and acidity.

Climate and harvest

After the abundance of rainfall at the end of 2016 and beginning of 2017, a suitable amount of water combined with the warm spring, led to an earlier than anticipated bud break, which occurred 15 days earlier than usual. By the half of April 2017, three days of frost hit the Barbaresco area, leading to a strict selection in the vineyards which resulted in the loss of 10% of the overall production. However, the sudden drop in temperatures led to a positive slow-down of the vegetative growth. The remaining spring months showed temperatures and rainfall on average. Whereas, the summer proved to be one of the warmest in the last 10 years. The average temperature in June was 33°-34°C, two degrees higher than the average. The rainfall trend has been low, with Barbaresco experiencing 80 days without any rain shower. In Barolo the last part of the season has been more humid, with 40mL of rain, thus leading to more tonic skins and higher acidity. Overall, 2017 will be remembered for the healthiness of the grapes, due to the dry growing season; likewise, for the overall drop of the production, which the Gaja Estate has estimated around 20%.

The harvest began on September 13th with Merlot, then Barbera and ended with Nebbiolo on October 20th.

Tasting notes

A bright, austere and elegant version, boasting juniper, star anise and spicy notes. Followed by pomegranate, strawberry, black pepper and saffron flavours. Sorì San Lorenzo 2017 is complex, solidly structured and vibrant, with a lingering and minerally aftertaste. Refined tannins provide a good balance with the fruity core.

Vineyards

The Sorì San Lorenzo vineyard is situated in the municipality of Barbaresco, a few steps from the old town centre. The land, facing south, consists clayey-calcareous marls and covers a surface of 3.38 hectares, with an average altitude of 250 m above the sea level. The vines are 50 years old on average.

Appellation Barbaresco D.O.P.

Grape varieties 100% Nebbiolo.

Winemaking method

Fermentation and maceration for around three weeks followed by ageing in oak for 24 months.



DARMAGI 2017

NEW RELEASE

2017 is a vintage of very low quantity and an overall “concentration” of: fruit, structure and acidity.

Climate and harvest

After the abundance of rainfall at the end of 2016 and beginning of 2017, a suitable amount of water combined with the warm spring, led to an earlier than anticipated bud break, which occurred 15 days earlier than usual. By the half of April 2017, three days of frost hit the Barbaresco area, leading to a strict selection in the vineyards which resulted in the loss of 10% of the overall production. However, the sudden drop in temperatures led to a positive slow-down of the vegetative growth. The remaining spring months showed temperatures and rainfall on average. Whereas, the summer proved to be one of the warmest in the last 10 years. The average temperature in June was 33°-34°C, two degrees higher than the average. The rainfall trend has been low, with Barbaresco experiencing 80 days without any rain shower. In Barolo the last part of the season has been more humid, with 40mL of rain, thus leading to more tonic skins and higher acidity. Overall, 2017 will be remembered for the healthiness of the grapes, due to the dry growing season; likewise, for the overall drop of the production, which the Gaja Estate has estimated around 20%. The harvest began on September 13th with Merlot, then Barbera and ended with Nebbiolo on October 20th.

Tasting notes

A wide and rich bouquet, with notes of black cherry and cassis followed by a fresh and vegetal hint. Velvety and juicy on the palate, with notes of black currant, red apple and mint which lead to a spicy finish. Darmagi 2017 has silky and ripe tannins, bright acidity and a long finish.

Vineyards

Planted in 1978, Darmagi is Angelo Gaja’s tribute to the prestigious Cabernet sauvignon variety, and a clear sign of the peculiar Langhe expression in wines, even from non-traditional varieties.

Appellation Langhe D.O.P.

Grape varieties Cabernet Sauvignon

Winemaking method

Fermentation and maceration for around three weeks followed by ageing in oak for 24 months.

First vintage produced 1982.



SPERSS 2016

NEW RELEASE

2016 is among the best vintages of this century and it has all the potential to be a must-have for Barolo lovers.

Climate and harvest

The winter has been mild, with low level of rainfall during the months of January and February. Starting from the end of February 2016, the temperatures finally dropped and remained low until the end of March. This late winter led to a delay of about 10 days in the bud breaking. The spring has been rainy and mild, which resulted in good conditions for the vines. During the summer, the temperature trend has been steady without any particular heat peaks. There has only been a couple of hot weeks in July, with temperatures hovering above 30° C but never exceeding 35°C. In particular, the climate trend has been determined by remarkable temperature variations between days and nights during the last part of the growing season.

Tasting notes

What immediately catches the eye is that 2016 Sperss is less powerful than the past vintages. Nevertheless, it shows an appealing juiciness and embraces a polish, velvety and ethereal character. Delicate berry notes cede to red orange, anise and the *Scorzone* summer black truffle.

The wine displays a vertical lift, austere tannins and a very long finish.

Vineyards

The Sperss vineyard is located in the Marenca-Rivette sub-area in the municipality of Serralunga. The land, arranged as an amphitheatre on a surface of 12 hectares, consists of very compact clayey-calcareous marls and has south and south-west exposure with an average altitude of 370 m above the sea level. The vines are 55 years old on average.

Appellation Barolo D.O.P..

Grape varieties 100% Nebbiolo

Winemaking method

Fermentation and maceration for around three weeks followed by ageing in oak for 24 months.

First vintage produced 1988.



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Gaja's Barolo Sperss is unbelievably polished in 2016. Fragrant, medium in body and silky for a Serralunga Barolo, Sperss speaks to finesse more than anything else. The dark, brooding qualities that are such signatures emerge with time in the glass, and yet the 2016 remains light on its feet and incredibly nuanced. While the 2015 showed some linkage to the past, the 2016 really appears to represent a big stylistic shift. What a gorgeous wine it is.

Robert Parker
WINE ADVOCATE



The golden touch, that proverbial Gaja magic, is taken to a whole new level in the 2016 Barolo Sperss. Angelo Gaja has taught his children to follow their own path, and now that the generational switch is well underway at the family estate, we can see that Gaia, Rossana and Giovanni have done him proud. Very proud. This stunning expression from the 2016 vintage (with 16,000 bottles released) represents quite a few celebratory milestones. We are now in the fifth generation to protect the Gaja legacy in an unbroken family chain that has endured since 1859. This wine is 100% Nebbiolo, and since the 2013 vintage, it is part of the Barolo DOCG appellation. Winemaking has been tweaked to embrace a more elegant, ethereal and streamlined personality, instead of the bigger extraction we saw in the past. This upgraded identity is distinctly evident in this newest release of Sperss. Starting with appearance, the wine is luminous and bright with shiny ruby and garnet gemstone. Its aromatic reach is three-dimensional with width, height and depth. Delicate berry tones cede to pressed lilac, anise, sandalwood and cardamom spice. I double decanted and left the bottle open for a few hours before my tasting. The results are tight and gentle, and the wine shows beautiful vertical lift and intensity. To achieve this much power without the excess fruit weight is really quite an accomplishment. This is the magic of Nebbiolo, and the magic of Gaja.