



AZIENDA AGRICOLA
C O G N O®

Elvio Cogno



Overview

The Cogno family has been making wine for four generations in Piedmont. In 1990, Elvio Cogno left a long and fruitful partnership with the venerable Barolo producer Marcarini at La Morra and bought a splendid, historic 18th-century farmhouse on the top of Bricco Ravera, a hill near Novello in the Langhe area. (Novello is one of the 11 communes in which Barolo is produced.) The farm was surrounded by 11 hectares (27.18 acres) of steeply sloped vineyards. Elvio restored the manor, converted the old granaries to wine cellars and founded his eponymous winery. For the next 20 years he devoted himself to the winemaking traditions handed down to him by his father and grandfather.

Elvio, in turn, has now passed the torch to his daughter, Nadia, and her husband, Valter Fissore, who has worked beside Elvio for 25 years. Following in the footsteps of Elvio the maestro, Elvio Cogno winery continues to produce elegant wines without altering the traditions, styles and flavors of the Langhe, with its breathtaking quilted landscape and unique grape varieties.

Today, co-owner and winemaker Valter oversees a total production of nearly 7,000 cases of 11 Elvio Cogno estate wines. These wines include four Barolo DOCGs: Cascina Nuova, Ravera, Bricco Pernice and Vigna Elena Riserva; two Barbera d'Alba DOCs: Bricco dei

Merli and Pre-Phylloxera; Bordini Barbaresco DOCG; Montegrilli Nebbiolo Langhe DOC; Anas-Cëtta Nascetta di Novello Langhe DOC; Dolcetto d'Alba DOC; and Moscato d'Asti DOCG.

These wines are produced from the meticulously groomed vineyards on the slopes that surround the hilltop winery. Valter Fissore and Nadia Cogno cultivate indigenous varieties – Nebbiolo, Barbera, Dolcetto and Nascetta – with organic vineyard practices, low yields per hectare and respect for the natural balance of the vine. Valter describes his wines as “precise and pure,” and says they are meant to evoke emotions to be remembered and a sense of place, born of this remarkable site.

Elvio Cogno wines are of the highest caliber produced in Langhe. They are well-known and consistently well-received by critics both in Europe and the United States. Antonio Galloni, founder of Vinous Media, states, “the truth is that all of the wines in the estate’s lineup are fabulous from top to bottom... Elvio Cogno (is) one of Barolo’s leading estates.” Elvio Cogno has been named “Winery of the Year” by Wine & Spirits Magazine for four of the past six years. Jancis Robinson characterizes the 2006 Vigna Elena Riserva as having “near perfect balance.” The Wine Advocate’s Monica Lerner describes the wine as “truly stunning.”



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Vineyards

The Elvio Cagno winery sits at the top of Bricco Ravera, a hill near Novello in the Langhe area of Piedmont, one of the 11 communes in which Barolo is produced. Ravera is the finest cru of Novello, encircling the top of the hill and the winery, reaching a 380-meter (1,246-foot) elevation, with breathtaking views in all directions. At sunset on clear days, a turquoise horizon frames the farm, hence the name “Petorchino,” or “blue feet,” for this vineyard land.

Surrounded by 11 hectares (27.18 acres) of sloping vineyards, Elvio Cagno produces 11 estate wines. These wines include four Barolo DOCGs: Cascina Nuova, Ravera, Bricco Pernice and Vigna Elena Riserva; two Barbera d’Alba DOCs: Bricco dei Merli and Pre-Phylloxera; Bordini Barbaresco DOCG; Montegrilli Nebbiolo Langhe DOC; Anas-Cëtta Nascetta di Novello Langhe DOC; Dolcetto d’Alba DOC; and Moscato d’Asti DOCG.

Valter Fissore and Nadia Cagno cultivate indigenous varieties – Nebbiolo, Barbera, Dolcetto and Nascetta – with organic vineyard practices (working towards certification), low yields per hectare and respect for the natural balance of the vine. The limestone-based soils deliver elegant Nebbiolo that Valter describes as “precise and pure”. The wines are meant to evoke memories of time and place.

The meticulously groomed vineyards are densely planted with 4,000 to 5,000 vines per hectare, vertically trellised and Guyot pruned, the rows oriented to take maximum advantage of the sunlight while traversing the hillsides to prevent erosion. Grasses are grown between the rows to hold the rainfall and soil in place and to encourage healthy microbial life in the soil. Many of the vines are 30 years old, with the Ravera vineyard 50 to 70 years old and the Pre-Phylloxera vines more than 120 years old!

The Pre-Phylloxera Barbera vines are remarkable not only for their age – they are one of the last archaic vines of the Langhe area – but primarily because they maintain the original Barbera characteristics, since the vines are ungrafted. Planted before the arrival of phylloxera in Langhe, located in Berri near La Morra village, the soil is very rich in sand which provides a natural protection against the phylloxera louse.

The climate is influenced by the Alps to the north and the Ligurian Sea (part of the Mediterranean) to the south. The intersection of these two opposing geographic features results in morning fog and large diurnal temperature changes. Elvio Cagno receives up to one meter (3.28 feet) of snow in the winter, plus spring showers, which eliminate the need for irrigation.



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Modern fermenters line the Elvio Cogno granary-turned-winery from floor to ceiling rafters.

“We work to respect the characteristic of the soil and the characteristics of the vineyard,” explains Valter.

“When you drink my wine I want you to understand this is Barolo, this is Nebbiolo, this comes from Piemonte. This is very important, I don’t want you to drink my wine and say ‘oh this is very good, but where does it come from?’”

Adhering to as natural a process as possible, native yeasts are used for all Elvio Cogno wines except the Moscato d’Asti (which is also their only wine that is fined and filtered, a traditional step before bottling this wine). Long macerations (skin contact through submerged cap) and slow fermentations with indigenous yeast at cool temperatures are used for the red wines, resulting in richer flavors and greater complexity.

Moving away from the French barriques that had become popular in Piedmont, their red wines are usually aged in the traditional large (used rather than new) Slavonian oak casks. This aging does not alter what mother nature has created – classic fruit-driven wines that are balanced and elegant, with well-integrated tannins and remarkable longevity. These are wines that evoke a sense of place and purity from the autochthonous varieties of Piedmont.

Winemaking

Valter and Nadia take a very minimalistic approach to winemaking. Their philosophy is that terroir is the first and foremost determinant of a great wine. The less human manipulation, the more a wine’s true character is expressed – its personality, identity and elegance.



Elvio Cogno’s barrel cellar, with 25-hectoliter Slavonia oak casks that are traditional in the Piedmont region.



Barolo bottles aging in the immaculate cellars at Elvio Cogno

Cellars
Tasting Room
Albeisa Bottle

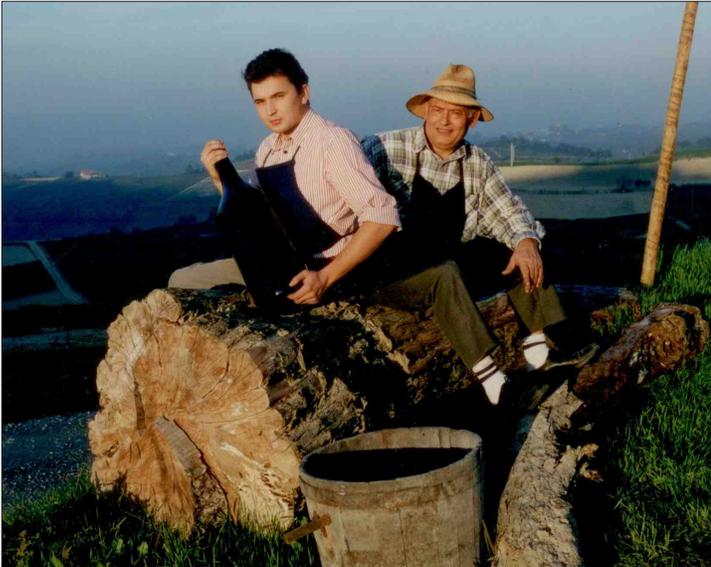


The Elvio Cogno tasting room in a converted barn with the original exposed beams



The Albeisa Bottle:

The Albeisa bottle dates back to the beginning of the 18th century, when the Alba-area producers, wishing to distinguish their exceptional wines, adopted a bottle with a distinctive shape and named it the Albeisa, or Alba bottle. With the invasion of Napoleon, however, this bottle was gradually replaced by Bordeaux and Burgundy bottles. These were more economical, with a more regular profile since the glass was blown into molds that were perfectly cylindrical. In 1973, a small number of producers decided to resurrect the venerable Albeisa bottle, adding the name Albeisa in relief on the bottle. The wines of Elvio Cogno are bottled in the Albeisa, which is reserved for wines only from the official denominations of Alba, in the Langhe hills.



Valter Fissore and Elvio Cogno worked together for 25 years.



Valter Fissore, Elena Fissore and Nadia Cogno have now taken the reins.

The Family

The Cogno family has been making wine in the Langhe area for four generations. After a long and fruitful partnership with the venerable Barolo producer Marcarini at La Morra, in 1990 Elvio Cogno bought a splendid and historic 18th-century farmhouse situated at the top of Bricco Ravera, a hill near Novello. (Novello is one of the 11 communes in Piedmont in which Barolo is produced.) The farm was surrounded by 11 hectares (27.18 acres) of steeply sloping vineyards. Elvio restored the manor, converted the old granaries to wine cellars and founded his own, eponymous winery. For the next 20 years he devoted himself to the winemaking traditions that had been handed down to him by his father and grandfather. Paying special attention to the indigenous varietals and old vines, Elvio recognized that his vineyards enjoyed a unique microclimate, optimal exposure and exceptional drainage.

Elvio has now passed the torch to his daughter, Nadia, and her husband, Valter Fissore, who has worked beside Elvio for 25 years. Following in the footsteps of Elvio the maestro, his son-in-law and daughter continue to produce elegant wines without altering the traditions, styles and flavors of the Langhe, with its breathtaking quilted landscape and unique grape varieties.

"Proprietors Valter Fissore and Nadia Cogno are at the top of their game. . ." affirms Antonio Galloni (Vinous Media 2012). As the winemaking team, Valter and Nadia agree that minimal intervention in the winery gives the fullest expression of their terroir and a sense of place to their wines. While honoring tradition, Nadia and Valter have introduced a freshness and innovative approach to their winemaking.

Their meticulously groomed vineyards of varietals native to the Piedmont area are organically cultivated, adding nothing to the environment that would compromise the purity and precision of the wines. Yields are kept very low, respecting the natural balance of the vines, some of which are very old indeed.

Joining in the family enterprise is Nadia's and Valter's daughter, Elena, who designs their labels. A drawing of a baby chick, made for her parents when she was only three years old, shows her special talent and adorns the Vigna Elena Barolo label, a wine produced only in great vintages. This was the beginning of an artistic collaboration that continues today, as the graphic artist, Elvio's granddaughter, gives a fresh look to these classic wines.