

## A Langhe Legacy

An Interview with Federico Ceretto, Chief Executive Officer and Sales Director, Ceretto

**EDITORS' NOTE** Federico Ceretto, Chief Executive Officer and Sales Director at Ceretto, is deeply committed to his family and its history. He often visits the 60 countries in which Ceretto wines are represented and works to expose new markets to his family's wines. He is passionate about wine and, as his father and uncle taught him, he continuously looks to learn more about the Langhe's changing landscape and to stay in-line, and even ahead, of the times, both in the vineyard and in the global wine market. He also promotes his family's restaurants in Alba: La Piola (a traditional Piedmontese trattoria) and Piazza Duomo (a three Michelin-star experience where every meal features a unique array of vegetables and herbs grown in the chef's organic gardens). In addition to a passion for wine and food, he and his family also provide singular opportunities to both little and well-known contemporary artists who the winery commissions to craft sculptures, paint portraits, and host exhibitions located in the vineyards, enabling the natural and contemporary artistic forms to rest close and draw comparison.



Federico Ceretto

**WINERY BRIEF** When the UNESCO organization added the vineyard landscape of the Langhe-Roero to its list of World Heritage Sites in 2014, it was confirmation the Ceretto family hails from a truly enviable location. Founding their first winery (ceretto.com) in the 1930s, the land Bruno and Marcello Ceretto have handed down to their children has been masterfully preserved. The vineyards now stand as a model to the eyes of the world. The same can be said of Ceretto's pursuit of organic farming and environmental sustainability in the vineyards. The Ceretto family embodies the ethos that agriculture can and must be respectful of its environment.

### Will you discuss the history of Ceretto?

The story of the Ceretto winemaking family begins in Alba in the 1930s when Riccardo Ceretto founded the Ceretto Casa Vinicola. The winery's turning point came in the 1960s when Riccardo's sons, Bruno and Marcello, started researching, selecting, and acquiring vineyards and land in the best production areas of the Barolo and Barbaresco appellations. Our family's first winery was eventually built in Alba and was then moved

to the iconic Monsordo Estate. We also hoped to improve the recognition of Arneis, which is also located in Alba, on the world stage. Such extensive planning and research were unheard of at the time and marked the beginning of the Ceretto family's position as a leader in the Langhe and Roero. Bruno and Marcello were dubbed the Barolo Brothers by *Wine Spectator* in 1982 for their work, as they were among the first to promote the idea of a cru model in Italy. For 90 years and three generations, our family has established itself

as a Piedmont stronghold, overseeing 540 acres of estate-grown vineyards throughout four properties. Today, we represent the third generation of the Ceretto family engaged with the region and its culture, notably overseeing a hazelnut/nougat factory and two restaurants (La Piola and the three-Michelin Star restaurant Piazza Duomo), championing sustainability using new and innovative technologies, and patronizing contemporary art in our winery's vineyards.

### Will you provide an overview of Ceretto winery and wines?

Ceretto has four main properties: Bricco Rocche in Castiglione Falletto (DOCG Barolo) produces Barolo DOCG, Barolo Rocche di Castiglione DOCG, Barolo Bricco Rocche DOCG, Barolo Brunate DOCG, Barolo Bussia DOCG, Barolo Prapò DOCG, and Barolo Cannubi San Lorenzo DOCG; Bricco Asili in Barbaresco (DOCG Barbaresco) produces Barbaresco Asili DOCG, Barbaresco Bernadot DOCG, Barbaresco Gallina DOCG; Monsordo Bernardina in Alba produces Blangé Langhe Arneis DOC, Langhe Monsordo Rosso DOC, Dolcetto d'Alba Rossana DOC, Barbera d'Alba Piana DOC, Nebbiolo d'Alba Bernardina DOC, Barbaresco DOCG, Barolo DOCG, and Barolo Chinato; and I Vignaioli di Santo Stefano in Santo Stefano Belbo (DOCG Moscato d'Asti) produces Moscato D'Asti DOCG, and Asti Spumante DOCG.

Barolo DOCG is Ceretto's flagship Barolo. This wine is a blend of the hillside vines grown in Tortonian soils surrounding La Morra and Barolo and of a more austere and masculine side coming



Cantina Bricco Rocche with "The Cube" in Castiglione Falletto, Italy

from vines grown in the typical Helvetian soil found in Serralunga d'Alba. It is an exemplary Barolo, with rich notes of ripe strawberry, black licorice, hints of flint, tar, wet earth, and soft notes of sweet spice.

Blangé Langhe Arneis DOC comes from a native Piedmontese varietal which is grown in a highly distinctive region known as the Roero. This unique Arneis wine combines organic practices in the vineyard with a modern style of wine-making. Fruit-forward with enjoyable minerality, this palate-pleasing wine contains alluring aromas coupled with a balanced freshness on the palate. Notes of anise seed, almond, peach, and fresh pear combine to make this wine enjoyable on its own or when paired with a variety of dishes. Our family is working to improve Arneis' recognition on the world stage.



I Vignaioli di Santo Stefano Moscato D'Asti DOCG was founded by Bruno and Marcello Ceretto to commemorate their father and to elevate the image of Moscato d'Asti. This lively and aromatic wine is pleasing on the nose with aromas of yellow peaches, apricots, and white flowers. The bubbles on the palate are refined and help elevate the subtle aromas and flavors found on the nose and palate. At once fragrant and alluring, this is a sweet wine that has an excellent balance between sugar and acidity.

**What have been the keys to Ceretto's growth and leadership?**

The founding and early evolution of the Ceretto winery is a testament to our family's vision which is valid for both today and the future. The thought behind the winery's establishment was innovative at the time, given our founders' focus on terroir. Today, our family willingly shares its findings with fellow winemakers as the region works together to battle climate change and to engage in organic practices.

When we look back, we are amazed by how much the Ceretto brand has been able to grow, and how representative the brand has become of



*"The Grape" at Tenuta Monsordo Bernardina, Ceretto's headquarters in Alba, Italy*

Langhe and Roero. We have always worked with a deep respect for our origin story, our production, and our land. The original intention was not to grow in dimension and production; however, those of us in the third generation of the Ceretto family have always recognized that our surroundings are what make us unique, and we aim to preserve the land and its heritage as best we can, and to represent that land on the world stage by taking advantage of the best it has to offer. By having the utmost respect for the soil, native grape varieties, and topicality of place, we have written our testament to the future. Ours is a company that wholly believes that wine, food, tradition, and culture come together to offer Ceretto drinkers worldwide a holistic understanding of the region.

**How important is it for Ceretto to be committed to sustainability?**

The goal of all of Ceretto's projects – from production in the family's vineyards to our vision for our restaurants – is to preserve Langhe's cultural heritage and to promote a healthier future for the region. Inspired by the innovative ideas of our fathers, our generation chooses to employ innovative practices to be even more respectful and environmentally conscious in our agricultural approach. This includes using non-invasive cellar techniques that allow Ceretto's much-acclaimed estates to speak for themselves. In addition, over the past 20 years we have phased-out the use of insecticides and fertilizers, opting instead for cover cropping. Our sincere commitment to a sustainable future is also reflected in the fact that all estate fruit is farmed organically and biodynamically.

All Ceretto comes from the winery's guiding principle: our operations and choices are founded on the values of respect and sustainability, and we intend to take this message worldwide.

**Will you highlight your family's restaurants in Alba?**

We look to harness the bounty of our land to its fullest potential and therefore, we now have a hazelnut candy/nougat factory called Relanghe and two restaurants – La Piola and Piazza Duomo, the latter which is the recipient of three Michelin stars. La Piola, located in Alba's town center to encourage conviviality and togetherness, is a "trattoria" serving traditional Piedmontese dishes and regional wines. Piazza Duomo came about when the dream of young chef, Enrico Crippa, became a reality upon his collaboration with us in establishing a gastronomic landmark in the Langhe area. The partnership was consummated

at first bite, and Piazza Duomo has become one of the most notable restaurants for food lovers from all over the world. The renowned restaurant boldly stands in the Piazza del Duomo and greets its diners with famed artist Francesco Clemente's pink frescoed walls and old-world charm.

Ceretto's new generation – Alessandro, Lisa, Roberta, and myself – continue to take the winery to the next level and put great effort into employing innovative agricultural practices and expanding upon Ceretto's initial interest in wine. Gastronomy, food production, and cultural preservation have been incorporated into our remit as can be seen in the winery's restaurants, which are situated and decorated to promote the region's history and cuisine. These restaurants also look to the future with innovative interpretations of some of the region's traditional dishes, as especially seen in Piazza Duomo.

**Will you discuss your efforts to provide opportunities for both little- and well-known contemporary artists to develop and how the winery supports these artists?**

Art and architecture are very important to our family which believes that art allows us to be ambassadors of the Langhe region through expressions beyond those of the land. We were exposed to contemporary art by British artist, David Tremlett, and American, Sol LeWitt, and now the family wholeheartedly endorses a close relationship between art and wine. Ceretto welcomes contemporary artists, both famous and little-known, with whom we nurture a personal relationship based on mutual esteem and allow them to leave their mark on our wineries and restaurants through sculptures, paintings, and exhibitions. The artists' expressions must present a feeling and a deep understanding of the spirit of the Ceretto winery, and the winery's mission to add beauty to its property and territory. The promotion of art in our vineyards, from the Barolo Chapel in Brunate, the fresco by Francesco Clemente that welcomes guests to the Piazza Duomo restaurant, to La Speranza and *Happy Dream* by Kiki Smith at La Piola, the recently installed *Love* sculpture by Francesco Clemente at Monsordo Estate, the *Protect Me Everywhere* sculpture at Bricco Rocche Winery (a gate made by Valerio Berruti framing the vineyard through a couple's embrace), stand in direct alignment with Ceretto's approach in the cellar – a respect for the environment as the winery's art forms a bond between architecture and landscape. ●