

Northern Piedmont Satellite Regions ...



The north of Piedmont is known as much for rice as it is for wine. The region produces some of the best varieties of rice (ie Arborio) as well as many still-underrated age-worthy Nebbiolo-based reds. The soils in the various regions are more similar than they are different – mostly made up of sand, clay and glacial schist (gravel and minerals). It is the mountain streams in the Alps which collect to form tributaries which carry the gravel and minerals and glacial schist into the plains. It is along these rivers one finds these small, but noble wine regions. The rice, however, grows away from the rivers in the flatter plains.

All of Piedmont's important wine regions are linked to rivers. In the shadow of Mont Blanc at the border with France, the Dora Baltea River flows south through Valle d'Aoste, through Carema and further south eventually joining the Po. All of the important wine regions in Valle d'Aoste are found in its valley. Near the border with Switzerland the Sesia River begins and flows south, eventually splitting two key regions – Costa della Sesia on the left bank and Colline Novaresi on the right. It then flows south and also meets up with the Po. The Tanaro is the other important branch of the Po that runs through Asti, Barbaresco and Alba and curves around Barolo.

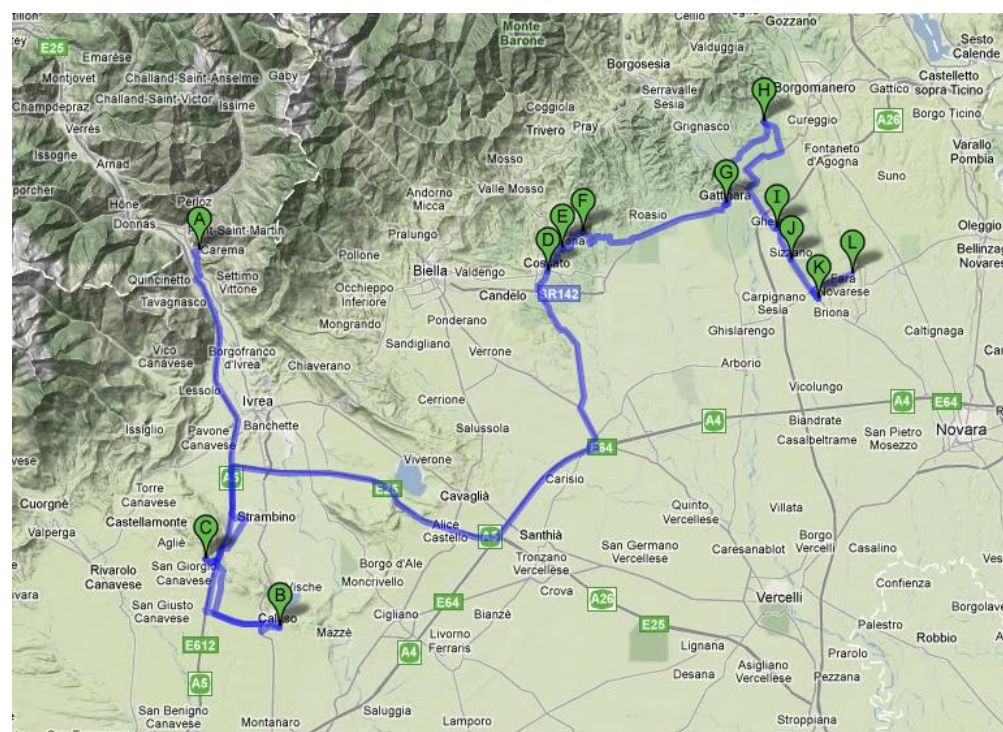
An aspect that links all of these wines is that they possess an elegance and minerality that reflects their cooler climate and terroir as compared to Barolo and Barbaresco. In many cases the ageing regimen is similar to Barolo and Barbaresco but the weather is more variable – more like the weather in Barolo and Barbaresco before the mid 90's. These regions tend to perform better in warmer vintages during which growers are able to more easily fully ripen their grapes. In cooler vintages it can be challenging to reach full ripeness in these cooler regions.

Carema is more closely related to Donnas, its neighbor over the border into Valle d'Aoste, than to the other northern Piedmont satellite regions. These wines are higher elevation than those of the Costa della Sesia or Colline Novaresi. They are grown on steep slopes where rocks were piled to form terraces.

There are only forty acres planted but there are over 100 different plots. Most people own very small amounts and so the majority of the wine available commercially is that of the Produttori di Carema coop. The clones of Nebbiolo used are Picutener and Pugnet – the same as those used in Donnas.

To the west of the Sesia River Nebbiolo plays a larger role in the blends than it does to the east. Often producers choose to bottle them as 100% Nebbiolo or *Nebbiolo in purezza*. On the east side of the river (aside from Ghemme) Nebbiolo's roll in the blends is diminished and the other grapes play more of a roll. The other grapes used are Vespolina, Croatina, Uva Rara and Bonarda Piemontese. Vespolina has been shown to be an offspring of Nebbiolo. Croatina is a late ripening variety that makes fruity wines with good acidity and low tannin. Uva Rara is often used to soften Nebbiolo, it is seldom found on its own. Bonarda Piemontese is rarely used anymore – it produces small bunches and has low productivity.

To give you a sense of the relative size and proximity of these regions, you could start in Lessona and drive through Bramaterra, Gattinara, Boca, Ghemme, Sizzano, and end in Fara one hour and twenty minutes later.



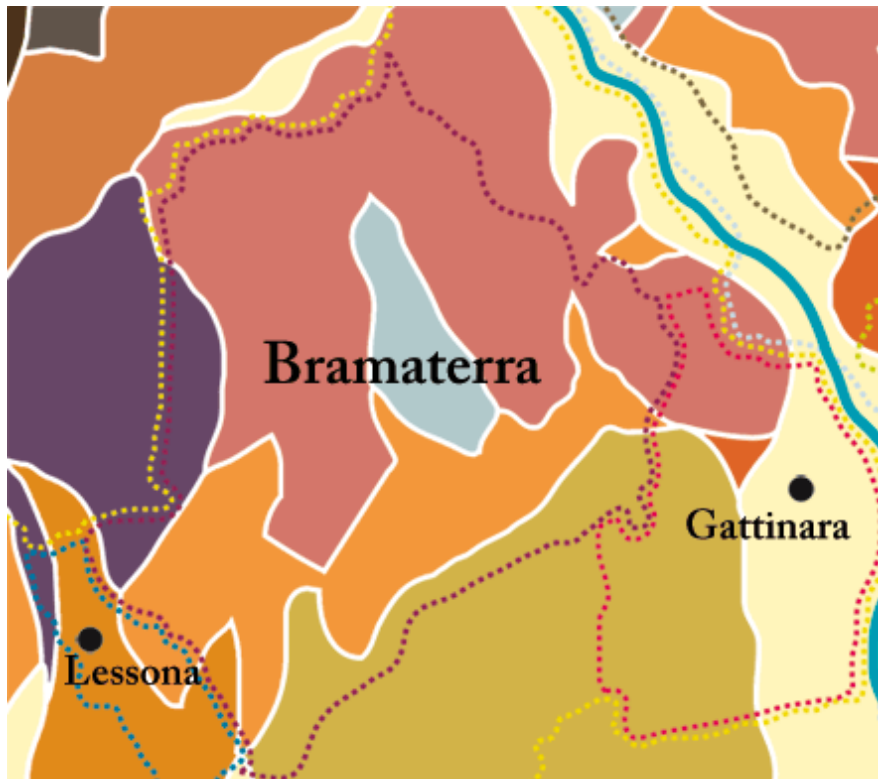
“Lessona has a sandy soil (almost 90% marine sand), it is very acidic, iron-rich and very old (2 million years old). Bramaterra instead has a younger volcanic soil (800,000 years) – made of porphyry (porphyry is a purple-red volcanic rock), also very acidic and rich in iron, manganese and potassium. Gattinara has a similar soil to Bramaterra but it is a single massive block of porphyry while Bramaterra is more disrupted. Ghemme, Fara and Sizzano have more fertile soils of alluvial origin.” – Cristiano Garella, winemaker of Tenute Sella



Soil in Lessona –
orange and red
marine sand



Soil in
Bramaterra –
Red-brown
Porphyry and
Pink Porphyry
that is breaking
down







Sabbie di Deposito Marino =
Marine Sand

Porfidi Quarziferi =
Porphyry with Iron and
Quartz

Calcari Dolomitici e Arenarici
=Dolomitic Limestone and
Sandstone

**Terrazzi Fluvio-glaciali
ciottolosi** =
Terraces with stony glacial
schist and river deposit

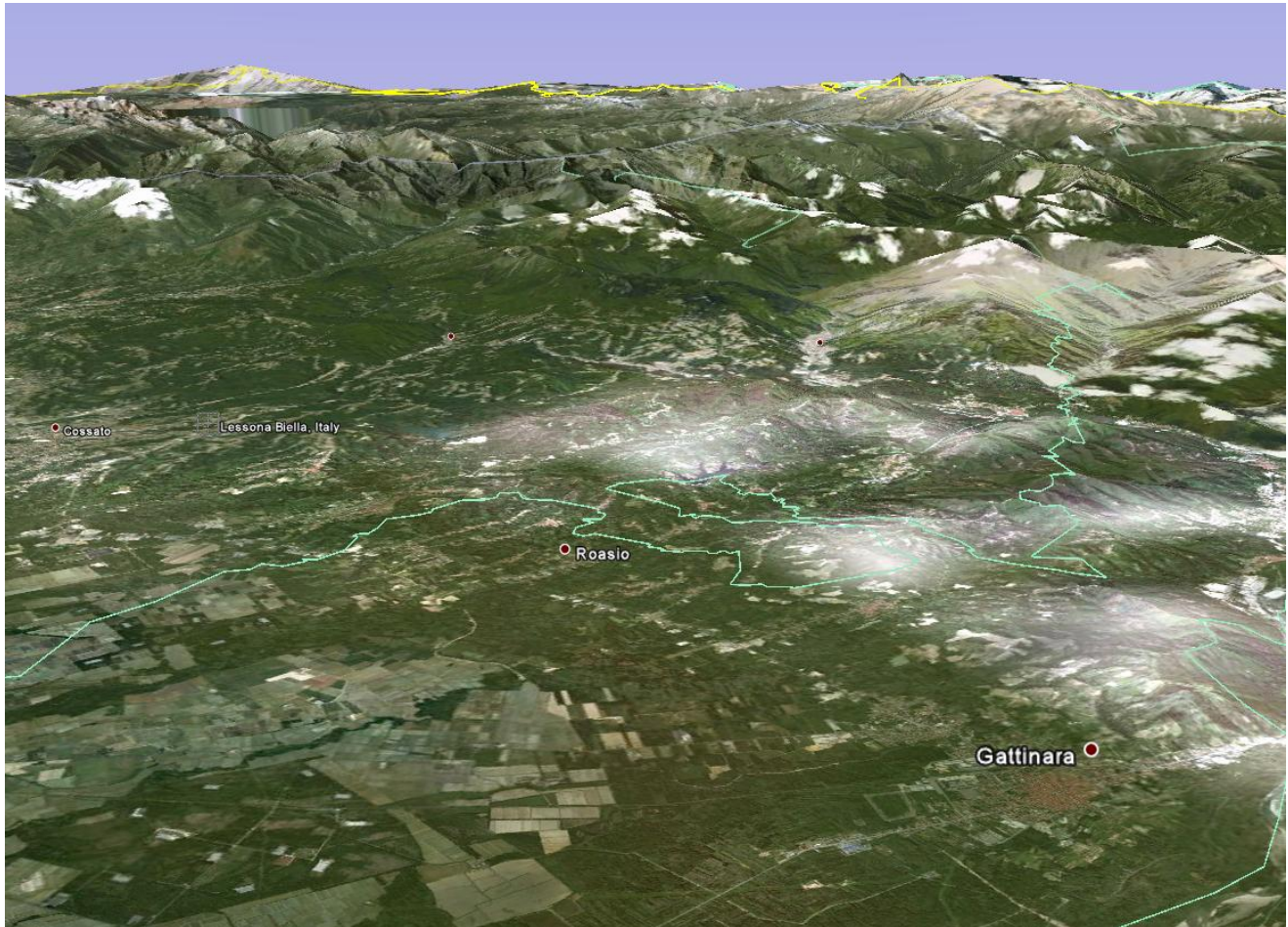
Geologia:

-  sabbie di deposito marino
-  porfidi quarziferi
-  calcari dolomitici e arenarici
-  terrazzi fluvio-glaciali ciottolosi

D.O.C.

-  Lessona
-  Bramaterra
-  Coste della Sesia
-  Gattinara

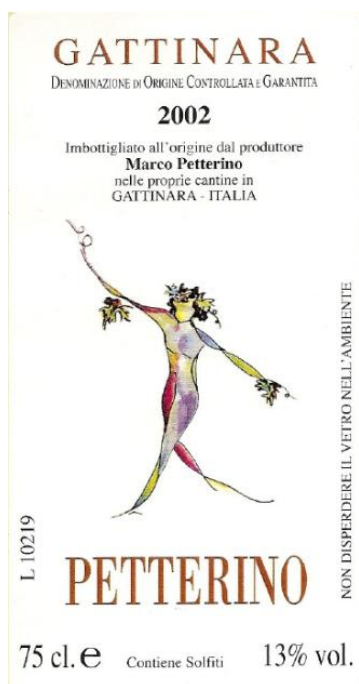
View looking towards the Alps – you can see Gattinara in the foreground and then Roasio (one municipality in the Bramaterra DOC) and then Lessona:



Sparse native vegetation in Bramaterra during the summer

Producer Profiles:

Marco Petterino, Gattinara



Marco Petterino is among the smallest producers of Gattinara. He has a small amount of land – just 2 ½ hectares of vineyards in total. He has pieces in three of the top cru's in Gattinara – Permolone, Castelle and Guardie and all are southwest-facing. Fermentation lasts for 15 days after which the wine goes into 25HL oak casks for three years. The wine then goes into stainless steel for at least six months before going into the bottle. In most vintages it would be eligible for the “Riserva” designation if he chose to use it. He just makes one wine and the production of his one Gattinara is usually under 1,000 cases of 12 per year. He releases his wines much later than his counterparts. He has just recently released his 2002 vintage which will then be followed with the 2001 and 2003 vintages. We are lucky to have small quantities of two vintages – 2000 and 2002. The 2000 has a bit more power while the 2002 is amazingly balanced, elegant and aromatic.

Tenute Sella, Lessona

“Sella is one of the oldest European wineries that never changed hands. Today we try to represent the excellence of Northern Piedmont respecting our history and our tradition. From



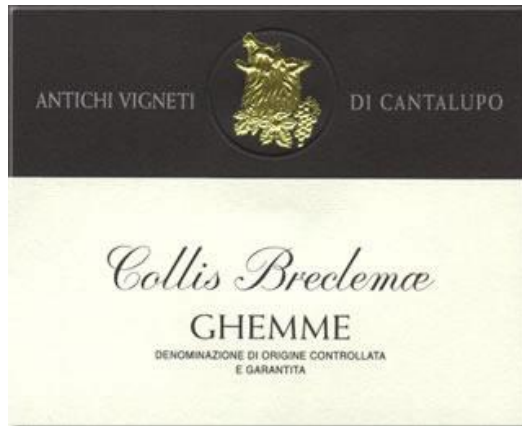
our 22 hectares of vineyards we produce about 90 thousand bottles, fruit of the grape varieties typical of the Biella region: Nebbiolo, Vespolina, Croatina and Erbaluce, vinified in a classic style.” – Tenute Sella.

When one talks about old, historic wine producers in Piedmont one often thinks of wineries like Giuseppe Mascarello e Figlio that started in 1881 or Marchesi di Barolo, the oldest Barolo producer. The Sella

family first bought vineyards in Lessona in 1671, almost 200 years before Italy was unified. While in recent years there has been more attention and some new development in the north of Piedmont, Sella has continued to be a hallmark of the potential the region offers. They have choice vineyards in the two DOC's of Lessona and Bramaterra and they make a few different single vineyards that rival most top Barolo's as well as a few entry-level blends under the Coste della Sesia DOC.

Antichi Vigneti di Cantalupo, Ghemme

The winery of Cantalupo is the property of the Arluno family, who have long been vineyard owners and



grape growers in the beautiful rolling hills of Novara, tucked to the north of the Po River valley and south of the Alps. These are officially the back roads of Piemonte, but as such are great hunting grounds for superb wines that offer outstanding value. However, while the region that includes Ghemme, and its slightly better known neighbor, Gattinara, is not a particularly well known today, its historical wine-producing roots are deep, as there is evidence that grape cultivation in this area predates the Roman empire. The climate here is not dissimilar from that around Alba where the nebbiolo grape reaches its

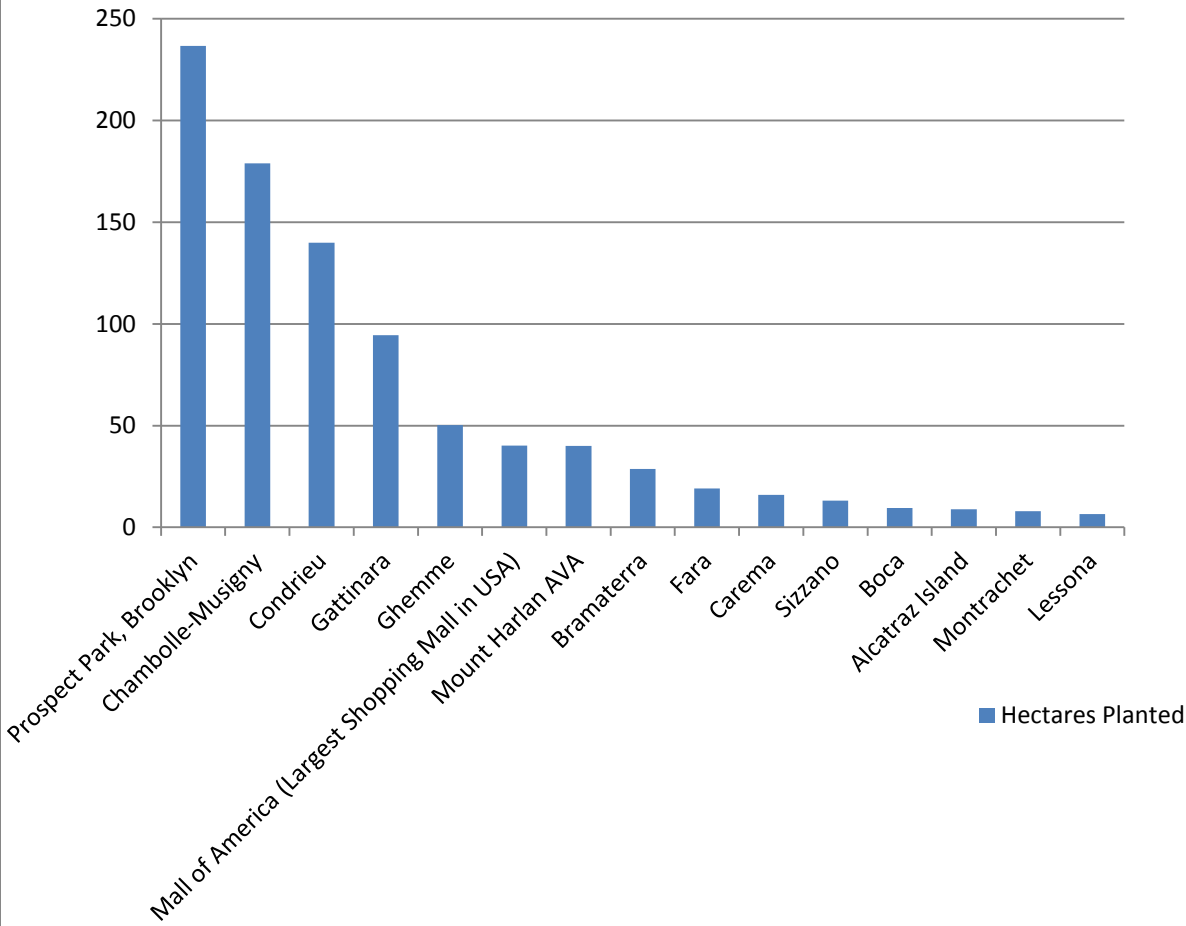
apogee in the wines of Barbaresco and Barolo, with warm summers and foggy autumns allowing nebbiolo to again produce lovely wines. Located so close to the alpine peak of the Monte Rosa, which is the second highest mountain in all of Europe, the soils of Ghemme are not rich by any stretch of the imagination, and the corresponding wines are elegant and medium-full in style.

Produttori di Nebbiolo di Carema



Produttori di Nebbiolo di Carema is a producer of top quality Nebbiolo in Torino, located in the utmost northwestern region of Piedmont. Produttori di Carema, created in 1960, is a small cooperative divided amongst 45 growers in this small, remote region. Each grower rarely owns more than 1 hectare, most having only ½ hectare. The vines are planted on steep, south-facing terraces. The D.O.C. Carema, established in 1967, sits on an incredibly mountainous swath of land bordering the Valle d'Aosta. The climate is cold and quite windy here, resulting in grapes that are slow to ripen, and wines that are light garnet in color.

Size of Piedmont Satellite Areas Compared to Other Areas



A. Carema DOC

- a. **Soil** - morainic glacial schist.
- b. **Grapes** – 100% Nebbiolo. Here they use two clones– Picutener and Pugnet.
- c. **Elevation** – Vineyards range from 350-700 meters in elevation.
- d. **Ageing** -- Must be aged at least 36 months – 24 of which must be in oak or chestnut of a maximum capacity of 40HL. For Riserva – 48 months 30 of which must be in oak.
- e. Achieved DOC in 1967. Carema is at the border of Vallee d’Aoste, only 5 kilometers from Donnas.
- f. Examples in the market
 - i. Produttori di Carema (ours)
 - ii. Others – Ferrando (Rosenthal)

B. Erbaluce di Caluso and Caluso Passito DOC’s

- a. Benchmark region for Erbaluce. Erbaluce di Caluso is used for the fresh dry wines, Caluso Passito for the sweet wine made from dried grapes. A Caluso Passito must be aged for a minimum of four years. Caluso Passito Riserva must be aged for a minimum of five years.
- b. Examples in the market
 - i. Ferrando (Rosenthal)
 - ii. Cieck (Rosalie Sendelbach)
 - iii. Orsolani (used to be in the market)
 - iv. We’ll have an Erbaluce from Sella but it’ll be a Costa della Sesia Bianco.

C. Canavese Rosso and Canavese Bianco

- a. These appellations are generally used for the more early-drinking reds from Carema and Erbaluce producers.

D. Coste della Sesia DOC

- a. This is a region that encompasses Lessona, Bramaterra and Gattinara. It is generally used for Producer’s more early drinking wines from vineyards outside of the above three zones. All four of these zones are located to the west of the Sesia river.
- b. Fun fact – the large beer company Menebrea (that also produces Tappeto Volante is located in Biella between Carema and Coste della Sesia.
- c. Examples in the market
 - i. Sella – Orbello, Casteltorto and Doranda(ours)
 - ii. Proprieta Sperino (Sussex Wine Merchants) – owned by Isole e Olena

E. Lessona DOC

- a. **Soil** - Almost entirely made up of marine sands with high concentrations of minerals such as iron, manganese and potassium.
- b. **Grapes** – Nebbiolo locally called Spanna (minimum 75%) with Vespolina and Uva Rara for a combined maximum total of 25%.
- c. **Elevation** – 300 meters

- d. **Ageing** -- Aged for a minimum of two years – one of which must be in wood.
- e. Sella is the original producer of Lessona, their first vintage was made in 1671! They are one of the oldest wineries in Italy that have never changed hands.
- f. Other examples in the market
 - i. Proprieta Sperino also makes an excellent Lessona (Sussex Wine Merchants)

F. Bramaterra DOC

- a. **Soil** – Loose soil, of volcanic origin, ranging from pale yellow to dark red to brown, with high concentrations of minerals in the soil
- b. **Grapes** – Nebbiolo locally called Spanna (50-70%), Croatina 20-30%, Bonarda and Vespolina together or alone 10-20%.
- c. **Elevation** – 270-350 meters
- d. **Ageing** -- Minimum ageing two years, 18 months minimum in wood. Riserva must be aged 3 years, two of which must be in wood.
- e. None others in the market that I know of – one other produced as far as I know.

G. Gattinara DOCG

- a. **Soil** – The Gattinara hills have the same mineralogical composition as the Alps: there are granites, porphyries, quartzes and numerous ferrous minerals, which give the ground its typical reddish colour.
- b. **Grapes** – Nebbiolo (Spanna) minimum 90%, Vespolina and Bonarda for a maximum 10%.
- c. **Elevation** – 280-420 meters in elevation
- d. **Ageing** -- Minimum ageing of three years, one of which must be in wood. Riserva must be aged four years, two of which must be in wood.
- e. Examples
 - i. Marco Petterino -- 2 hectares of vineyards
 - ii. Antoniolo (Skurnik) – 14 hectares of vineyards
 - iii. Travaglini (Palm Bay SWS) – 55 hectares of vineyards
 - iv. Bianchi (Selected Estates of Europe) – 20 hectares (not all in Gattinara)

H. Boca DOC

- a. **Soil** – comparable to Gattinara
- b. **Grapes** – Nebbiolo (Spanna) 45-70%, Vespolina 20-40%, Uva Rara up to 20%.
- c. **Elevation** – 400-500m in elevation
- d. **Ageing** -- Minimum 3 years of ageing – two of which must be in wood.
- e. Now we are on the east side of the Sesia River. Boca is the northernmost of the Piedmont wine regions.
- f. Example – Cantina Conti (Jan d'Amore)

I. Ghemme DOCG

- a. **Soil** – The soil “is a colossal collection of mineralogical samples from the alpine range above, composed of pebbles of granite, porphyry, gravel rubble, of schist, mica-schist, serpentine, flakes of Dolomitic rocks of Fenera, of amphibolite pebbles” (Nicolini, 1904).
- b. **Grapes** – Nebbiolo (Spanna) minimum 75%, Vespolina and Uva Rara alone or together no more than 25%.
- c. **Elevation** –280-310 meters in elevation
- d. **Ageing** -- Minimum ageing of three years – minimum 20 months in wood and a minimum of nine months in the bottle before release. Riserva must be aged a minimum of four years with a minimum 20 months in wood and a minimum of nine months in the bottle before release.
- e. Examples
 - i. Dessilani (Martin Scott?)
 - ii. Ioppa (Skurnik)

J. Sizzano DOC

- a. Nebbiolo (Spanna) 40-60%, Vespolina 15-40%, Uva Rara up to 25%. Minimum 3 years of ageing – two of which must be in wood.

K. Fara DOC

- a. Nebbiolo 30-50%, Vespolina 10-30%, Uva Rara up to 40%. Minimum 3 years of ageing – two of which must be in wood.

L. Colline Novaresi DOC

- a. The “Coste della Sesia” of this side of the Sesia River. Named for the nearby town of Novara. This appellation too is used for many of the more early drinking wines of the area. It also allows for varietally labeled wines such as our Nebbiolo Coline Novaresi “Il Mimo” from Cantalupo. If a grape is listed, the wine must be at least 85% that grape. If it is just Colline Novaresi Bianco, it must be 100% Erbaluce. If it is Rosso it must be at least 30% Nebbiolo, Uva Rara up to 40% and Vespolina and Croatina alone or together up to 30%.

Vintage Chart – Compiled from Tenute Sella's web site:

The 2010 vintage:

A slightly later than average bud break and a pretty cool and moist early spring. Then the heat, alternated with heavy rainfall, in between May and June led to an exceptional vine vegetation growth. The regular weather in July and August gave balance, while the mild September and October ensured a long, slow ripening, thereby improving the quality of tannins. This allowed us to carry on longer macerations on the skins, for very promising wines.

The 2009 vintage:

Vintage characterized by an early bud break (first week of April) followed by a warm spring, but with almost continuous rainfall during the second half of May. The summer saw good weather conditions in June and July, while August was pretty cool and humid. Unfortunately, some summer hailstorms have affected the production here and there. A very dry September, with hot days and rather cool nights, provided an excellent ripeness, and a really good harvest in terms of quality, for rich and elegant wines.

The 2008 vintage:

A very early bud break (late March) was followed by a very rainy May and unfortunately by several hailstorms. From early May to mid-July in the vineyard of San Sebastiano, but not only there, as many as 6 hailstorms have damaged the shoots and the bunches. The remaining grapes, properly selected (we produced less than one third compared to a normal year) have ripened well, thanks to a sunny and dry month of September, for very aromatic wines, with outstanding tannins.

The 2007 vintage:

After an extremely mild winter, the early stages of growth were held well in advance. Luckily the summer has been hot, but without any excesses; the good ventilation ensured the health of the grapes and the little rains of early August avoided drought. The harvest took place in advance, but with optimal ripeness of tannins and anthocyanins. Great purity and excellent body, the 2007 is an outstanding vintage, that will grow for the next twenty or thirty years.

The 2006 vintage:

After an often cold winter the early spring was mild and constant. During the months of April and May regular rains provided a good growing season. After the excesses of early summer (the extreme hot in the second half of June, then the rainy weather in early July) the season turned mild and dry, especially in September. A classic vintage, on average in terms of quantity, with well balanced Nebbiolo wines, less powerful 2003 and 2007, but excellent in terms of aroma.

The 2005 vintage:

A colder than average end of winter and a cool spring delayed the bud-break by two weeks compared with the usual dates. Then the summer started hot and sunny, scattered with some exceptionally cold but dry days. The abundant rainfall during the month of August delayed a harvest that seemed to be anticipated. Uneven vintage, with peaks of excellence (great balance between acidity and alcohol) where the most draining soils have avoided the risk of rot. The richness in acidity and in tannins and anthocyanins promises an extraordinary longevity.

The 2004 vintage:

A cool and regular winter, followed by a mild and rather dry spring. The summer was hot, but without heat-waves, with well distributed rainfall, never excessive. The growth cycle of the vines has been ideal to punctually proceed with the vineyard management. Excellent weather also in September and October, with extreme temperature contrasts between day and night and very little rain. Outstanding vintage both in quantity and quality, where the growers have thinned the crop: power and elegance perfectly balanced, with a tight-knit, fine and tender tannic structure.

Some ideas on playing the wines off each other and their competition...

Average Retail Shop / restaurant –

Basically here you shouldn't expect them to have ten wines from northern Piedmont, much less 5. So go in with realistic expectations. Gattinara is a safe bet as well as one of the entry-level wines from Sella or Cantalupo.

I brought with me our line-up from northern Piedmont. I notice that you already have the Travaglini Gattinara (probably the most well-known producer from the area). We have a few wines including a fantastic Gattinara that you have to try. There are many great DOC's in northern Piedmont, Gattinara is just one of them. You should definitely try all of these if I were you I'd look to add a few like the Orbello from Sella which is a lower price point than the Travaglini and is a blend of different local grapes including Barbera and is a great introduction into this part of Piedmont. You could also try a Carema which is 100% Nebbiolo and aged like a classic, traditional Barolo though is a little lighter and very elegant. Since Gattinara is a popular category you could also add our Petterino and offer two (or replace the Travaglini!). The Petterino is a tiny production wine and you definitely will not see it in many places so you don't have to worry about pricing competition. The wine is fantastic and offers great value – they release their wine much later than others so you can get a Petterino 2000 Gattinara for the same price as the Travaglini 2004 or cheaper!

Geeky Retail Shop / Restaurant

You need to first know with which wines the account already works. If they already work with a Carema you're better off pushing for one of the other wines. If not, it's a little easier to differentiate Carema from Gattinara than it is from Lessona from Bramaterra. Carema is more easily compared to Donnas. Basically I'd push an account with a big Italian list or significant Italian interest to do Carema or Donnas, Bramaterra or Lessona, Ghemme and Gattinara. Gattinara because it's a great wine, story and price, a Sella wine because it is an historic estate and the wines are great. Ghemme because it's also an historic estate. You need to sell the reasons why any account should have more than one or two of these wines.

I brought with me our line-up from northern Piedmont. We've recently taken on two new producers -- one is a classic benchmark producer, one is a hidden gem. I see you already have the Ferrando Carema and the Antoniolo Gattinara. The Petterino Gattinara is another great Gattinara – aged in botte, it is a little more elegant and aromatic than the Antoniolo, and it is at a lower price point. Also, we have two vintages – 2000 which might be an easier sell, as well as 2002 which is an amazing wine and my personal favorite. We also have the Sella Lessona. The Sella family has been making this wine for over 350 years. It is 80% Nebbiolo with 20% Vespolina. This is a touch broader than the Gattinara with slightly more tannin and herbal notes. I think to truly represent northern Piedmont you should have a Carema, which you have, as well as a Bramaterra (which has a higher percentage of the "other" northern Piedmont grapes) and a wine from the east side of the Sesia River. That could be the Cantalupo Ghemme, or even their cru "Collis Breclamae." For Bramaterra we have a cru – the I Porfidi from a plot that is mainly porphyry – volcanic rock – this is very elegant and mineral-driven from very old vines. We also have a great Erbaluce from Sella. So to fill out your northern Piedmont section you're taking the Petterino 2002, Sella Bramaterra I Porfidi and the Cantalupo Ghemme. Thanks!

Sample Northern Piedmont Bag (remove white & rosato for a 6 btl option)

Tasting Sheet

Produttori di Carema, Carema 2006

100% Nebbiolo from high terraced slopes at the border with Vallee d'Aoste.

24 months in botte followed by a year in the bottle before release

Produttori di Carema, Carema Riserva 2006

36 months in botte followed by a year in the bottle before release.

Produttori di Carema, Carema Riserva 1996

Sella Coste della Sesia Orbello 2009

Barbera 50%, Nebbiolo 20%, Croatina 15%, Vespolina 10%, Cabernet Sauvignon 5%

Ten months in 50HL oak casks

Average age of vines 45 years

Sella Bramaterra 2005

Nebbiolo 70%, Croatina 20%, Vespolina 10%

28 months in 10 HL barrels

Sella Lessona 2006

Nebbiolo 80%, Vespolina 20%

24 months in 25HL barrels

Sella Lessona San Sebastiano allo Zoppo 2005

Nebbiolo 85%, Vespolina 15%

Average age of vines 75 years

36 months in 25HL oak barrels plus 12 months in allier oak barrels

Sella Lessona Homaggio a Quintino Sella 2004

Nebbiolo 85%, Vespolina 15%

Average age of vines 50 years

Sella Erbaluce Doranda 2010

No Malo, six months in stainless steel
Average age of vines 18 years.

Sella Nebbiolo Rosato Majoli 2010

No Malo, six months in stainless steel
Average age of vines 45 years.

Petterino Gattinara 2002

100% Nebbiolo – three years in 25 HL oak casks followed by six months in steel.

Petterino Gattinara 2000

Cantalupo Nebbiolo “Il Mimo” 2010

One night’s skin contact. Aged in steel before release.

Cantalupo Agamium 2006

A few months in botte followed by time in the bottle before release.

Cantalupo Ghemme 2006

100% Nebbiolo from vineyards ranging in elevation from 280-310 meters.

Cantalupo Ghemme “Collis Breclenae” 2004

Situated in one of the best areas for producing Ghemme. This is the biggest vineyard owned by Cantalupo; with a south-south-east exposition at an altitude of 280-310metres above sea level, it extends over ten hectares of land.

Cantalupo Ghemme “Collis Breclenae” 1986

