



PODERI ALDO CONTERNO

Aldo Conterno was born in 1931, the second son of Giacomo Conterno; his family had been winegrowers in Piemonte for five generations. He left Italy in 1954 with the intention of establishing a winery in the Napa Valley with two uncles who lived in San Francisco. Instead he was drafted into the US Army soon after his arrival, spending two years in Korea and returning to Italy after being honorably discharged. He and his older brother Giovanni took over the Giacomo Conterno estate in 1961; in 1969 Aldo left to establish Poderi Aldo Conterno. Much has been made of the split between the brothers, with Giacomo being labelled a great traditionalist and Aldo the modernist innovator. While it is true that Aldo was influenced by new ideas espoused by Angelo Gaja, it is not reasonable to call someone who (for example) so staunchly opposed the adoption of barriques in Barolo - which became almost de rigueur in the 1990's - a raving modernist. Rather he was a thoughtful, open-minded idealist who was passionately devoted to expressing nuances the of Langhe terroir; for him, using modern innovations to best express traditional values simply made good sense. His wines were unquestionably more traditional than not.

A great character and a great gentleman who was revered and respected throughout the region and around the world, Aldo died in 2012. He had already ceded control of Poderi Aldo Conterno to his three sons Franco, Stefano, and Giacomo in the late 1990's. In the early 2000s the trio undertook a massive shift in the vineyards, dramatically reducing the estate's already low yields while also making changes to the winemaking - moving from roto-fermenters to gentler variation utilizing horizontal fermentation tanks with a paddle inside for less extraction. The vines are farmed organically, and the wines have never been better.

All of the vineyards are located in the Bussia Cru located in the commune of Monforte and reflect the clayey-calcareous soil, rich with calcium carbonate and iron, typical of the region. The Romirasco, Cicala and Colonnello vineyards are very steep with beautiful south and south-west exposure and all three utilize both the Lampia and Michet clones. The two former vineyards favoring Lampia and Colonnello dominantly planted to Michet.

The family produce stunning Barbera as well as one of the greatest Chardonnays produced outside Burgundy. Of course the barolos are profound: Granbussia - a three vineyard blend from Romirasco, Cicala, and Colonnello, aged three years in botti and two years in stainless steel - and single vineyard wines from each of the aforementioned sites and are considered to be among Piemonte's very greatest wines. Il Favot expresses Aldo Conterno's spirit of innovation: nebbiolo from young vines aged for 15-18 months in -- wait for it - barriques.

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