



Winery Profile
AZIENDA CRUS

In 2010, newlyweds Davide and Daniela Bellini made the bold decision to leave the winery in which they were then involved to pursue their own dynamic project. Natives of the storied winemaking zone of Bramaterra, they sought a quiet place immersed in nature where they could ultimately produce world-class wines of Alto Piemonte. The couple, at the behest of a local elder, settled in the village of Masserano, a centuries-old town renowned for yielding the zone's top wine grapes. Dedicating their lives to the replanting of long-abandoned vineyards in Masserano, Davide and Daniela formally established Azienda Crus in 2016. With 3.5 hectares under vine, the winery produces an electric Rosato, a seriously crunchy Rosso, and two different bottlings of Bramaterra. All of these Nebbiolo-based wines are blended with local varieties like Vespolina and Croatina, which thrive in the zone's famous porphyry soils of volcanic origin. Davide and Daniela are committed to managing their land organically. In fact, 2020 marks the first vintage of certified organic wines from Azienda Crus.

As they headed off in search of their own vineyards back in 2010, Davide and Daniela stumbled across a hillside named Colma Santa Barbara in Masserano. They immediately felt that this was where they belonged. In 2012, Davide and Daniela managed no small feat by purchasing the entirety of the vineyard from more than a dozen individual parcel owners. Despite the potential of this majestic place, the vines required a painstaking, full-scale replanting in 2015. Today, Colma Santa Barbara represents Azienda Cru's top vineyard, and it is the source of the winery's eponymous single-vineyard Bramaterra bottling.

With plantings stretching as high as 430 meters, Colma Santa Barbara ranks among the highest elevation vineyards in Alto Piemonte. The soil of Masserano, made up of 75-percent porphyry, is incredibly poor. Pink-sand topsoil runs only a few centimeters deep, below which the vines immediately encounter volcanic rock. Davide and Daniela were able to plant just 6,000 vines to 3.5 hectares as a result. From Colma Santa Barbara, they produce single-vineyard Bramaterra composed of 80-percent Nebbiolo, 10-percent Vespolina, and 10-percent Croatina. In the cellar, the grapes macerate for 28 days in stainless steel, after which the wine ages for 18 months in neutral French barrique. As the roots grow deeper into the porphyry with each passing vintage, the resultant wines will demonstrate greater complexity, more pronounced minerality, and a more resounding, savory finish.

La Luppa, another vineyard of the estate, is also located in the historical village of Masserano and boasts vines with an average age of 40-50 years. In stark contrast to nearby Colma Santa Barbara, the soils of La Luppa are primarily yellow sand and clay. Indigenous varieties like Nebbiolo, Croatina, Vespolina, and Barbera take well to these richer soils. This vineyard gives rise to bright botanical aromatics, a hallmark of Bramaterra wines. Grapes harvested from both La Luppa and Colma Santa Barbara macerate for 22 days in stainless steel, after which the wine ages for 18 months in neutral French barrique. A blend of 77-percent Nebbiolo, 13-percent Vespolina, and 10-percent Croatina, this wine is called "Mumbel," which is dialect for Mombello, the neighborhood within Masserano where the winery is located.



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La Luppa was owned by a local elder nicknamed Peppone (“Pepun” in dialect), one of the original founders of the Bramaterra appellation. Tragically, Pepun passed away just as Davide and Daniela assumed control of the vineyard and before their ambitious winery project had been realized. As tribute to this local legend, they named their Vino Rosso, a refreshingly light-bodied field blend, Pepun. A blend of 60-percent Nebbiolo, 20-percent Barbera, 10-percent Vespolina, and 10-percent Croatina from 60-year-old vines, the grapes macerate for 15 days in stainless steel, where primary fermentation occurs. The wine is subsequently divided between stainless steel and neutral French barrique, where malolactic fermentation occurs. It then ages for an additional 6 months in barrique prior to bottling. As a crushable red wine, “Pepun” Vino Rosso makes for an ideal introduction to the wines of Bramaterra.

Meanwhile, “Zaira” Coste della Sesia Rosato is composed of 60-percent Nebbiolo, 15-percent Vespolina, 15-percent Croatina, and 10-percent Barbera. This low-production rosé undergoes 14 hours of skin contact before completing fermentation in stainless steel. Beguiling notes of forest strawberry, rose water, and pink peppercorn abound in this singular expression of Alto Piemonte rosé. Of Arabic origin, “Zaira” means flower and evokes the blossoming and flourishing of something young and precious.

As previously mentioned, Azienda Crus is located in the Mombello neighborhood of Masserano. Davide and Daniela have been working tirelessly to restore the ancient epicenter of this 17th-century neighborhood centered on a parish church. The estate will feature a winery, a cellar, and a tasting room once construction has been completed. Theirs is an impressive project designed to be a powerful reference point for Bramaterra upon its completion.