



Winery Profile
TENUTA IL NESPOLO

Luca Amerio is a youthful man whose quiet demeanor belies his inventive winemaking style. His family's ancestral lands are situated in Moasca, a tiny village resting on the southern flank of the province of Asti. Moasca is that rare spot where Asti's two iconic DOCG zones, Moscato d'Asti and Nizza Barbera, overlap. Now at the helm of his family's estate, Luca draws from his family's old-vine plantings in the heralded limestone-clay soils of Asti to produce both classic, appellation-based wines and fresh, appellation-defying bottlings. Chief among the latter is "Vino da Sete," the estate's edgy riff on *vin de soif* composed of Barbera, Freisa, and Sangiovese. Today, Luca's professional training and his ingenuity are on thrilling display as Tenuta il Nespolo marches into a bright new era.

Upon marrying Franca from a nearby town, Giovanni, Luca's grandfather, moved into what would become the present-day cellar of Tenuta il Nespolo. In the early 1960s, Giovanni began to produce his own wine from the vineyards that he cared for with his father. Wine-focused farms were not common in Asti during this time; more commonly, farms cultivated everything from fruit through grains to meat from livestock. Giovanni, however, had a knack for making delicious wine, and folks would travel far and wide to fill their demijohns. Regional demand for his wines grew steadily, leading to a brisk business selling to clients in Turin and Milan.

As the years passed, Moasca—like much of Asti at large—was increasingly planted to wine grapes. The estate's success enabled the family to purchase new vineyards and to convert fruit orchards to vineyards, including a rare and now treasured parcel of Sangiovese. Upon completing school, Franca and Giovanni's sons, Domenico and Enzo, joined the business. They carried on with cultivating fruit and producing wine while gradually parting ways with their livestock.

In July 1995, Domenico was tending to the vineyard just below the family farmhouse when he cut a turn too tight and wiped out one of the supporting posts in his neighbor's vineyard with his tractor. An urgent call came from the local hospital at that very moment, and he sped off to meet his newborn son, Luca. This next-door neighbor jokingly recalls this accident as the moment when Luca was anointed a vigneron for life.

The following year, Giovanni officially passed the baton to his two sons. They committed to focusing exclusively on wine and replaced the last apple orchards with grapevines. Luca displayed a proclivity for vineyard work at a young age and recalls being interested in attending enology school as far back as middle school. Following high school, he worked in an agricultural laboratory as well as a local wine shop to gain experience while he tested for and was ultimately accepted to the Viticulture and Enology Department at the University of Turin.

That same year, Luca jumped into winemaking, producing Barbera first and then still, dry Moscato the following year. His home village features a unique divergence in soil types conducive to Barbera and Moscato, among other bottlings. On northern slopes, the soils are darker owing to high clay content. These soils give rise to a richer style of Barbera with lush red fruit. On southern slopes, the soils are predominantly calcareous. These chalky white soils favor the production of white wine with high acidity and delicate structure.



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Tenuta il Nespolo is hands-off in the vineyard, allowing the vines to grow vigorously and using minimal amounts of copper and sulfur only when needed. In winter, the estate tills the soil while adding manure to enrich the land and foster ideal conditions for water absorption in advance of the warmer months. Now that Uncle Enzo is happily retired, Luca and his father Domenico work in tandem, caring deeply for the land inherited from Giovanni.

Of the estate's 12 hectares under vine, Barbera and Moscato account for the majority of the family's plantings. Smaller parcels of Freisa, Dolcetto, Favorita, and Chardonnay also thrive. Remarkably, in the 1980s, Luca's grandfather planted a small vineyard to Sangiovese, which flourishes in limestone-clay soils. This vineyard inspired a wine called "Vino da Sete"—a delightfully crushable red wine that drew us to the winery. "Vino da Sete" is a co-ferment of Barbera, Freisa, and Sangiovese whose name translates as "wine of thirst," or as the French write, *vin de soif*. We view this crunchy, chillable red as a harbinger of more great things to come from the cellar of Luca Amerio.