

## Domenico Clerico – Ciabot Mentin, Barolo

- One of the textbook wines from Ginestra Cru
- Shows the hallmark character of long-lived, superb structure this area is known for
  - Potpourri, cinnamon, fennel, bergamot tea, lemon peel

### The Producer

In Italy drinking a bottle of Barolo is an event. Every vineyard in every vintage has its own story to tell. Domenico Clerico, championing the virtues of terroir by focusing on single-vineyard Barolos from the Monforte d'Alba commune, has been considered a benchmark producer of Barolo since he began making wine.

One of the original Barolo Boys, and always ahead of his game, he recognized early on the potential in the eastern slopes of Monforte d'Alba. After taking over his family farm from his father in 1976, he sold off the olive business to purchase a vineyard in Bussia, from which he made his first Barolo "Briccotto Bussia". From this successful debut, he then purchased vineyards in Ginestra and Mosconi, bringing his holdings to 21 hectares by 1995. By choosing great locations in these top crus, and focusing on single vineyard bottlings, he quickly gained international renown as part of the original Marc De Grazia portfolio. Today, Clerico is cited in textbooks as a benchmark producer of Monforte d'Alba.

Rivalled only by his colleagues (and friends) Voerzio, Sandrone, and Scavino, his goal has always been quality. Often Clerico is interpreted as "modern," but actually his unchanging goal has been the ultimate expression of site and vintage. Green harvesting, controlled fermentation, and meticulous selection of new barrels were all quality improvements learned from the great wines of Burgundy, which this younger generation was open to.

In 1990 he introduced French barrique aging. Like many of his cohorts, he experimented with new barrique in a drive for the cleanest wines possible, now using 20% of new oak followed by 16 months in 5000L Slavonian casks, which he believes leads to the ideal expression.

Until his passing in 2017, he continued to push boundaries for quality. While battling cancer, in 2007 he built an impressive, state-of-the-art cellar with top of the line equipment, sculptures, and a pool. With the 2011 vintage, he created a Barolo Classico, usually a staple of Barolo producers, but a new offering for Clerico. His goal was to make a Barolo more accessible to the younger generation while also increasing the quality of his single vineyard Barolos. His vision continues under his widow, Giuliana.

The estate's current portfolio features cru Barolos from single vineyards including Ciabot Mentin (Ginestra), Pajana (Ginestra), Percristina (Mosconi), a Barolo classico, as well as a Barbera bottling taken from the most approachable barrels from three single vineyards.

### The Wine

Within Monforte d'Alba, the most famous cru is unquestionably Ginestra, and Clerico's Ciabot Mentin is often heralded as the best example. Planted at 1,300 feet, with a south to southeast exposure, Clerico's Ciabot Mentin is a special part of the larger Ginestra cru. His yields are low in comparison with other producers and his oak and bottle resting time before release is longer than most. This makes Clerico's Ciabot Mentin a real treasure in the scheme of Barolos; his current vintage will be older than what is typically on the market. The resulting wine expresses profoundly rich and dark fruit with spice, grilled flavors, and dark mineral nuances.



**Region:** Piedmont

**Appellation:** Barolo, Monforte d'Alba

**Vineyards:** Ginestra

**Altitude:** 1,100-1,400 feet

**Soil:** Helvetian clay and marl

**Varietal:** 100% Nebbiolo

**Vine age:** some as old as 45-55 years

**Trellissing:** Single Guyot

**Harvest:** Manual in early October

**Vinification:** Maceration on the skins in a rotofermenter for 20-30 days

**Aging:** Total of 32 months barrel aging, first in French oak (20% new), then in 5000L Slavonian cask; followed by 2 years in bottle

**Production:** 1,900 cases

**Tasting Notes:** The bouquet is generous and opulent with plush dark fruit, enhanced by spice, grilled herb, and dark mineral nuances. Profound and meaningful quality of fruit with fluidity as it evolves in the glass. Soft tannins accent the sheer muscle and energy of the wine.