



## ▶▶▶ THE WINE ROUTES



The itinerary through the lands and wines of the Biella district departs from Lake Viverone, a popular resort surrounded by the slopes producing the Doc wines of Canavese and Erbaluce. In addition to the water sports offered by the resort, the lake's natural environment is perfect for pleasant rambles on foot, bicycle or horseback. Roppolo Castle, headquarters of the Enoteca Regionale della Serra, is nearby where all the region's wines can be tasted and purchased. From there, Biella is within easy reach by road, where it is possible to visit the town's medieval centre, Piazza, try Canestrelli, the town's delicious

traditional sweet, or Ratafià, a characteristic liqueur produced in nearby Andorno, before visiting Europe's third largest Sanctuary at Oropa, a monumental place of pilgrimage.

This is also an obligatory culinary pause to enjoy the Sanctuary's renowned hot chocolate, or a plate of polenta concia (maize porridge with fondue cheese) in one of the numerous nearby restaurants. From Biella it is possible to visit Candelo, known for its beautifully preserved late medieval fortification, the Ricetto. Spread over 13,000 square metres, this Ricetto (the Italian name means "refuge") is listed as one of the best conserved in Europe. Candelo itself is surrounded by one of the district's nature reserves, the "Riserva Naturale della Baraggia", a wild and evocative apparently flat plain linking Biella with the Po valley, which has a suggestive "savannah-like" appearance.

From Candelo, the itinerary proceeds toward the east of the district, along the modern highway between Biella and Cossato, to visit the district's other Doc wine producing areas, "Lessona", "Bramaterra" and "Coste del Sesia". This is the green heart of the district stretching from Masserano, where a visit to the medieval centre is a must, to Sostegno, an enchanting little village immersed in the green hills. A well known haunt for mushrooms hunters, the area is also the ideal place for rambles through its beautiful vineyards in any seasons, along the footpaths that lead to the Valsessera, a mountainous area between Biella and the Sesia valley. This wonderfully uncontaminated environment is still home to chamois, deer and marmot. Naturally, the area has a good number of restaurants offering the district's traditional dishes, accompanied by the wines these splendid sun-kissed hills produce each year.



## ECOLOGICAL WINE-MAKING MUSEUM

Candelo, a small town a few kilometres from Biella, was said to produce 1,250,000 litres of wine back in the 17th century. From this and other interesting historical facts one can grasp the importance that wine held for this tiny community, as well as the main purpose of its fortified medieval centre, the Ricetto: an enormous store serving as a communal wine cellar as well as refuge in times of need. This is the idea behind the wine-making museum being developed in a number of the cellars under the patronage of the Province of Biella. Its intention is to restore antique wine-making apparatus and revive traditional techniques through the creation of a "museum-vineyard". Visits to the first of these "museum-cellars" can be organized by calling the Pro Loco in Candelo at: 015/2536728. In October, every year, the Ricetto plays host to "Vinincontro", a wine-oriented event with concerts and tasting.

**THE SERRA REGIONAL WINE CENTRE**

200 types of wine, 20,000 choice bottles with a beautiful brick-vaulted stone-walled cellar: these are the suggestive first impressions given to visitors by Enoteca Regionale della Serra (the Serra Regional Wine Centre). In this ancient medieval manor in Roppolo one can find all the wines of Piedmont, as well as those of Valle d' Aosta, all of which having been admitted to the Enoteca only after passing scrupulously severe selection. In this fifteenth century cellar, with its typically arched shelving reminiscent of ancient infernotti, there is also an area dedicated to regional folklore, exhibiting a small collection of traditional wine-making apparatus. The Castle also plays host to the Festa dell' Uva (grape-harvest festival) in September, and many other gastronomic and folklore events, conventions and seminars, all with the same common denominator: wine.



**BRAMATERRA d.o.c.**



Born from the fortunate combination of the Nebbiolo vine and the particular nature of the terrain of this region, which provides its natural habitat, it is a formidable wine, full of flavour, velvety, with a characteristic garnet red colour and a pleasantly bitterish undertone. Its production area lies between Masserano, Brusnengo, Curino, Villa del Bosco and Sostegno. *An ideal companion for:* game and red meats in general. *Grape:* Nebbiolo (Spanna) 50/70%, Croatina 20/30%, Bonarda and Vespolina, alone or together, up to 20%. *Minimum alcohol content:* 12%. *Ageing:* obligatory 2 years, of which at least 18 months in wooden barrels.

**CANAVESE d.o.c.**

Most recent addition to Piedmont's D.O.C. wines. The appellation "Canavese" is divided into "Red", "Ros?", "White", "Nebbiolo" and "Barbera".  
Production area: Cavagli&Mac246;, Dorzano, Roppolo, Salussola, Viverone, Zimone.

**COSTE DELLA SESIA d.o.c.**

Very recently approved according to D.O.C. regulations ,the wines of this appellation are divided into: "Red", "Ros?", "White", "Nebbiolo", or "Spanna", "Bonarda" or "Uva rara", "Croatina" and "Vespolina".  
Production area: Lessona, Masserano, Brusnengo, Curino, Villa del Bosco, Sostegno, Cossato, Mottalciata, Candelo, Quaregna, Cerreto Castello, Valdengo and Vigliano Biellese.

**LESSONA d.o.c.**

A rare and precious wine, this is produced in the hilly area from which it takes its name, a few kilometres from Biella. A garnet red colour with hints of orange as it ages; intense bouquet, fine and delicate, reminiscent of violet; dry, pleasantly tannic flavour, agreeable, with great character and a persistent after taste.  
An ideal companion for: game and red meat in general.



Grape: Nebbiolo (Spanna), Vespolina and Bonarda may also be present up to 25%.  
Minimum alcohol content: 12%.  
Ageing: obligatory 2 years, one of which in wooden barrels.



One of the Region's few white wines. Production area: the province of Turin, with Caluso as its epicentre, extending up to the Canavese and Biella districts. In the province of Biella it can be found in Viverone, Roppolo and Zimone, where the terrain is of glacial origin and ideally exposed.

Erbaluce types:

#### **ERBALUCE DI CALUSO**

Intense straw-yellow with hints of gold; subtle, delicate bouquet, reminiscent of flowers of the field; dry, agreeably acidic persistent taste.

An ideal companion for: appetizer and fish.

Grape: Erbaluce 100%.

Minimum alcohol content: 11%.

Ageing: not contemplated.

#### **CALUSO PASSITO**

A brilliant yellowy-gold colour with a hint of shadow; characteristic ethereal, delicate bouquet; its flavour is sweet, harmonious, full-bodied and velvety, the result of a long process which demands that the grapes are hand-borne to the press to avoid damage by lying them on straw lined gratings.

Before pressing, the grapes are left to "appassire" (a kind of drying process) for a few months (hence the name "passito").

Grape: Erbaluce, sometimes with local Bonarda (5%). The grapes must be naturally dried to give a sugar content no lower than 30%.

Minimum alcohol content: 13,5%.

Ageing: obligatory for 5 years, blending with wines from other vintages is allowed in this time.

#### **ERBALUCE SPUMANTE BRUT (sparkling)**

Most recent addition to the Erbaluce family, this wine is slightly sparkling with a pale straw colour; light evanescent froth and fine, persistent perlage; characteristic delicate bouquet and dry, fresh, fruity flavour.

Grape: Erbaluce 100%.

Minimum alcohol content: 11.5%.

Ageing: none.