



ENOTEC IMPORTS, INC. BAROLO MGA 360

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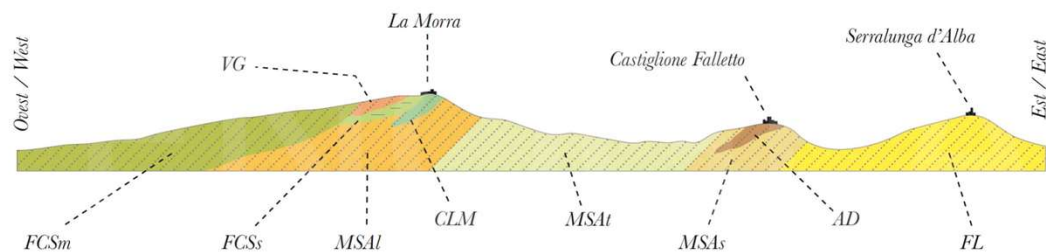
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THE ZONE



Zona di origine del Barolo docg
Barolo docg production zone



COMMUNES



Communes

The Barolo zone, officially delimited in 1966 with the recognition of Denominazione di Origine Controllata (DOC) and, in 1980, with the introduction of Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita (DOCG), takes in 11 different communes. These are Barolo, Castiglione Falletto and Serralunga d'Alba, which lie entirely within the zone, and Cherasco, Diano d'Alba, Grinzane Cavour, La Morra, Monforte d'Alba, Novello, Roddi and Verduno, which lie within it in part.

In this section I have dedicated to each of them a short introduction describing the main features of the communal territory and the MGA subdivisions, leaving further details to be analyzed in depth under each single MGA entry. This for two reasons: 1) the study of a territory must, in my opinion, proceed step by step; 2) with more detailed information, the profiles of many communes would have become too extensive to be consulted on the web.

To accomplish this task I have often had to resort to images that cover a much larger portion of the territory than those that appear with the MGA entries. This means that in some cases the boundaries may not be perfectly accurate, but still close enough for our purposes. In general, in the introductory images that illustrate the various sectors and slopes within the communal territory, I have highlighted all of the vineyards that lie within the commune, while in the detailed images of the individual sectors or slopes I have usually highlighted only the vineyards that fall within the various MGAs concerned.

For your reference, here follows a summary of the various details of the production regulations for Barolo DOCG.

Grape variety: 100% Nebbiolo.

Maximum production per hectare: 8 metric tons or 54,4 hectoliters or 7,253 bottles of wine.

Minimum legal ageing: 38 months from the 1st of November of the year after the harvest, 18 of which in wood barrels. The term "Riserva" can be used on the label when the wine has been cellared for 5 years, calculated once again from the 1st of November of the year after the harvest.

Minimum alcohol content: 13% Vol.

Minimum total acidity: 4.5 grams per liter.

Minimum dry extract: 22 grams per liter.

On the label – in addition to the appellation name Barolo and, in certain cases, the specification of "Riserva" status – can appear:

The township which is the source of the grapes

(e.g. Barolo del Comune di Barolo – Barolo of the township of Barolo)

Menzione Geografica Aggiuntiva (MGA or "cru")

(e.g. Barolo Brunate / see page 40)

Vigna ("vineyard"), but only when used along with the name of a MGA

(e.g. Barolo Bussia Vigna Colonnello / see page 313)

In this last case, the addition of the word "Vigna" is not necessarily an indication of superior quality compared to that of a Barolo which carries solely the MGA indication, and this despite the fact that the use of the word "Vigna" obliges the producer to reduce yields by 10%, from 8 to 7.2 tons per hectare (from 3.2 to 2.88 tons per acre).



CASTELLETTO

Castelletto

Monforte d'Alba



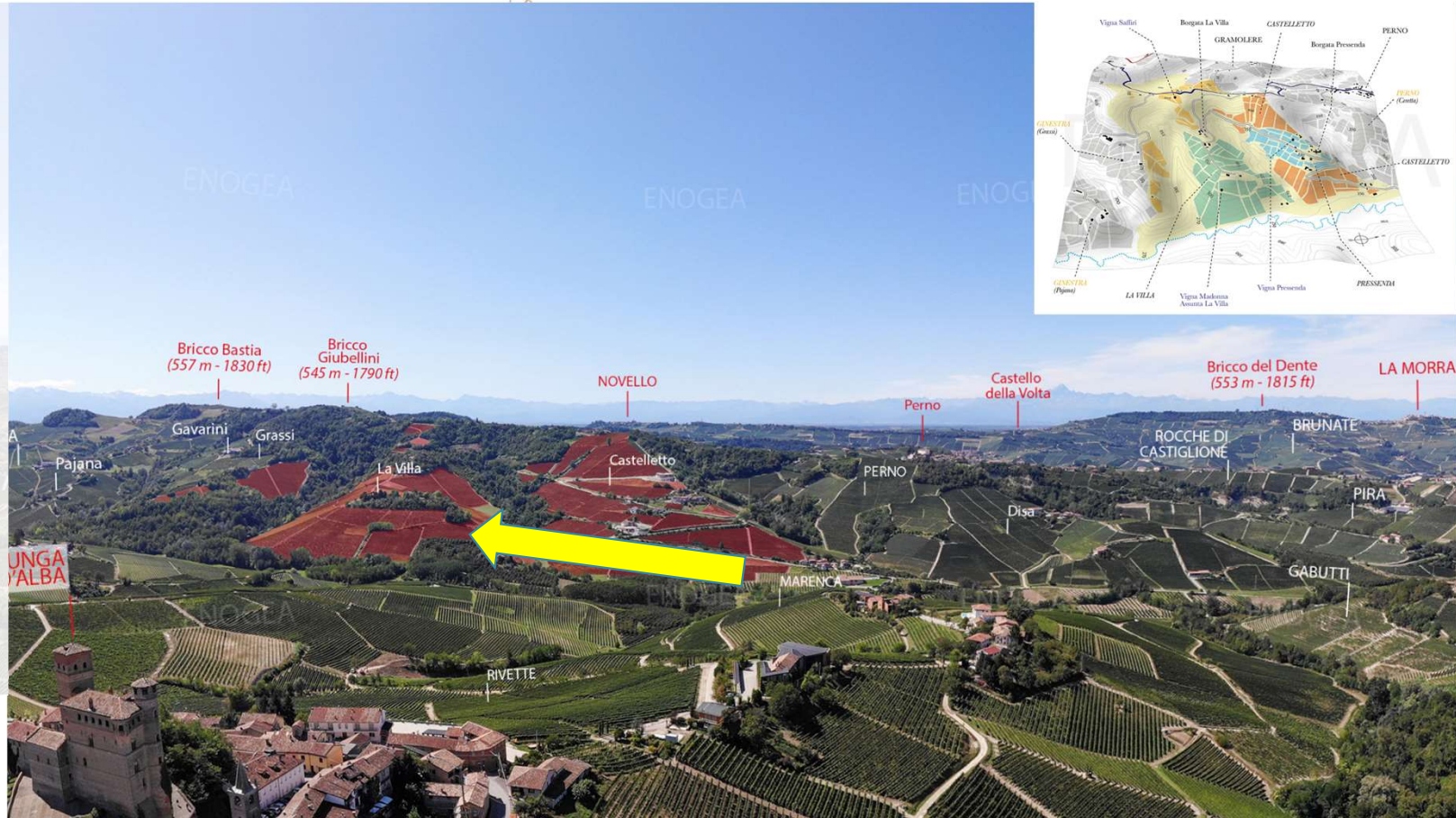
Officially the MGA Castelletto extends even beyond the wooded ridge in the direction of Gramolere, as illustrated in the 3D model.

What everyone associates with the name, however, is the slope visible in these background images. A slope that is naturally divided into two zones: that of La Villa, the hamlet once the seat of the commune of Castelletto, and that of Castelletto proper, in whose central part lies what was traditionally distinguished as Pressenda, within which Vigna Pressenda is further delimited.

The Castelletto area is characterised by a single slope, often very steep and with a more easterly exposure. The higher part has rather sandy soils (Diano Sandstones) and at the same time evolved, which accounts for a slightly fruitier character in wines (Giovanni Manzone and Josetta Saffirio) than those coming from Pressenda down, and therefore on the Lequio Formation.

The area of La Villa, on the other hand, already begins to assume the form of the ridge that we will find more explicitly between Grassi and Ginestra, therefore characterized by two opposite vineyard slopes: one facing north, with evolved soils and largely dedicated to Barbera and Dolcetto, the other facing south, with younger soils and essentially dedicated to Nebbiolo (as is the part of Vigna Madonna Assunta La Villa facing Serralunga d'Alba). The looming presence of the wooded ridge, however, means that the microclimate is cooler than Ginestra and Mosconi and perhaps that is why the wines show a less intense and more vertical style, at least in the case of the Seghesio brothers.

The Saffirio Vineyard, almost at the top of the ridge, has younger soils on Diano Sandstones, but since no wine has ever been made exclusively from it, it's impossible to say what kind of Barolo it can produce.



FOSSATI

Fossati

Fossati

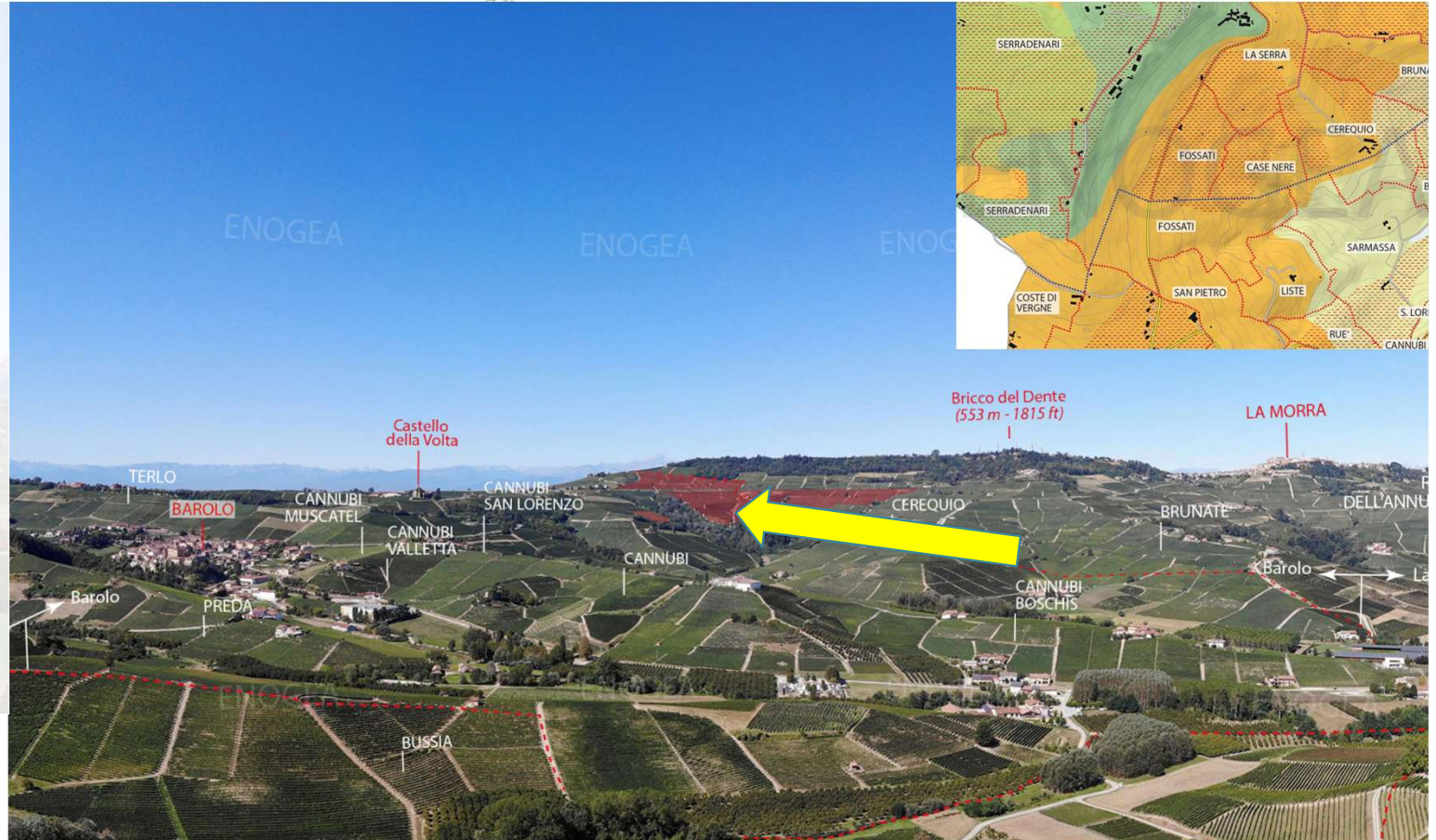


All rules have exceptions, including that one I gave you about observing vineyards in the field: first from a distance, then from several possible angles, and only later by entering between the rows. One exception is Fossati.

Referring to the three images, you can perceive the differences in altitude and get an idea of the exposure as well as the scope of the MGA and note how the border between Barolo and La Morra cuts it in two. But it is difficult – except perhaps in the third image – to perceive the steepness of the slope, which in a vineyard with such uniform exposure, becomes a key factor.

Except at the highest part close to the woods, where the incline reaches significant degrees, on the rest of the slope (from just above the road down to the base) the incline is rather gentle. This means that there is less erosion and greater accumulation, with soils that are therefore often evolved and equally often subject to landslides (a problem, as we've seen, that is even more marked at *Case Nere*).

Evolved soils and deeper terrain, as noted, render wines that are richer in color and substance, which in the case of Fossati also means rougher tannins than others, requiring longer refinement in bottle. Or, as they might say, wine more sword than foil.



LAZZARITO VIGNA PREVE

Lazzarito

Serralunga d'Alba

Like Gabutti and Parafada, Lazzarito is one of the first category crus mentioned in Renato Ratti's map, and of the three has undoubtedly enjoyed the greatest visibility and acclaim over the years, also due to the greater number of producers.

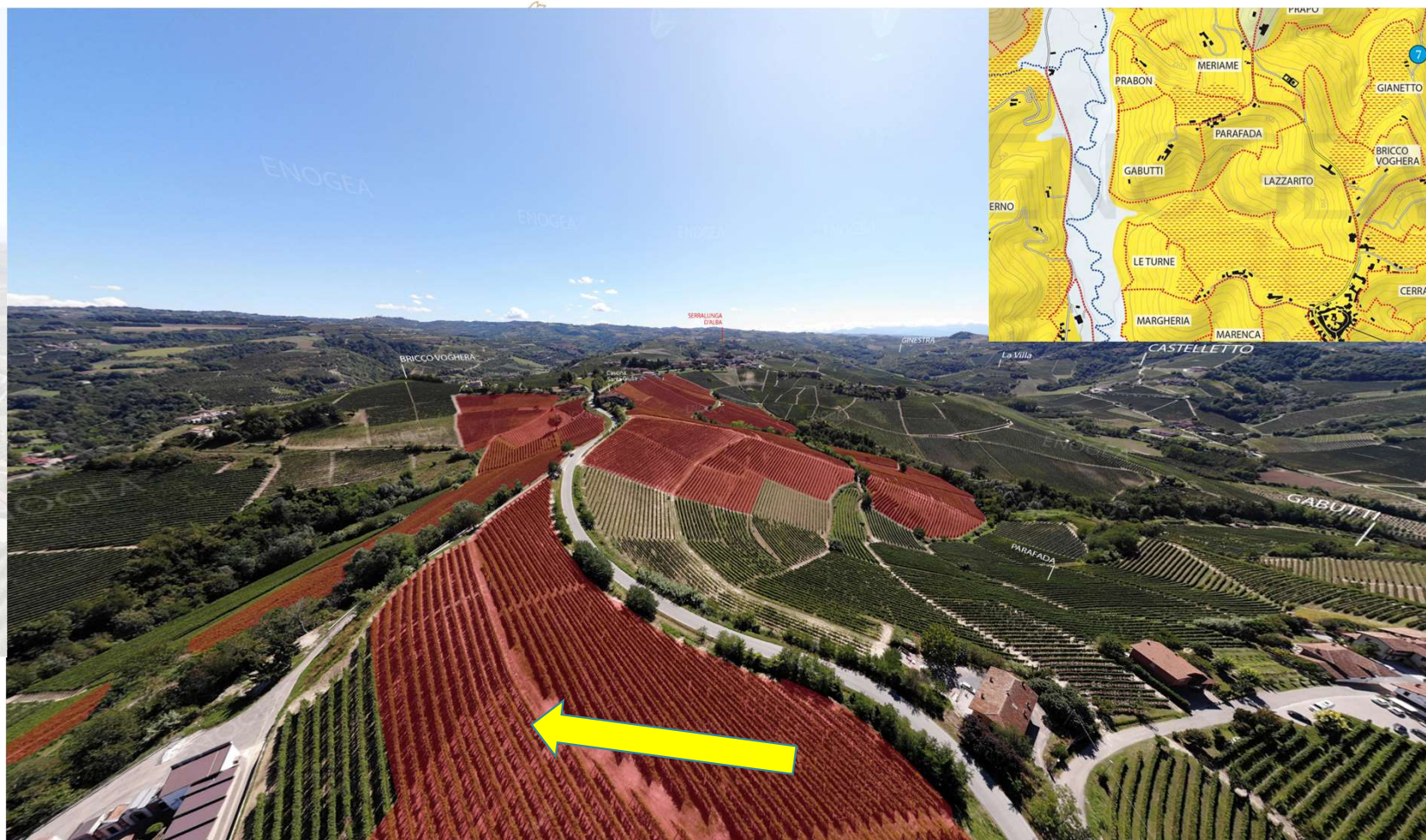
Ratti, in his delimitation, included only the part facing southwest at the foot of Cascina Santa Giulia in the cru, whereas the current MGA also extends along the eastern side of the hill, part of which was included in the historical confines of Lazzarito.

The opposite side – much larger and better known – can be divided into two distinct areas: the basin of Vigna La Delizia, to which can be added the small hill above Parafada, where Vigna Preve, which has a much more recent history than La Delizia, is located and the basin of Lazzarito proper, which was then the one highlighted by Ratti.

Immediately downhill lie the vineyards of Lazzairasco, while on the southern border of the MGA is the area of Santa Caterina, which, like Lazzairasco, was included in Lazzarito following the comune's first delimitation of the cru in the 1990s. Considering the Barolo coming from there, I would say that addition was completely justified.

In general, the wines of this MGA have more weight than nuance, with character less evident and recognizable than, for example, Gabutti, Prapò or Cerretta.

A last note about Vigna La Delizia, whose vineyards cross over from Lazzarito MGA to Parafada MGA, where it not only occupies a larger area but also finds its best exposures. It would seem opportune to decide in the future to which of the two MGAs it definitely belongs.



MONVIGLIERO

Monvigliero

Verduno



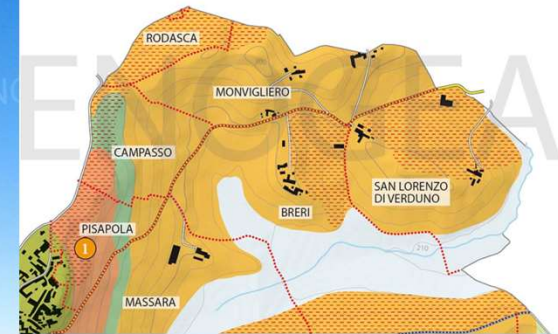
The present image, although taken from a certain distance, is nevertheless sufficient to place the cru in the context of the DOCG and the commune. Rotating the image we can see that Monvigliero is in the lowest part of Verduno on the northern border of the Barolo denomination, where the hills become gentle and rounded and the valleys broaden and where the vineyards share space with other crops, first of all hazelnuts (beyond Campasso the landscape begins to change a bit).

Compared to Breri and San Lorenzo di Verduno, however, the hill of Monvigliero is more variable and pronounced, so that at least three distinct areas can be identified within it (see the second image).

On the right, near the DOCG boundary, is a rather uniform and moderate slope, where I know of no wine produced purely from it; at the center is the crest that dominates Cascina Monvigliero, from which comes the Barolo di Paolo Scavino; beyond that is a broad slope running from Bricco Fava and Cascina Marzio forming a large amphitheater near the border with Campasso. Of the three, this area boasts the longest tradition of bottled wines as well as the largest number of owners, notably since Monvigliero became the setting of numerous important acquisitions in recent years by non-Verduno wineries (including Oddero, Poderi Luigi Einaudi and Vietti).

Despite the plurality of interpretations, including some very different choices of harvest dates, Monvigliero is generally noted for elegant wines, capable of reconciling structure and balance, with a touch of depth and austerity that neighboring crus rarely express (with the exception of Massara).

Why this is so is hard to say, considering that the geological makeup of the area is entirely laminated Sant'Agata Fossili Marls with younger soils, including the best exposed vineyards of San Lorenzo di Verduno. These are the mysteries that make wine so fascinating.



MOSCONI

Mosconi

Monforte d'Alba



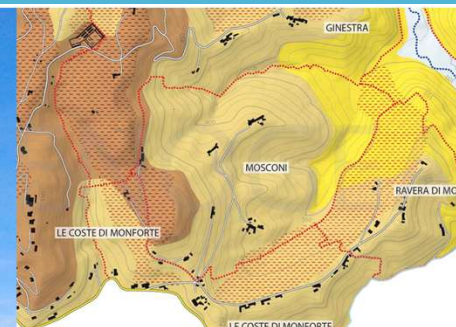
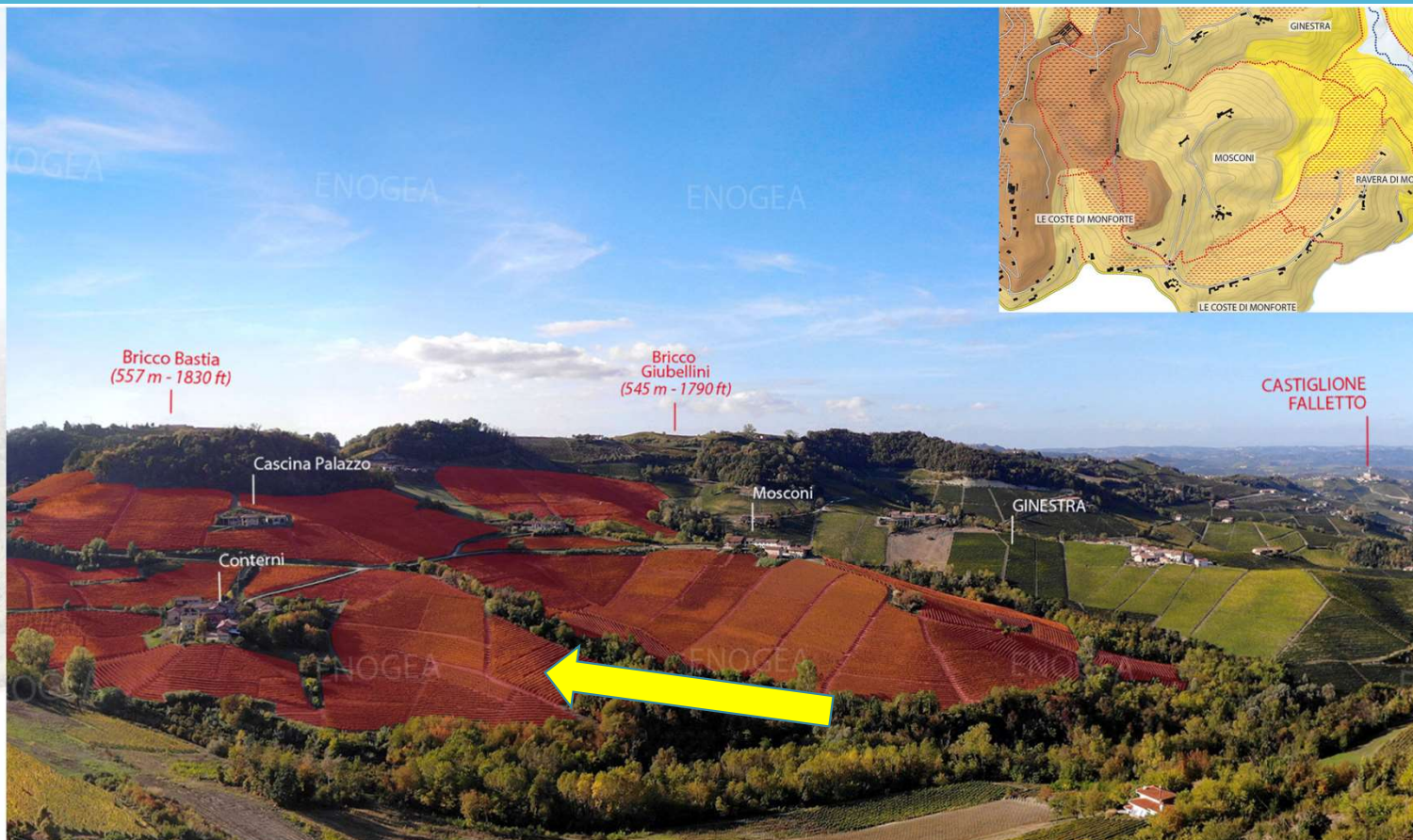
The differences between the Barolos of Mosconi and Ginestra are not as pronounced as those between Mosconi and Ravera di Monforte or as those between Brunate and Serradenari, but they are noticeable in almost every vintage.

Why this is so is hard to say. The wines on the market today come from both the Mosconi area proper and the Conterni area, which in terms of soil and geological formation (sandy Sant'Agata Fossili Marls) differ very little from the heart of Ginestra.

Mosconi is also slightly higher than Ginestra, although the exposure is generally similar, even where the slopes curve more decisively to the east, as in the case of Vigna Ped and the vineyards of Conterni immediately downhill from Cascina Palazzo. The wines of Mosconi maintain their essential substance, with a touch of roundness in the tannins and a balance that the wines of Ginestra, at least in their youth, rarely manage to express.

The only real difference in terms of landscape is that both Conterni and Mosconi, at least in terms of the areas most suitable for Nebbiolo (those visible in the first two images), are smaller and more closed in and therefore probably different in microclimate. But how much influence this has in the style of the wines is still to be determined.

Also worthy of mention are the vineyards of Cascina Palazzo, in particular those to the left in the image.



SERRA DI TURCHI

Serra dei Turchi

La Morra



Before I started this project, I hadn't realized how easy it would be to confuse Serra dei Turchi with Bricco Ambrogio in photographs: the same shape of the hill, the same exposure (for the most part), the same uniformity of slopes and even a similar row of houses along the top of the ridge. The similarities continue in the terrain – as can be noted on the geo-viticultural map – since both MGAs are characterized by younger soils of typical Sant'Agata Fossili Marls.

The similarities do not carry over into the wines, however, since the Barolo of Serra dei Turchi in terms of weight and intensity seems closer to the elegance of the wines of Bricco San Biagio or Roere di Santa Maria than to the substantially structured wines of Bricco Ambrogio.

It's also worth noting the differences in elevation of the two hills, which for Bricco Ambrogio is much more pronounced, even if in these images it's practically imperceptible since aerial views tend to flatten the horizontal perspective.



ORNATO

Ornato

Serralunga d'Alba



It is not a rule, but in the Langhe the name of farms or hamlets, and the associated vineyards, often derives from a family name. In some cases it remained the same, such as Ornato, in others it was simply pluralized, especially in the case of hamlets or very large farmsteads known as cascine (Dardo became Dardi, Parusso became Parussi, and so on).

These families, being part of very small communities, had close ties that over the years became so complex that I'm amazed every time I hear about them. (To give you an idea, the original owner of this cascina – signor Ornato – had two daughters, who became respectively the grandmothers of Renato Massolino, of the Massolino winery, and Ester Canale Rosso, of the Giovanni Rosso winery, which today are both prominent names in Vignarionda).

Linked to Ornato, or perhaps to Briccolina, could also be the Barolo Vigna Siri label that the Giacomo Conterno winery produced between the late 1960s and early 1970s from the vineyards of Giacinto Cagnazzo, whose family had several properties in this area (and this might also explain the inclusion of Ornato on Renato Ratti's cru map).

Coming to the present, what today is delimited as Ornato MGA, apart from a few small plots on the top of the crest overlooking Briccolina, is rightly concentrated on the southern slope, right between Falletto and Briccolina. This notably warm and early-ripening position renders wines which, in terms of intensity, compare more to those of Boscareto or Corda della Briccolina (another warm and early-ripening position) than to the Barolo of Falletto.



PARAFADA

Parafada

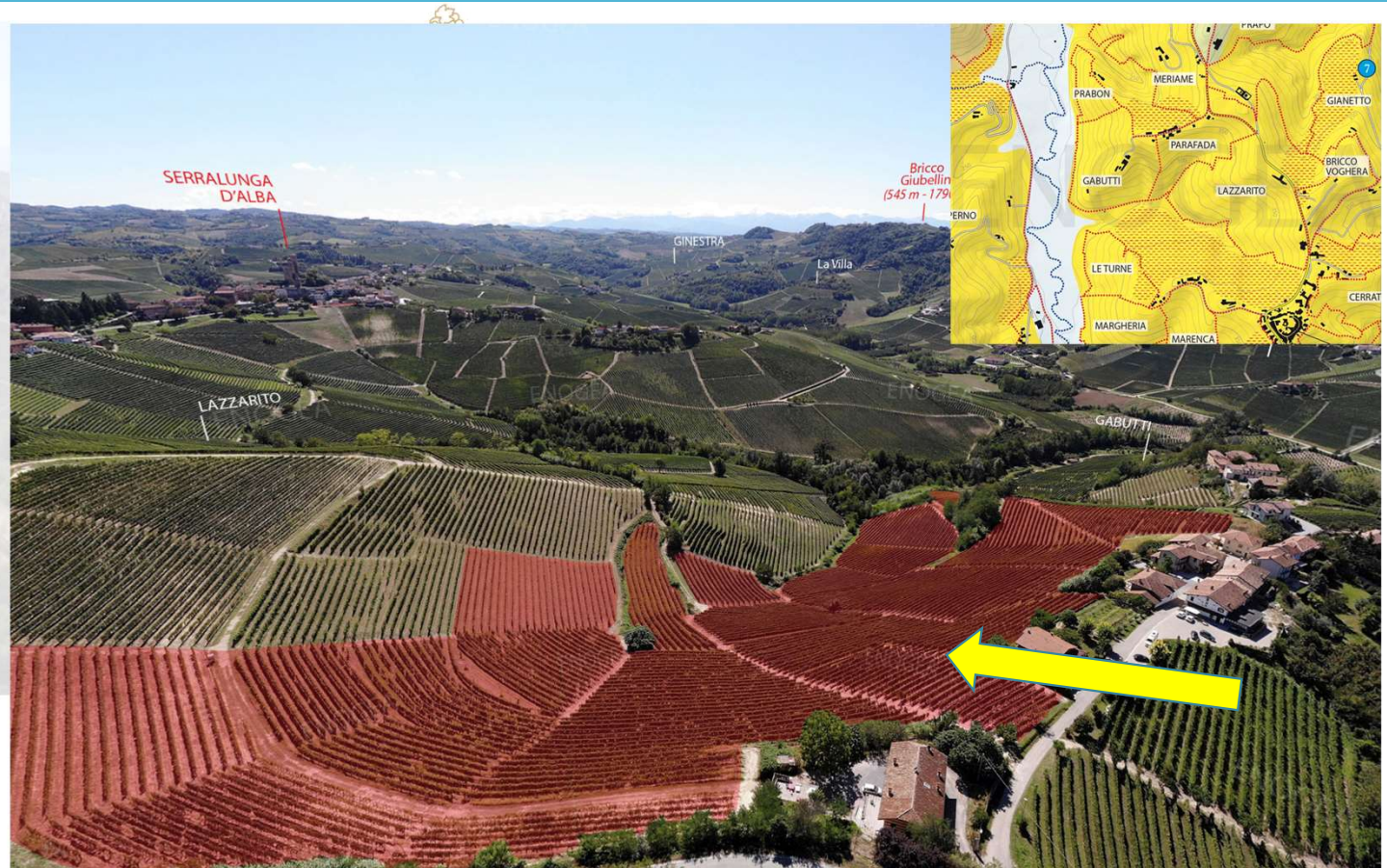
Serralunga d'Alba

Parafada, together with Gabutti, offers one of those instances in which the tools I provide to differentiate the details of ridges, slopes and exposures strain to explain the reality. Nor is the information provided by producers helpful.

If, say, Gabutti is an early-ripening vineyard according to Franco Boasso the opposite is true for Cappellano, and the example is repeated in the case of Parafada between Palladino and Massolino.

To me this is frankly inexplicable, just as it is inexplicable that Gabutti renders more substantial and flavorful wines than Parafada, where wines are less expansive and more austere without, however, being hard or dry.

Equally inexplicable – though this could be remedied sooner or later – is why La Delizia, one of the truly historic vineyards of Barolo, is today divided between Parafada, with the largest and best part of it, and Lazzarito, whose name had always been associated with La Delizia.



SAN BERNARDO

San Bernardo

Serralunga d'Alba

In some of the crus I've written about, I would like to own a vineyard. In others, I'd actually like to live there. But in San Bernardo nothing of the sort.

Looking at it I find none of the scenic elegance of Brea, Bricco Voghera or Cerrati, none of the majesty of Boscareto or Francia, and not so much as a feature that distinguishes it from Serra or Colombaro. Yet, in every recent vintage, the Barolo Riserva San Bernardo of Palladino stands out for its originality, warmth, depth and character.

And the explanation could once again be found in the little nuances of the landscape.

In the second image, more so than in the first, we can see how a part of the San Bernardo slope makes a slight but significant turn toward the south (as we have already seen in neighboring Broglio), and it happens that the vineyards of Palladino are located right there. In other words, a vineyard which on paper should be an expression of the cooler side of Serralunga d'Alba instead occupies a slope that is bathed in sunshine for a good part of the day, especially in its highest part. And, I would say, this is clearly felt in the wine.

