

# Ep 165: The perfect Valentines Day Wine Brachetto d'Acqui with Norbert Reinisch, Export Manager of Braida winery (Part 1)



**Janina Doyle 00:00:07** Welcome to Eat Sleep Wine Repeat, a podcast for all you wine lovers, who, if you're like me, just cannot get enough of the good stuff. I'm Janina Doyle, your host, Brand Ambassador, Wine Educator, and Sommelier. So, stick with me as we dive deeper into this ever evolving, wonderful world of wine. And wherever you are listening to this, cheers to you!

Hello, wine lovers and lovebirds, because this episode, as Valentine's Day is fast approaching, I have decided to dive into the world of romance, passion with the perfect elixir for love. And that is my friends, Brachetto d'Acqui.

Now, this is a sparkling red gem that comes from the beautiful hills of Piedmont in Italy, and it is renowned as the quintessential love wine. So, it's going to be Norbert Reinisch from Braida Winery, who's going to take us on this journey. And not just this beautiful, frothy, sweet wine, but also Moscato d'Asti. These two are quite possibly, actually no, most definitely the happiest wines in the world. And if you are a wine lover and have not tried these two wines, you absolutely have to.

Now, quick shout out to [Wickhams Wine](#), my sponsor who makes a lot of this possible and makes my life a hell of a lot easier. So, do go across to their website as well and use the code "EATSLEEP10" for 10% off your first order. Right, get ready for some of the funnest wines in the world.

**Janina Doyle 00:01:46** My first question to you, considering actually, this is a Valentine's Day themed episode, I think is quite perfect because it was love, in fact, that brought you over to the Braida Winery, was it not?

**Norbert Reinisch 00:02:01** It was indeed, actually. As you can hear from my name, Norbert Reinisch doesn't really sound Italian. If you would see me, I don't really look Italian. So, I'm not Italian. I'm from Austria. And actually, I was trained as a medical doctor, specialised in internal medicine.

And at the beginning of my career at the hospital, I met, actually, the wine Bricco dell'Ucellone, the Barbera from Braida. And I saw a television show called 'The Winemaker of Europe' from Christian Richard, and he was interviewing Giacomo Bologna, the founder of the winery. He was seated in the restaurant Il Cascinalenuovo with the napkin on his tummy.

And speaking about his love to Barbera, how to treat Barbera to get a great wine. And I just started to work in the oncology department, so it's really very depressing. And as I said, he was able to transmit his passion just with a simple interview. And I decided to go to Vinitaly, which is in Verona,

which is just a two-hour drive from Innsbruck. And I tried to meet this guy because he was so full of life, so full of energy. And I said, no, I need to know this man.

I bought the wine, I tasted the wine, I loved it. And so, I arrived at Vinitaly. No word Italian. A friend of mine, she was writing down the phrase, "May I taste," and which is "Che io possa assaggiare". And the names of the important wines I wanted to taste and knew anyway.

And so, I arrived at different booths and asked to taste some wines and they said, "No. Are you from the industry?" And I said, "No, I'm just a young medical doctor interested in wine." So, some of them, they didn't give me anything to drink or taste and so I arrived of Braida.

**Janina Doyle 00:03:45** Oh, outrageous!

**Norbert Reinisch 00:03:46** And so I arrived at the booth of Braida. And I was asking for Mr. Giacomo Bologna. And there was a guy there telling me, "No, I'm sorry to tell you, he passed away three months ago."

**Janina Doyle 00:03:57** No!

**Norbert Reinisch 00:03:57** I didn't know this. So, he passed away on Christmas day in 1990. And I arrived in early April of '91. And then I said, "Oh, I'm so sorry, I didn't know this." And I turned around and said, "Oh, stop. Stop. Stop. Stop." It was just wait in Italian, which I could understand. Okay. I should wait. And Rafaella appeared from this little, small office at the back of the booth and she was the only one speaking English at the booth at this time.

**Janina Doyle 00:04:24** How convenient.

**Norbert Reinisch 00:04:26** Yeah, absolutely. And so, I saw her coming out and believe it or not, it was a flash. I fell in love immediately.

**Janina Doyle 00:04:33** No! Really?

**Norbert Reinisch 00:04:34** Yes. And let's say this was 30, 34 years ago in '91. 33 years ago. I was dressed with the papillon and I had glasses. I looked a little bit like Harry Potter, by the way. Long before...

**Janina Doyle 00:04:48** Nothing wrong with that look.

**Norbert Reinisch 00:04:51** And so, Raffaella also, I think, she liked me from the beginning. And she invited me to sit down to taste all the wines, to have some salami, some pasta, pepperoncini and so on.

And it didn't finish there. She invited me for dinner as well. And I was, I'm still quite a shy guy, I said, "No, thank you. Thank you so much." But I returned the next day with two roses, one for her and one for her mom.

**Janina Doyle 00:05:18** Oh, now that's clever.

**Norbert Reinisch 00:05:22** I returned and I said, "Thank you for the hospitality," and so on, because they treated me as of the industry, not just as a lover of wine. And a couple of weeks later, I

received a letter, where Raffaella was writing, "Thank you for the interest," and so on, "And thank you for the roses, which we brought home to Rocchetta Tanaro." And so, then we started to write letters. At this time, there were no emails yet.

**Janina Doyle 00:05:47** Oh, now this is just so romantic. Okay!

**Norbert Reinisch 00:05:50** And I also started, instead of going in holidays to Tuscany, which usually I did, or on the seaside in Italy, I went down to Piedmont and so a story started.

**Janina Doyle 00:06:01** Oh, I love that! So, obviously, very soon you learned the words in Italian, "Will you marry me?" I assume.

**Norbert Reinisch 00:06:09** Absolutely. And not only... I made a fresh course in Italian, 21 hours only in conversation. So, actually, today I cannot help my son in his homework because I'm really poor in writing. Only in communication, it was okay. And of course, I learned Italian when I moved a couple of years later to Italy. So, I had to learn Italian, no way, but I'm happy.

**Janina Doyle 00:06:33** Oh, I love this! So, now you're working fully. You're obviously married into the family, but you're also working for Braida. So, what is it that you do at Braida?

**Norbert Reinisch 00:06:43** So today, I am responsible for the export markets. Braida is producing approximately 700,000 bottles a year. It's allocating the wines 50% to the Italian market and 50% to the export market. And I am responsible for international markets.

So, I'm usually travelling nearly up to six months a year, especially in the first three months and the last three months of the year, including the wine fairs. And the other six months I'm in the office, which means it was a very hard time during COVID because we couldn't even move out of the village. I was two years in the office, actually.

**Janina Doyle 00:07:21** So, you were ready bursting to leave as soon as you could?

**Norbert Reinisch 00:07:24** Yes. Yes, yes. It was a good break for me.

**Janina Doyle 00:07:28** Well, you know, so now the interesting thing, which I think you've touched on, which is lovely is Braida is one of those wineries, obviously, they did not discredit you at the beginning because you weren't in the industry, which is very clever. This is what wineries should be doing. Wine is for everyone. So, already I'm giving them a big stamp of approval, but for you, what is it that makes Braida Winery so special?

**Norbert Reinisch 00:07:51** First of all, I think because it's a family. So, it's a family winery. Although, now with 60, 64 hectares, it's quite a big family business right now, but it's still a family. So, there's my brother-in-law who is in charge of vineyards and in the winemaking. And Raffaella together with me is in the commercial part. And unfortunately, I never met my father-in-law, but my mother-in-law, she was actually, let's say, leading the kids to where we are today. She's not with us anymore. So, it's a family business.

And you can even feel if you visit us or if you're just coming into villages, a very small village, Rocchetta Tanaro, many people are working for us. So, it's a family really, which makes it great. And

let's say I was accepted immediately in this family, also with all the people working here and we have lots of fun. Hard work but lots of fun.

**Janina Doyle 00:08:49** Well, and now obviously it's such a shame you missed Giacomo by three months. He started this winery. He's actually got a pretty beautiful story, hasn't he? Would you care to tell us all listening, a little bit about why he was so filled with passion, why he inspired you and how he set up Braida?

**Norbert Reinisch 00:09:10** Yeah, actually the family is coming out of a restaurant business. Indeed, there was a famous restaurant called Trattoria Braida, which was run by the grandmother of my wife and in service by the two brothers.

When the grandmother was getting too old, I think it was in the early 80s, they stopped to run the Trattoria, and the two brothers divided a little bit. So, Giacomo, my father-in-law, he started into wine business, doing wine distribution and also from '61 wine production. Whereas his brother today is now running, still, he's 82 or 83 years old, the restaurant family now called Trattoria I Bologna after they understood that the son, Giuseppe Bologna, their son, was interested to go into the restaurant business.

And so, they reopened on a different place in Rocchetta Tanaro, a new restaurant business, which is still a very successful, although it's not a Michelin star restaurant, but it's really a great and highly quoted Trattoria style restaurant in Rocchetta Tanaro.

And Giacomo started off with only three hectares at this time. So, production, you can imagine, was super limited and let's say, maybe not enough really to run a family besides. So, he did also lots of distribution, mostly but not only, domestic wines. And he was shipping the wines then together with his wines to the restaurants.

And he was also travelling abroad and in Italy and he was really having all this. Especially in the truffle season, a white truffle in his bag. And he did a lot of party. He did a lot of fun. So, people remember him. And he also encouraged some other wine producers, really, to make also this step to don't be just a farmer and working on the weekends in the wine or in the vineyards, so really starting other wine business. And this was fortunately also in the times, so we're speaking mid-60s, end of 60s, where Italian quality wine production really started.

So, of course, starting in Tuscany with the Antinori family and so on, but also in Piedmont wine characters changed a little bit, so they were more approachable than they had been in the 60s or in the earlier time of this century.

And so, it was always, always party time. And indeed, when we meet, he always said, "20 minutes to eight. Eight minus 20. "Otto meno venti", which was always, "Okay, go out for dinner."

**Janina Doyle 00:11:46** Love it! Oh, dear me. So, he had a very big focus on the grape variety, Barbera, but we are going to talk about that grape variety in great detail in the next episode. So, I'm going to park that for a moment, but you've mentioned again already that, is it a village or a town that you're based in, which is Rocchetta Tanaro? Where is this? If somebody wanted to come and visit you, where are they going to find it in Piedmont?

**Norbert Reinisch 00:12:11** So, we are just outside of the city of Asti. So therefore, we are speaking about also Moschato d'Asti, Barbera d'Asti. We are starting with Brachetto d'Acqui, which is maybe another 20 minutes far away from us.

But Asti is a beautiful city, also to visit, especially in autumn with all the parties going on and so on. Anyway, the area where we are located is called Monferrato. Monferrato literally means iron mountain.

And indeed, the soil is super rich in iron, which makes it fantastic for actually two grape varieties. And let's say the main grape variety in Piedmont actually is Barbera. So, then we divide from the origin Barbera d'Asti, Barbera d'Alba or Barbera del Monferrato and so on. And the other one is Grignolino, which is only grown actually in the Asti area.

And we are just, let's say in the car, 35 minutes when you know the streets away from Barolo area. So, the Langhe, which are the rather, it's more hilly, it's 3/400 metres higher than we are located here, close to the River Tanaro. And then you are in the land of Nebbiolo, of course, the King of Wines, Barolo and Barbaresco and my wife always says, "Barbera is the Queen of Wines." Also, I think from the character...

**Janina Doyle 00:13:26** I agree.

**Norbert Reinisch 00:13:27** Of the wines, of the fruity, it's more female, more elegant, more drinkable. At this time, Barbera was a wine for people who were working into the vineyard, but not making wine.

**Janina Doyle 00:13:41** I like that. I like that. So, if somebody was coming to visit you and they were coming to this area, would Asti specifically be a really good place to base themselves to be able to travel around, do you think?

**Norbert Reinisch 00:13:54** In our area, I think if you want to stay in a place, you should choose more countryside places.

**Janina Doyle 00:14:01** Oh, really? Okay.

**Norbert Reinisch 00:14:02** There are hotels in Asti and in Alba. But these are really more business hotels, not really, not really touristic hotels where you would stay a week or five days, but let's say our area is full, we call it Agriturismo, we have one Agriturismo, which we are calling it Braida Wine Resort, with just five to seven, sometimes eight, nine rooms.

**Janina Doyle 00:14:26** Okay.

**Norbert Reinisch 00:14:27** Which are located actually in the vineyard. So, you just open the window in the morning. The only thing which I would miss in Piedmont is the access to the sea. Well, let's say you open the window, not today because it's unfortunately so foggy, we don't even see the weather. It's really horrible, but it's the time.

**Janina Doyle 00:14:45** Don't ruin the story. Don't ruin the story. Well, yes. And anyway, foggy, yes there is a lot of fog there in your area in general.

**Norbert Reinisch 00:14:50** You open and you'll see the vineyards, forests, hills, and on the back, you have these high mountains of the French and the Swiss Alps. Sometimes, actually, very few days a year, you can see also the Mont Blanc, Monte Bianco, the highest mountain of Europe. So, it's 200 kilometres away and sometimes you can really see it when you know where it is. It's the same to restaurants. Restaurants in the countryside are usually better than in the big cities.

**Janina Doyle 00:15:19** Okay. You sold it to me and it's been staying inside a vineyard, it's the most peaceful, tranquil, spiritual, connective experience. I am all for that. So, fine. right? Sign me up for one of those rooms.

And I imagine as well that this is a region as well that you can really go hiking and walking. I've been to La Morra. I've been in the Barolo region and wow, the hills and stuff. So, imagine all around where you are, it's similar?

**Norbert Reinisch 00:15:47** Yes. No, actually we are at the beginning of this kind of landscape. Indeed, you have been in La Morra and the Barolo area, which is a UNESCO World Heritage since maybe 10 years or so.

And actually, this world heritage starts from the first vineyard. When you go up the hill, you're going into a fraction called Bricco. So, we will speak later about the name Bricco. And this is part already of this Nizza area and this is part of this world heritage. And because when you're driving from the airports to our place, you don't see vineyards, you just see rice fields because it's the biggest rice production in this area between here and Milan.

**Janina Doyle 00:16:24** Okay.

**Norbert Reinisch 00:16:25** And no hills and no wines. So, there's a bit of, "Where are the vineyards?" Okay. Another five minutes with the car and you are falling into the, I always say the ocean of wines.

**Janina Doyle 00:16:36** Which is good. There's some sort of ocean. Because already you've said that here, there is no sea. What is, obviously you're quite like the sea because you've really mentioned that, but what do you love the most about the Piedmont region?

**Norbert Reinisch 00:16:47** So, the Piedmont region, a part of, let's say the landscape has these soft hills and just behind the high mountains, which for me, also very important as a skier coming from the Tyrol. So, it's one hour to Sestriere and you can see the peak of the mountains always white until, maybe, end of March, April.

And the beauty of Piedmont also is the smaller villages. You don't have really big cities. You have smaller villages. And let's say the funny thing is you go into unknown small villages and in the centre of the villages, mostly, of course, always the Church. And they are Churches from the 11th and 12th centuries, and they always have some beautiful paintings inside and it's incredible. Then, of course, I must say restaurant wise, I think it's the best region you can find.

Because it's not touristic, we have tourists coming in September, October, November for one reason, which is the truffle and the other nine months, people have to live from us, and so, prices in the

restaurants and style of food in the restaurant is what you can eat on everyday base. And it's always the best quality.

So, we have also a special race of cows, which is called the Razza Piemontese, of you see them, there was just the fair a month ago in, let's say that they showed *façona* beef. They look really very, very heavy, but you can eat them. It was really raw from nose to tail. So, it's really in soft, soft, soft meat. And indeed, right now, when you go to restaurants, most of them are closed in January this season. You have this *carne cruda*, which is literally tartar.

**Janina Doyle 00:18:29** Oh, yes!

**Norbert Reinisch 00:18:30** One year old wheel. So, it's not red. It's a lot more white. And you just put salt and pepper and a little bit of lemon and when you're in the season, a lot of truffles on the top. So, it's the simplest dish and let's say the choice of the quality of meat in Piedmont, it's so easy to get because you get it everywhere.

**Janina Doyle 00:18:52** You're selling it. I'm like, I'm so hungry right now and I can vouch. It has been a long time since I've been in Piemonte. So, I'm not going to make a comment. But I mean, I just remember everywhere we went, the food was stunning. But I can't go into any more details because we can't taste the food.

Well, actually, sorry, everyone listening. You also can't taste the wine. But this is a wine podcast after all, we are going to talk about the wine that has inspired this episode because Brachetto d'acqui is one of these wines that has been pinpointed as the Valentine's Day wine.

Now, as somebody who lives in Piemonte and is working with these wines, what do you think of this wine? Did the people in Piemonte associate this wine with Valentine's Day or is that all of us silly, loved up Westerners?

**Norbert Reinisch 00:19:42** Of course. Of course. And actually, it's a wine for the younger generation. So, let's say you are part of the young generation.

**Janina Doyle 00:19:51** Well, thank you!

**Norbert Reinisch 00:19:52** The point is indeed, let's say, you have to know that here, they are people here that are not into spirit drinks. So, they don't drink high alcohol. So, there's not yet the problem of binge drinking and so on.

And when the young generation stops to drink soft drinks, or they are too bored to have just water, they are switching to two wines which are very low in alcohol, one out of each, which is the Brachetto, Brachetto d'Acqui. And also, it's not a super dry wine.

So, of course, by definition, it is a sweet wine. So, you cannot discuss away the sugar, but when we're going to taste this wine, I rather would say it's a slightly sweet wine, let's say. It's because of the acidity itself. So, together with the Moscato, which are two grape varieties, which have a very high acidity. And the methods of winemaking we will discuss later indicates that there is some carbonic acid, natural carbonic acid.

And as you hear from the word, it's an acid. So, the pH of this wine, it's super low. So, it's around 3.1 or something, which means really, it's quite sour. And this acidity really matches and balances the sweetness of the wine. And then I think there are really very few aromatic grape varieties and especially, red aromatic grape varieties as a Bracchetto.

I would maybe include the Moscato Rosa from Alto Adige or from Trentino, which anyway, yes, I have similar fruit profile than this, but if you go to this Bracchetto and my wife insists, because I would say, "Okay, can you smell these rose petals or this rose aromas?" And then Raffaella, my wife says, "No, you have to say it's Bulgarian rose."

**Janina Doyle 00:21:42** Ohh!

**Norbert Reinisch 00:21:43** And I'm like, "What the hell is Bulgarian rose?"

**Janina Doyle 00:21:45** Yes, I was going to say what? Excuse me.

**Norbert Reinisch 00:21:48** It's so funny. Actually, then we were making a search on the internet and so on. And it really exists, the Bulgarian rose, rather more known as Damascus rose from this area anyway, from Balkan and the Middle East. And it's very perfumed.

The only ones in our life we were able to visit Rome together for a wine tasting. Close to the Circus Maximus, there is a rose garden, which is not always open to the public, but from April to June and again in September, October. In this garden, I think it's a free entrance, but it's usually closed. They have 1,100 different rose types there.

So, we were checking, and we went there and it's really very particular flavour. And it really reminds you of the flavours of the first impact, because you have first this floral impact of these rose flavours, like a fragrance actually, it's very incredible. And then you get these red fruits, let's say, I would say this is super Strawberry, super Raspberry flavours on the nose, but also violets. It's beautiful to have this all together. Promising and on the palate, it's very similar aromas and flavours on the palate.

**Janina Doyle 00:23:03** The whole time you've been talking, I'm sniffing it. You've summed it up beautifully. It's beautifully perfumed. It's really aromatic. But it's also just soft and it smells very fresh. There's something very, very inviting. It's really alive and bright. I'm gonna taste it because I can't wait any longer. So, I need to verify what you say is correct.

**Norbert Reinisch 00:23:30** It's quality control. It's quality control. I do this every morning.

**Janina Doyle 00:23:34** That's what it is, that's the word. Hang on, let me have a little try of this.

**Norbert Reinisch 00:23:38** And the beauty of this wine also is as it's so low in alcohol and has this natural carbonic acid, you can really drink it, even at this time of our interview, which is close to...

**Janina Doyle 00:23:48** Oh, early. Well, listen, our palates are more open in this moment. What I love about this wine, and yes, like you said, you can't not talk about the sweetness because it's really there, but because the acidity is so high and because it's so floral, it's a very pretty wine.

It's really bright and aromatic and alive and it feels so light on the palate. It's really very easy to drink. It's really rewarding, to be honest, because it doesn't taste cloying in the slightest. Bright,



sweet, aromatic and actually the florals, I get it is like a big punnet of strawberries all mashed together, but the floral notes, like you mentioned, violets and rose petals. But also it's almost like you could even have some lilies or some even touch of like, well, not maybe not as strong as jasmine, but it really feels like there's all of these gorgeous, really intense aromatic flowers in it.

Oh, it's such a divine wine, which is why as well with the sweetness, with the brightness, with the prettiness. Of course, this is a great wine to have with chocolate, is it not?

**Norbert Reinisch 00:24:57** Also in the preparation of our podcast, actually, I was watching what could be the best. And I saw the best one is to have a chocolate fountain.

**Janina Doyle 00:25:07** Oh my God. With strawberries. Yes

**Norbert Reinisch 00:25:10** With strawberries, it is the best thing to combine. Or right now, because it's the season also, this orange peel, the orange zest, actually, it's so fantastic. Just put a little bit of chocolate on it and it's incredible.

**Janina Doyle 00:25:23** To be fair, when you're doing a romantic dinner, you said, the chocolate fountain, but the chocolate covered strawberries where they've obviously already dried, and you just eat them and when they're on there on the plate, oh, my God, would be absolutely perfect because of course this wine, even with the sweetness, is still very, very fresh. It tastes fresh.

And so, to have the fleshiness and the freshness of strawberries would be absolutely perfect. Would anybody pair this wine with savoury dishes? Do you get a little bit adventurous sometimes in Piemonte when you open this up? Or is this more drink by itself or drink it with a little bit of chocolate and fruit? What do you think?

**Norbert Reinisch 00:26:02** I discovered travelling in the United States, especially people also like this style of wine, which also later when we are speaking about the Moscato also as an aperitif. And if you serve cold cuts, or savoury food as an aperitif, so standing up and you get some finger food with it, even with some Gorgonzola cheese, which is a Piedmontese cheese anyway, it works. It works.

But let's say, 90% of Italians, they will choose this all by its own. I think 30% of the production in Italy is most drunk in the last months because together with the Panettone in waiting for Christmas, because you know, in Italy, let's say we have good culture of coffee, espresso in the morning, cappuccino, maybe in the early morning.

In the afternoon, people don't meet together for a coffee, but rather for an aperitif, or Campari or something like this, aperol and so on. But also in wine bars, they are serving. Or Moscato and Brachetto. And usually, in Italy, you have the aperitif. You have cold cuts. And mostly you have also the Gorgonzola on the plate and this always works. So, you clean up your palate from this sweetness, although this wine is not really sticky. So, as you told before, it's Sweet wine.

**Janina Doyle 00:27:18** No, it's super fresh.

**Norbert Reinisch 00:27:20** But the sugar is not sticky.

**Janina Doyle 00:27:22** No, it's definitely, it's fresh, light and actually frothy because it's not fully sparkling. So, for anybody to know, when you open up this wine, you're opening up like a normal wine with a cork. It doesn't have a cage. This is not like champagne.

It's got a little bit of that frothy bubbles, but also as well, I think we should point out, and this is why it's an amazing aperitif wine to drink. It's 5.5%. I could drink the whole bottle to myself. In fact, I might.

**Norbert Reinisch 00:27:48** I always say 5.5, drink and drive.

**Janina Doyle 00:27:53** Yeah! I mean, I'm not sure if we're supposed to be supporting that but you definitely can. Okay. So, for anybody wanting to know a bit more about this wine, the Brachetto part is the grape variety. So, as a grape variety, is it ever used as a still wine or is this always in this slightly sweet, frothy style?

**Norbert Reinisch 00:28:16** So, mostly it's in the sweet style, but there are some producers, I think, Scarpa is one of them, doing dry versions, which I tasted but I must say it was maybe 20-25 years ago the last time.

Anyway, the perfumes on the nose, it's very similar because you have especially these floral notes and these red flavours, which actually, and then you are a little bit disappointed when you get it on the palate as a dry wine because let's say lacking then the acidity a little bit, lacking also the tannins makes the wine, let's say, you have to love this.

There's another grape variety in Piedmont called Ruché, which has similar flavours. Let say, these rose flavours rather more than the strawberry flavours. And this is always produced as a dry red wine, which is more exciting.

So, the Ruché is kind of aromatic, but not as aromatic as the Brachetto. And Brachetto Acqui, or Brachetto d'Acqui, which is the denomination, is because it comes from a small town, 20,000 people living there. Oh no, sorry, 2000 – No, 20,000 people living there.

It's a spa town, spa area, lots of spring falls, especially sulphurous, especially when you go there in winter, in the centre of the city, the foam of this sulphurous, quite smelly stuff, and you always see, let's say, rarely it's snowing in our area. But if it's snowing, the snow is melting very fast in this area, because there's some volcanic activity.

So, we have a part of this mostly clay, sandy soil with some limestone. We also have a volcanic subground, which is responsible for this hot spring falls over there. And this makes the soil so good for these aromatic grape varieties because you don't only find Brachetto, but also Moscato in this area. And it's a grape variety also, which is the first one to be harvested.

So, in the last years with this climatic change, we started sometimes already in the last week of August. And usually, it's the second week of September, but with this, we are getting to two weeks earlier than 20 years ago. Of course, the potential alcohol would be a wine of 12.5, 13% easily, but stopping the fermentation when we are getting close to five in a bottle and 5.5 degrees of alcohol leaves the residual sugar, which is around the 130-135 grams.

**Janina Doyle 00:30:55** Do you know what? I didn't expect it to be that high. I was thinking, I don't know, 60-70, because it doesn't actually seem that sweet.

**Norbert Reinisch 00:31:05** Okay, interesting. Yeah, most historically it seems around like a little higher than this maybe, good Riesling from Germany or whatever. But let's say they are leaving because, again, also there they have a high acidity and Brachetta also has this high acidity. And the pH is so low, which means it's more acidic, the wine on the palate, because of the carbonic acid.

**Janina Doyle 00:31:26** So, for anybody listening as well, because the bubbles are created naturally, and this does not go through a second fermentation like traditional method. This is just the one time and then you stop it halfway through. Hence, not so many bubbles and the alcohol, it's still 5.5 and there's the sweetness. It's all because of that one fermentation, the process where the bubbles are trapped. So, they are naturally created, aren't they?

**Norbert Rheinische 00:31:51** Yes. Because we are producing, let's say after the grapes arrive, we are crushing them, leaving them on a normal stainless steel just for maceration, because you need two, sometimes three days to get this – anyway, it's not a dark red colour, but it's a light red colour. I would say, anyway, it's quite ruby. So, it's beautiful, bright.

So, after two, maximum three days, we have to clarify the must a little bit. And then we are putting them into an autoclave, which is just a stainless steel pressure tank, which is usually used to make the Charmat method and other sparkling wines. And we keep three or four tanks temperature controlled close to zero over the year and ferment every other month in one of the tanks, adding just a special aromatic yeast in our case.

And then, fermentation starts and it takes quite a long time, 15 to 20 days, just to reach, because it's going under pressure and the yeast, they don't really like pressure. Who likes pressure?

**Janina Doyle 00:33:00** Very valid point.

**Norbert Rheinische 00:33:01** And so, therefore it takes a long time for them to transform the sugar into alcohol. Let's say there are two by-products, one is temperature, which we control because anyway, fermentation temperature is around 15 degrees centigrade.

And then the pressure, what was it? And the pressure is going higher and higher. In the bottle itself, the pressure is around maximum 2.5 bar. Compared to Champagne, for example, it's 5-6 bars. And indeed, there exists also the Brachetto sparkling, we call it Brachetto Spumante version, which is under the same denomination.

So, if you buy a bottle, you have just to check if you have a closure like the Champagne with the agraffe (muselet/wine cage). This is a Brachetto Spumante, which maybe is slightly lower in sugar, I call around the same, maybe one degree higher in alcohol. But it has a six bar pressure, so it's really different.

But the Brachetto d'Acqui, it's this one fermentation going up. And when we are coming close to five percent, we are cooling it down to zero degrees, so the yeast definitely stopped working. We control the pressure, which let's say usually it's a little higher than 2.5 and release the higher pressure.

And we are going through micro filtration into the bottle, so the gas cannot escape because if you have an ice cold sparkling water, if you open it, the bubbles are not coming out there waiting and it's getting warmer. And so, it's going directly into the bottle and closed and, let's say, you can keep the wine up to three years, I would say. But let's say the younger it is, the fresher it is, of course.

**Janina Doyle 00:34:47** And that's the joy of it. I mean, this is a 2023 that we're drinking for anybody as well. I had a look on the internet. It's about £15 from, in the UK, a place called Tanners. So, this is not an expensive bottle of wine.

And again, it's Joyful. It's joyful, it's bright, it's light, it's super fruity, it's juicy and then all of those florals, a real explosion. And actually, do you know what? It's also kind of grape-y as well. We talk about Moscato grapes, which we'll go on to in a second, being the one grape in the world that actually tastes and smells like grapes. But this has a grapey edge to it as well, which is really interesting. I don't know, maybe because it's grown right next to Moscato, maybe it just absorbs something. I don't know.

**Norbert Rheinische 00:35:31** It's certainly a matter of soil and variety and the area gives this beautiful flavour to it.

**Janina Doyle 00:35:39** So, I've actually put this in a white wine glass but kind of like a Sauvignon Blanc glass or like a small version of a Champagne glass but it's got a big enough bowl and tapers in so I can catch the aromatics. Would you put it in that kind of glass?

**Norbert Rheinische 00:35:55** Yeah, I fully agree with your choice of shape. Unfortunately, when you go to even local restaurants, they serve it still in a kind of cup, which I hate. I use actually the white wine glass. Indeed I would say, let's say what everybody has at home is a kind of Chardonnay glass, no? A smaller Chardonnay glass, which would be the perfect shape, I think to all this or this little broader Champagne glasses. Yes, of course.

**Janina Doyle 00:36:21** Okay.

**Norbert Rheinische 00:36:21** If you'd like to wash glasses, it's complicated.

**Janina Doyle 00:36:25** Exactly. We'll leave that up to everybody. And lastly, on Brachetto d'acqui, what temperature do you think you get the most out of it?

**Norbert Rheinische 00:36:34** So, let's say we put a Brachetto in the tastings always on ice, of course, but coming fresh from the ice, it's a little bit too cold, although let's say it's warming up in the glass quite fast. But let's say, if you want to point me down, I would say between 7 and 10 degrees. This is the perfect serving temperature.

**Janina Doyle 00:36:52** Okay, good. Right, everybody, Valentine's Day, get yourself a bottle of this, chocolate covered strawberries, a bit of maybe charcuteries as well. And anyway, you're gonna have a wonderful time. Moscato d'Asti. Now, this wine for me has always been, I think, this is the most fun wine in the world, and possibly one of the wine world's best kept secrets to the public. No?

**Norbert Rheinische 00:37:17** It is. Let's say especially as a young person, when you start to drink wine, let's say there's no better chance than going directly to Moscato d'Asti before you go more to the drier versions, to the Prosecco or Champagne or other sparklings from the rest of the world.

But the Moscato, again, in a non-trained palette gives you fun. So, it's always fun. Even when I'm at a tasting and let's say the ladies are always coming and they want to have Moscato and their friends, they say, "No, sweet wine for me." But then, I insist and the girls insist that he has to taste it. What I always get back is a fantastic smile.

**Janina Doyle 00:37:56** 100%.

**Norbert Rheinische 00:37:57** I prefer to have a smile and say, oh, interesting or whatever. So, but because it makes you smile because it's so intriguing, again. It's maybe not so complex and not these floral flavours in the Brachetto. You have this really grapey and I love aromatic aromas. And also there is a thing which in Italy is unknown, but you in the UK, also in the US, it's not that known, it's elderflowers.

**Janina Doyle 00:38:25** Yes!

**Norbert Rheinische 00:38:25** In Austria, Germany, so I'm from Austria, elderflowers are growing everywhere. So, even at the train tracks and so on. And in end of May, you have this flowering of this elderflower. It's actually an elderflower juice. So, we have actually in Austria, we do the syrup with the elderflower.

**Janina Doyle 00:38:47** We have some here.

**Norbert Rheinische 00:38:48** Oh, you do too.

**Janina Doyle 00:38:50** Yeah!

**Norbert Rheinische 00:38:51** And when you go skiing in the Arlberg, what are you drinking after skiing? It's called Hugo. Hugo, which is a mixture of elderflower syrup with prosecco and sparkling water soda, and of course we are topped up with ice and it's beautiful to drink.

This wine, Moscato, especially our Moscato, which is coming from a Northern facing slope. It's actually called Vigna Senza Nome, which literally means Vineyard without a name.

**Janina Doyle 00:39:17** Alright, Okay.

**Norbert Rheinische 00:39:19** It's coming out from a huge hill. It's a 60 hectare hill and we have nine hectares, nearly in the core of this hill. And my father in law, he wanted to find the Cru name. So, we have to let's go back to the 60s, 70s, where it was not a very good time for Moscato because at this time the addition of sulphur was very high. And let's say after two bottles of Moscato, a headache 100% the next day and so on.

And this changed, of course, in the 70s and 80s with high quality production of Moscato, not only Asti production. And so, he sat down with the other owners and the other farmers to find a Cru name, which at this time always helped to promote the wine. So, it's not Moscato d'asti but let's say whatever.

And after a couple of evenings, he stood up and said, okay, it's not possible to find a name with you. I give no name to this vineyard. And this in Italian is Vigna Senza Nome, Vineyard without name. And it's really beautiful.

**Janina Doyle 00:40:18** Memorable!

**Norbert Rheinische 00:40:18** And the only lucky situation there really it's literally, it's a north west facing slope, which maybe in the 80s, not always so easy to produce healthy grapes because of sour rot and so on, but now with this global change, we are quite on the winning side of the slope, on the northern side, having especially this preserving freshness, so not only the acidity, but also this rather more apple-y green apple flavours into the glass.

Then if you go on the other side, then you're falling into a valley called Belbo Valley and the capital of Moscato, actually Santo Stefano Belbo. But the style of the Moscato is changing. It's more honey. It's a little sweeter style. So, whereas this is again, this wine leaves your palate completely dry, but this is still 100 grams. So, it's a little lower than Brachetto, but it's still on the very high side of sugar.

**Janina Doyle 00:41:14** You're so right about the elderflower, but I love that it's got this muskiness, like Moscato d'Asti is always aromatic and of course it's beautifully aromatic, but it's got this slightly more savoury edge and this lovely lemon sherbet.

And I guess, like you said, the fact that it's north facing, it's a cooler version. It doesn't have all that the tropical notes that it can do, but still it's bright. It's like it's got jasmine. It's got orange blossom, but I really like this kind of restrained muskiness that's going along with it as well. You know, this is a cool guy, you know.

**Norbert Rheinische 00:41:50** Yeah!

**Janina Doyle 00:41:51** Just, you know, it's actually,

**Norbert Rheinische 00:41:52** I will use this.

**Janina Doyle 00:41:54** Like you said, this isn't a wine that needs to be analysed too much. This is a wine that just needs to be drunk. Again, it's 5.5%, isn't it?

**Norbert Rheinische 00:42:04** Yeah!

**Janina Doyle 00:42:04** It's 5.5%. It's frothy. It's semi-sparkling. It is just something that is going to put a smile on your face, just what you said. But there is something a little bit more restrained, a little bit more stand back and a little bit, I quite really like the interest in this with that muskiness, so oh, yummy! So, this is made the same way as the Brachetto d'acqui, right?

**Norbert Rheinische 00:42:30** Of course, no maceration, so it's going directly from the press into, after clarification into the auroclaves and then the process is the same.

**Janina Doyle 00:42:40** Exactly. So, you mentioned Panettone. Panettone is a perfect pairing for Moscato d'Asti and fruit desserts, things with sponge and stuff. But do you have some perfect pairings for Moscato d'Asti?

**Norbert Rheinische 00:42:54** I think a perfect match would be everything based on hazelnuts.

**Janina Doyle 00:43:00** Oh, yeah!

**Norbert Rheinische 00:32:01** You know, after wine, hazelnuts is number one in Europe after Turkey. And you know, what is happening to all these hazelnuts? Mostly it's produced into Nutella.

**Janina Doyle 00:43:11** You can smell it. Actually, that's the funny thing. I went near to the factory and I remember, I was about three streets away and you could smell the Nutella in the air. It was nice for a second. I'm not sure if I would like living there where constantly your nose...

**Norbert Rheinische 00:43:28** No, it's only two months of the year.

**Janina Doyle 00:43:31** Ah, okay.

**Norbert Rheinische 00:43:31** The funny thing is it's actually at the same time truffle season. And so, the people think that they're going down, you have to park outside of the city because you cannot go in and you expect to go into the tent where they sell and they show the truffle and so on.

And so, the people think, oh, we get the expensive truffle smells getting out of the car and you get sweet chocolate. And the funny thing is, unfortunately, not today, not even in the next, in the next podcast when we are speaking about Barbera, but if you age Barbera and also if you age Nebbiolo a certain time, so it must be a minimum four, five, six years, then you get these roasted aromas of roasted hazelnuts into the wine for free.

**Janina Doyle 00:44:17** There you go. Good tip, everyone. Just be patient with your red wines. Oh, dear! Would you serve this wine again, same wine glass you've said?

**Norbert Rheinische 00:44:26** Yes!

**Janina Doyle 00:44:26** Again, between 7, 10 degrees, same thing. Treat it the same way as the Brachetto.

**Norbert Rheinische 00:44:29** Yeah! Absolutely.

**Janina Doyle 00:44:30** Perfect. And this is a similar price again, everybody, same place to actually Tanner's £15.95. They're doing this. So, if anybody hasn't tried these two wines and you fancy something that's lower in alcohol, lovely, a little sweet, frothy, really just going to make you happy.

Or again, if you want to drink a wine with most people that maybe haven't tried this, this is the type of wine I think you can surprise people with, right? So, happy juice, alcoholic, but only just. Alcoholic happy juice. That is what these two are.

**Norbert Rheinische 00:45:00** It's great. No, it's a perfect description.

**Janina Doyle 00:45:04** Love it!

**Janina Doyle 00:45:09** So, as you may have heard suggested in this episode, it is in fact Braida of Winery that is the story of Barbera, the great variety Barbera. And so, we will be talking all about their Barberas in part 2. So, join back again next week.

But for now, may I finish off with a love and wine quote of course as we prepare ourselves for Valentine's Day. And so, Euripides most famously said,

“Where there is no wine, there is no love”.

And so, stock yourself up with some wine. Make sure you get hold of these two absolutely delightful, happy wines.

If you're enjoying the podcast, don't forget to like the podcast, share the podcast with your wine loving friends. And of course, please leave a review. If you do have two moments, it does make the podcast far more discoverable for other people. Right. Me and my Brachetto d'acqui, we need some time alone. Time to connect. And so I raise my delicious red frothy glass to you all. Until next week my wine friends, cheers to you!