BAR TO BAR

Cycling itinerary in Langhe Roero
Welcome to Langhe Roero!

Langhe Roero, a well-kept secret

The network of hills that rises up from the Po river towards the Apennine mountain range to the south east in a sort of musical crescendo is known by three historical names that now encompass an area divided into multiple provinces. Those three names are Monferrato, Roero and, finally, Langhe. The Langhe region is the last bastion of an ancient world, separated from the rest of the Piedmont region by the Tanaro river and protected by the wall of the Apennines that rises above 1,000 metres (3,280 ft) throughout its length.

This cradle nestled between the mountains and the river has its own special microclimate and unique soil (with marine sediment carved away by rivers giving each hillside its own special strata) to produce some of the most desirable delicacies of Italian cuisine. This special corner of the country features products of unmatched excellence, some of which are closely kept secrets known only to gourmets around the world.

This is the realm of the Nebbiolo grape and its noble offspring, Barolo and Barbaresco wines, protected by castles, towers, and walled villages that harken back to the battles and the splendor of the Middle Ages. Pilgrims, salt merchants, soldiers in the crusades and Benedictine monks have all walked these lands and left their mark on local culture and heritage. But it was the lowly farmer, after centuries of hard work, who shaped these hills into the breathtaking landscape we see today.

And beneath these special hills lies the most secret of the region’s treasures, the Alba White Truffle (*Tuber Magnatum Pico*), that “gray diamond” so loved by the likes of Cavour and Vittorio Emanuele II and made famous around the world by the youngest son of a family of poor sharecroppers, Giacomo Morra, inventor of the Alba White Truffle Fair and a sort of *deus ex machina* for the Langhe region.

But the Langhe Roero area is not just about food. It is a true haven for hikers, cyclists, and all lovers of the great outdoors. A maze of trails crisscrosses
the hills providing a range of options for beginners and experts alike. You can go from strolling along the false flat of row after row of Barolo and Barbaresco vineyards on a quest to visit all of the most famous crus to following in the footsteps of “Johnny the Partisan” along the rugged trails described by Beppe Fenoglio; from the rolling hills of “The Moon and the Bonfires” steeped in the poetry of Cesare Pavese to the Grande Traversata delle Langhe (the Great Langhe Trail, or “GTL”), a three-day itinerary that will take you from Alba to the Ligurian sea along the same mule tracks travelled for centuries by merchants and smugglers alike. The bandits have long disappeared, but the spectacular landscapes and amazing flora made of rare orchids and age-old beech remain.

Another unexpectedly fascinating itinerary is that of the Rocche del Roero (literally: Roero rock formations), tour made of outdoor adventure and the discovery of local flora, fauna and geology, interspersed with sudden streaks of sand bursting with marine fossils that tell the tale of millions of years ago, when this all was beneath the sea, only the tallest of the hills poking up through the surface of the water as islands in the Adriatic.

Explore on foot or by bike the ancient cart tracks, steep mule tracks, trails through the ravines or along the crests of the hills, all the other roadways that have taken people from the hills to the sea for thousands of years and experience the history here in your own unique way, as you stop in silence to focus on details or enjoy the landscapes and interact.
with the locals and with the local wildlife. Take in all the history, folklore, cuisine, geography and, of course, the heart and soul of these hills as you go.

Although some of these ancient roads have since become modern-day paved streets, others have been swallowed up by the woods and are referred to, collectively, as the “Salt Roads”. They often still run through ancient toll stations that once helped fill the pockets of the local squire with monies that he may have then used to pay an artist to paint a beautiful fresco on a local church and create a little corner of paradise. Here in the Langhe, frescos can be found in some unexpected places, far from major cities, in secluded valleys and on remote hilltops, almost all of which belong to the renowned Mondovi school and late Gothic style.

Castles and towers will take you back to the days of King Arthur and the Knights of the Roundtable (as there are few places that have better preserved medieval architecture than the Piedmont region). Because the enemy here was most frequently the Moors (in addition to the lord from the hilltop fiefdom across the way), pirates who pillaged lands near the sea, a system of watchtowers was built alongside the fortresses in order to sound the alarm from the sea on up to Asti, spreading word of an attack in just about an hour. Over the centuries, many of the medieval manors have been embellished and transformed into luxurious baroque residences as a new power arose throughout the Piedmont region in
the form of the House of Savoy, ruling over the region from the sumptuous Royal Palace of Turin beginning in 1631.

It is here in the Langhe Roero region made of woodlands and ravines — the oak trees, hazelnuts and pasture lands making stone villages and rural churches uniquely fragrant — that the Piedmont of the House of Savoy preserves its more feral soul.

It is a soul of age-old beauty that is reflected in the snowy, protective mountaintops of the Alps as the hills here are brushed by the wind from the sea, creating a microclimate that is just what it takes to produce the area’s inimitable wines. But it is also a rugged soul made of hard work and sacrifice, poverty and emigration, resistance and resignation, as described in the works of Cesare Pavese and Beppe Fenoglio, two of Italy’s greatest authors of the 20th century, both of whom grew up here in these hills.

So it was not by chance that all of this was named a World Heritage site by UNESCO in 2014, this vineyard landscape becoming the 50th Italian site to be so protected. Of course, we locals have always known we lived in particularly magical place.

Knock, say you’re a friend, and all will be opened to you.

Welcome!
The Bar to Bar itinerary, a 7-stage circuit from Barbaresco to Barolo and back again (you can choose the direction), crosses a significant chunk of the Langhe Roero territory along low-traffic roads and trails, through woods and an array of uniquely beautiful landscapes. You will visit medieval villages and see a great many of the area’s vineyards as you learn a bit about local history and nature, and you can choose between shorter routes or longer ones, both designed for hiking and off-road cycling.

The longer circuit features long climbs and steep descents and is recommended for expert cyclists, but there is always the ability to avoid the most difficult sections either by getting off and pushing or carrying your bike, by taking a shorter, paved detour between two points, or by making use of public transport.

The shorter circuit leaves from Barbaresco and passes through Alba before following the Tanaro upriver into the Barolo region from Roddi – Verduno - La Morra and, finally, to Barolo.

The longer circuit goes from Barbaresco through Neive and Treiso and on to the Alta Langa. After descending into the Belbo Valley, you will then climb back up to the Bossola Pass and head back along the...
main ridge through the Langhe towards the Tanaro Valley. From Bossolasco - Serravalle and Roddino, the circuit goes through Serralunga and on to Monforte, Novello and Barolo. A variation from Serralunga to Castiglione Falletto - Monforte is also available.

Along the route, there are marked stations for charging e-bikes and for minor repairs that may be necessary along the way. These are normally located in town centres or in the immediate area, or near RV or other roadside parking areas.
How to get here:

**By car, motorways:**
- A6 – Torino Savona, Marene or Carmagnola exit
- A21 – Torino Piacenza, Asti Est exit
- A33 – Asti Cuneo, Alba exit

**By plane:**
- Torino Caselle – [www.aeroportoditorino.it](http://www.aeroportoditorino.it)
- Cuneo Levaldigi – [www.aeroporto.cuneo.it](http://www.aeroporto.cuneo.it)

**By train:**
- Ferrovie dello Stato: [www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com)
The Bar to Bar itinerary is marked with two-way signs bearing the red-and-white markings typically used for hiking trails, as well as with signposts specifically for cyclists. Signs may fall down at times, but very often there are also (red and white) markings on trees and rocks pointing you in the right direction, especially in the woods and far from paved roads. For any doubts, consult the GPS map that can be downloaded from the site www.langheroero.it.

The codes S(1-3) and D(1-3) that are found in the text indicate the difficulty of climbs (S) and descents (D), with S3 and D3 being the most difficult and recommended only for expert cyclists in good physical condition.
Alba - Treiso

Start cycling from the historical centre of Alba in the direction of the Langhe’s Barbaresco wine region and get ready to experience one-of-a-kind landscapes immersed in the wonders of nature as you ride along the headland trails of vineyards and up to medieval villages perched on hilltops. This fluvial ecosystem along the Tanaro river has been gifted with the fertile terrain needed by the Alba White Truffle, as well as rolling hills as far as the eye can see, gorges and rock formations exposing the rich geological strata that makes this region so special. Surprises await you around every curve.
Leave Alba along Viale Cherasca. Once across the bridge, over the river and the subsequent level crossing, turn left onto Via Barbaresco, which comes to an end after about 300 m (325 yards) and turns into an uphill dirt trail (S2), that runs alongside a fenced property (watch out for the dogs) and leads to a steep wooden stairway. Once at the top, turn left onto the asphalt in the direction of Agriturismo La Meridiana. At the agriturismo, another dirt trail (S2) runs along the property and up the Altavilla hill. Keep to the left through the fields and hazelnut grove until the final climb to the right (S2). This will take you to the top of the hill and the paved road. The road will turn to gravel and take you through the Tanaro rock formations and the Pertinace Valley. This is the hill from which, on October 10, 1944, the Langhe resistance fighters descended onto Alba and occupied it, even though for just 23 days, a period in which the town was declared a republic and that was told by Beppe Fenoglio, a partisan himself, in one of his most famous works.

Across from you, you will see the first of the Barbaresco hills, covered in vineyards and dotted with famous farmhouses such as Rombone, Roncaglie, Pajoré, Marcarini, and more.

The road near the last home takes a fork along a dirt road to the right, which runs around the property and takes you through the vineyards beyond the hill. This will head steeply downhill (D3, but there are fences and other barriers) and through the woods to the Seno d’Elvio river, close to where Bar to Bar • Leg 1 Alba - Treiso
this waterway joins with the Tanaro. Here, a small bridge crosses the stream, so that you can then continue along the river and gorges immersed in the silence, fragrances and biodiversity of nature. These gorges are home to some of the most precious of the Langhe truffles, precisely because they are so isolated and pristine.

The road runs by two signs dedicated to Fenoglio. Turn right after a couple of kilometres at the second of these signs and head to the Pagliuzzi farmhouse, which you will pass on your right. Cross the small bridge over Rio Sordo and return to a paved road near the Pora farmhouses.

Continue on past the old Barbaresco train station (now a winery and tasting room, owned by an Australian), then turn left onto Via della Stazione, which heads up to the natural amphitheater of Martinenga, where memories of the ancient Romans (Emperor Pertinax was born around here) and subsequent Barbarian Invasions echo live in the place-names and archeological finds. The five crus of this hill (i.e. Pora, Fasèt, Asili, Martinenga, and Rabajà) are among the most famous of all Barbaresco crus.

You reach the crest near the small San Teobado Chapel, where the trail to the left of the road runs parallel to this road into the ancient village of Barbaresco, with its marvelous medieval tower (the current one dates back to the 14th century, erected by Visconti, and has been refurbished and is accessible), the village literally immersed in vineyards of Nebbiolo, the most regal of the Langhe grapes. You absolutely must take a look around this town and enjoy the local wine!

Leave the village along Via Cavazza (next to Enoteca Regionale, in Confraternita di San Donato, a veritable temple of wine that is not to be missed), crossing the main highway and heading down to the small hamlet of Montestefano (another renowned cru, much like the nearby Montefico, Cole and Ronchi), which acts as a sort of viewpoint for the ancient village of Neive Alto. At the first house, turn left down a steep trail (D2) with switchbacks that starts out paved and then turns to dirt. Follow this to the bottom of the valley, where you will turn right into an enchanting poplar grove. Turn left after around a hundred metres and continue on parallel to the train tracks, then cross the tracks at the concrete overpass. Not far from there, you will arrive at Cascina Principè, where the road is again paved. Turn left to the intersection with the main highway.

Variant Cascina Ambrogio - Neive

Here, you can turn left, where the road has a few curves and takes you to a roundabout that leads to the historic Neive Alto, one of Italy’s most beautiful medieval villages. In the local dialect, it is called the pais dij snjoròt (village of squires), an expression that finds confirmation in the number of aristocratic homes that add a touch of refinement to the medieval look of the circular roadways with their portals and luxurious...
Cascina Ambrogio - Neive

interiors. At the top, the bell tower takes us back to the glory days of the municipal statutes, while the wonderful, 17th century Conti di Castelborgo Castle points to the village’s ancient riches. Below, beyond the road to Mango, the remarkable Romanesque Bell Tower of Santa Maria del Piano recalls the importance of the monastic re-colonization of these hills that had been ravaged and then abandoned by the Barbarians.

Neive was also the hometown of Romano Levi, a grappa artisan who enthralled at least two generations with his directly fired, distilled spirits and his free-spirited labels. Having passed away, Romano is now prancing around the hills with the muses from his naïve fantasies, but everyone here continues to speak of him and his childlike wonderment for the purity of nature.

And with this memory of Levi in your pocket, it’s time to get back to where you were and continue on past the main highway to the uphill trail (S2) to Cascina Montà. Pass this farmhouse on the left and continue up to the summit at San Cristoforo, where you find more vineyards. Keep left and head between the aqueduct basins on the paved road. Take the dirt road right after the last farmhouse and head to one of the most panoramic spots of the entire area, complete with a giant bench designed by Chris Bangle!

From here, head down a slow incline (D1) almost to the main highway, but turn left right before it along a lane, which will turn ninety degrees to the right and head steeply downhill (D3) to the main highway. Turn left here, then right at the next intersection (Trezzo Tinella). Cross the bridge and take the uphill trail to the right (S3). Keep to the left towards Cascina Castellizzano, which stands out on top of the hill. When almost to the top of the hill, turn right onto another headland trail. Once at the Castellizzano farmhouse, follow the paved road to the San Stefanetto Chapel (another pleasantly panoramic spot). Turn left here and head through the ancient hamlet of Bongiovanni (example of a small, fortified village with houses along the walls on both sides and which once had gates blocking the way at night), which is one of the two historic hamlets of Treiso (the other being Cravè, beyond the church square).

Treiso is often mentioned by Fenoglio (it was there that there was the first recruitment of the partisans escaping from Alba in order to avoid mandatory military service in Salò) and was also a source of inspiration for Piero Masera, the first modern photographer of the Langhe (his famous “Mattino sulla Langa” was shown at the Venice Biennale). In addition to the well-known Barbaresco, the hill that makes an arc from Treiso to Madonna di Como is renowned among gourmets for one the Langhe’s most fragrant Dolcetto.
Leg 2

Treiso – San Bovo

From Treiso, in the heart of the Barbaresco wine region, this leg takes you to San Bovo di Castino as you witness the shift in the landscape from the endless blanket of vineyards to woods, hazelnut groves and rock formations. These hills are steeped in history, from Roman times on up through the Italian resistance movement, but they also conserve memories of the poverty and hardship written about by Beppe Fenoglio in some of his most famous works of literature.

**DISTANCE/PROFILE**

12.5 km

+ variant 3 km

**ELEVATION GAIN**

START 410 m

FINISH 630 m

**DIFFICULTY**

BC
Leave town in the direction of Alba, then at the first switchback to the left, take the road to San Rocco Seno d’Elvio. Continue on this paved road until Cascina Alberta.

**Variant** Cascina Basso – San Rocco Seno d’Elvio

From here, there’s a nice variation that can be done by following the road that heads downhill, then turning left. This will take you into the cool valley of the Seno d’Elvio river (the name of which is a reference to the Roman emperor Publius Helvius Pertinax Augustus, who reigned for just 90 days, but left an indelible mark). **San Rocco Seno d’Elvio** is the only area of Alba that is authorized to produce Barbaresco wines, but this is also the location of one of the Langhe’s historic wine cellars, Bricco del Drago, where the “Grand Master” De Giacomi launched a series of early, but admirable initiatives on which no small part of the fortunes of these hills are based. One example is the miraculous “Nonna Genia’s Classic Langhe Cookbook”, the bible of local cuisine that has been translated, from the Italian, into many other languages. Bricco del Drago also includes a private wine museum, which features the oldest wine bottle with a “Barbaresco” label (1870).

Just past the Cascina Alberta farmhouse, at the first big curve to the right, take the headland trail to the left, which runs past vineyards and
hazelnut groves in the area of the deepest, most frightening of the Langhe gorges, the spectacular Rocca dei Sette Fratelli (legend has it that seven faithless brothers cursed God during a religious festival, ignoring the pleas of their pious sister, so the earth opened wide and swallowed all seven, saving the woman on the crest between the two gorges). Legends aside, the place is amazing, both for the breathtaking view and for the opportunity to see the stratification of the hill, which looks like a giant layer cake of limestone, clay, marlstone, sand, and sandstone — all of the features of Langhe soil in a single glance.

The dirt road returns here along this strip of land (that saved that sister of legend) at Canta, where you will cross the main highway, then begin the climb to the right immediately after the partisan memorial and the first house. This will take you up to the watershed overlooking the main highway. Here, the vineyards gradually give way to hazelnut groves, and the hills grow harsher and wilder. Continue along the crest for a couple of kilometres and then head back down to the main highway. Go through a little hamlet along the paved road, then continue on to the nearby road to Bossania. Immediately to the right, another dirt road will take you back up to the crest. The view from here is amazing and must be what Fenoglio and the other resistance fighters experienced themselves in their day.

Head back down to the hamlet of Cappelletto. After going through the intersection for Trezzo Tinella, take the first road and then immediately turn right up a gradually rising dirt road, which runs in a wide arc to the local highway at a house next to a wayside shrine and, across from, a wood hut. From here, the trail continues down to the right along a slight descent through hazelnut groves, making a wide arc first downhill and then uphill (D2; S2) to the ancient hamlet of Riondino, an excellent example of fortified farmhouse and now a charming roadhouse.

Now back in the heart of Fenoglio’s Langhe, the setting of some of his best novels, everything we see recalls a recent past (a mere 50-70 years ago) made of fratricidal war and misery.

At Riondino, turn right and head up another dirt road (D2) into the woods (the trail is well marked on the trees). Continue on to the summit, where the many beehives give an indication as to how good the honey is here in the Langhe.

Keep to the right and head gradually downhill (D1) until the paved road. Follow this road to the right for about a kilometre, then head up again to the left on a dirt road that gets gradually steeper (S1-2) and takes you to the legendary Cascina della Langa, the farmhouse where Johnny the Partisan (the hero of the Italian film of the same name and of the Fenoglio novel on which it was based) spent one terrible winter in 1944 in the company of a dog named “La Lupa”. The trail heads down slightly into the hazelnut grove (which gives just the right amount of privacy to the farmhouse, that is now another charming inn) and then back up just past the house in
the adjacent parking lot. Now continue along the crest in the woods towards Boscasso and Pavaglione. At the next fork in the road, both trails will take you to the hamlet of Pavaglione, but you’ll want to go to the right and head down past goats and donkeys to Pavaglione, the setting for Fenoglio’s “La Malora” (“Ruin”, English edition) about Agostino Braida, a poor servant who sought, in vain, to help his family out of a fate that was stronger than he. The Agostino and Tobia farmhouse here is now a cultural center for conferences and exhibits, as well as for readings of Fenoglio’s work.

Beyond the village to the left, the trail heads back up to the crest and runs through the trees to the small San Bovo cemetery. Once back down on the paved road, you will reach the remote, romantic village of Castino, immersed in the woods. San Bovo is a favorite stroll among Alba locals, who know how to find a friendly home with an eatery, rooms and a café or wine bar, as well as horse stables for a ride through the Belbo Valley. Mushrooms and truffles hide in the woods and steep hills here, and the best spots are protected jealously and written down in secret, encrypted notebooks like a witch’s book of spells (and legend has it that the spirits of witches inhabit these Langhe woods).
This long leg through the most untamed part of the Langhe features the old salt roads once traveled by wayfaring merchants, the peace and tranquility of the woods, and isolated villages that, together, make for some breathtaking panoramas. This is the realm of the hazelnut, another of the delicacies of the Langhe region. This leg is also part of the Grande Traversata delle Langhe itinerary, so watch out for the signposts and enjoy an intriguing detour or two through a side of the Langhe you may not have expected.
From the end of the main square in San Bovo, take the dirt road (S2) that heads steeply to Rio Grazie (the last bit is paved, keep to the left). Across from you, an old Castino Nunnery can still be seen, although it is now a private farmhouse, and up to the right, on the crest of the hill, you can also see the San Martino Monastery (now a farm for livestock). A Benedictine Monastery also awaits in town. Cross the river in a U-shaped curve (with a sign for San Bovo) and follow the dirt road to the left into the Belbo Valley. Cross the state highway onto Via Molina and cross the bridge over the Belbo river. Head up the paved road (S2) for about a kilometre to an old fortified house, complete with sentry box and medieval archway with a coat of arms. From here, take the steep, paved mule track to the right (S2-3) to the village of Castino, passing through fields and hazelnut groves. (The track will cross the asphalt a couple of times, but runs as straight as you would expect from a mule track.)

The historic centre of Castino reflects the wealth brought to the area by the two monasteries and the nunnery and features a curious church with two facades. The castle and the remains of the tower tell about a glorious past as a crossing point between Bormida, Belbo and Bassa Langa. In more recent times, the town was the target of Nazi and Fascist retaliation in 1944.

After a pleasant stretch through the flowery roads of the ancient village of Castino, follow the signs for Municipio (town hall) and then keep left on Via San Rocco (if you continue on, take a look at the quaint rural church of...
the same name) and then take the stone mule track to the right (S2) that heads steeply up to the crest (partially asphalted) in the direction of the Alta Valle Belbo.

These mule tracks, that run along the crests of the valleys and then run steep and narrow from one crest to another, are the hidden, but perhaps most significant, signs of the nearly one thousand years of merchants coming and going along the old salt roads from the sea to the Po Valley, which made these now-remote areas the centre of the world. In this regard, the Belbo Valley (like the Bormida Valleys and Uzzone Valley) provides endless opportunity to discover the glorious past and fading memories of a romantic age that would have made poets like Foscolo, Petöfi and Byron very happy.

Take a moment to enjoy the view out across the wildest parts of the Langhe where isolated houses are rare and villages wind around the hilltops, closed within stone walls and forbidding fortalices. All around you are fragrant woods full of chestnut, linden, acacia and elm trees, and with willows along the valleys and oaks on the hilltops, which, as legend has it, await the thunderbolts from the gods that are what make the magical white truffles here.

From Castino, the hilltop trail heads to Cravanzana overlooking Bosia about halfway down the hill. At the crossroads for Lodola (another setting for a work by Fenoglio, where partisans Poli and Mauri met after the winter of ’44: a brief detour here is also recommended), where the grassy trail meets up for a few hundred metres with a strip of asphalt, then splits off again to the right and heads into the woods. Here, every fork in the road is marked either by a stake or other red-and-white markings on the trees. The trail (D2) then bends into a couple of switchbacks and comes out onto the Viarascio road, which heads down through spectacular woods and meadows to Cortemilia.

Turn right and head back up to Cravanzana along the same paved road through hazelnut groves, that are cared for like rose gardens, until you get to the intersection outside of town. Go through this intersection into this medieval village with its Viale dei Caduti and the majestic silhouette of the castle dominating from above. Cravanzana is considered one of the hazelnut capitals of the world and is specialized in the “Tonda e Gentile delle Langhe” (now officially protected as the Nocciola Piemonte IGP), one of the best in the world. Around here, you will certainly have no trouble finding this local treat in pastries and other artisan delicacies.

Wander through the narrow roadways of the village and then come out to the south on Via Ferrera. Continue to the right along the road from before. At the first crossroads, head uphill into the woods to the left (S2) until you get to a farmhouse. Keep to the right, and at the next farmhouse cross the farmyard and continue along the cart track that crosses a paved road and continues on up to the crest of the hill to Case Codin. Here, head to the left on the paved road briefly until Cascina Cattivo. From here, continue again on the dirt road along the Bricco del Sole crest until just about the roundabout.
of the village of Feisoglio, the third of the Alta Valle Belbo and famous for its mushrooms, where the Church of San Lorenzo is definitely worth a visit. Across from the town are the fortified villages on the other side of the Belbo Valley: Arguello (facing Cravanzana), Cerretto Langhe (straight across from you) and Villa di Serravalle (where a partisan command post may be found).

Go past the town along the paved road and then head left at the first (marked) crossroads. This road will soon turn to unpaved and head to the right. Continue uphill (S1) into the woods a bit further and then come out into the open onto the watershed. The breeze coming in from the sea (that locals actually call in Piedmont dialect “marin”), will rustle through your hair and fill your nostrils with Mediterranean fragrances.

After about 2 km of paved road, turn left. After a brief descent, turn immediately to the right, nearly in a U-shape, to return to the stone track. Continue through the fields to the panoramic crest of the hill. Keep going until the next paved section and continue straight to the “Spianata dell’Amore” (Clearing of Love), which isn’t a place for young lovers to park, but rather refers to a medieval legend of the brave knight Leone (you’re actually standing on Monte Leone), who fell in love with the local farm girl, and this was the place where their love blossomed. Of course, this does point to the talent of medieval explores to find beauty! This clearing is open to the elements on all sides and features a giant bench designed by Chris Bangle, where you can take in the full 360° of this marvelous landscape.

The Church of San Giovanni, made of austere Langhe stone, awaits you at the next crossroads. From here, head down the slight incline to the village of Niella Belbo.
Leg 4
Niella Belbo – Roddino
This leg winds its way along the trails of the Alta Langa and is also a part of the *Grande Traversata delle Langhe*, so it provides numerous opportunities for detours to visit these highlands in greater detail. The route offers one-of-a-kind vistas as you ride along the crests of hills and the Sorgenti del Belbo Nature Preserve, through towns made famous by Fenoglio and medieval hilltop villages in which each and every stone has a tale to tell.

### Leg 4
**Niella Belbo – Roddino**

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<th>DISTANCE/PROFILE</th>
<th>ELEVATION GAIN</th>
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<tr>
<td>25 km</td>
<td>START 790 m</td>
<td>FINISH 580 m</td>
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Niella Belbo features a well preserved medieval tower and a number of marvelous, 15th century frescos in the local church and in the romantic Madonna dei Monti Sanctuary, one of the many spires that dot the Belbo Valley. In front of you to the north, you can see the large village of Bossolasco (which you will reach after a steep descent into Belbo at San Benedetto, the only town at the bottom of the valley), whereas the valley finally opens up to the west towards the Mombarcaro summit (896 m / 2,940 ft) and onto the Sorgenti del Belbo plateau, a unique nature preserve here in the Langhe.

Pass through the town in the direction of San Benedetto and continue along the paved road to the marked fork to the left, which then descends (D2) and continues as a dirt road until a fork to the left, which descends into the gorge (D2) and then, beyond the ford, heads back up into the woods (S2) along a flat cart track to the left. This joins up with the paved local highway to the right in the direction of the hamlet of Sant’Anna, where you take the trail to the left along the wall of the first farmhouse. This trail heads down quickly (D3) into the next gorge. You will head back up for about a hundred metres and then continue on to the hamlet of Scaroni, where you will take the paved road in the direction of San Benedetto.

Several signposts tell of the places and events from Fenoglio’s novels and stories, including “Un Giorno di Fuoco”. Everything here tells about Fenoglio, and Fenoglio has written much about San Benedetto. Also of...
interest here are the remains of the Benedictine Abbey with the archway to the fortified village and the enjoyable descent down a path and stairway to the river below. Signposts to Mimbergh, Cadilù and Lunetta, too, evoke memories of Fenoglio’s stories (such as “Pioggia e la Sposa”), and these three villages are certainly worth an unhurried visit.

Cross the Belbo river over the bridge and take the first (paved) road to the left (D3), which heads up the steepest side of the valley. The panorama opens up so that you can see the entire Benedictine village in all its medieval splendor.

Once at the crest of the watershed, you will be able to see the faraway Tanaro Valley, surrounded by the Maritime Alps, and the romantic Murazzano Tower. Take the state highway to the right and then immediately take the road to the left to the Safari Park. Once over the hump, you will find the grassy and rocky trail along the crest of the Bossola Pass.

This marvelous trail with its high-altitude view runs flat and then steeply downhill (D3) to the pass, where you join the state highway again for the intersection, then head immediately to the left to continue along the crest through the woods (attention: at the three-pronged fork in the road, keep straight to remain along the crest of the hill) until the Basic2 industrial site, which you will pass on the left. Cross the paved courtyard and continue on to the Church of San Rocco. Head back up (D1-2, paved) to the watershed and then descend into Bossolasco (at the end of the road, turn left and...
take the main road through town at the Church of Santa Maria degli Angeli).

**Bossolasco** is the village of painters (the *Sei di Torino*, literally the “Six from Turin”) and of their historic signs. Fenoglio, and most of the inhabitants of Alba, came here on vacation in the summer, and in winter this was the site of the only ski lifts in the entire Langhe region! This romantic village is embellished with roses and tastefully restored homes. The old Palazzo Balestrino alludes to the area’s ties to the Del Carretto Family from feudal Liguria, while the significantly reworked local church may have deserved greater care. As you leave town towards Serravalle and Alba, we highly recommend a stop at the famous Fontana Azzurra. Just past this fountain, leave the state highway and take the dirt road to the left, which heads down gradually through the fields and then much more steeply into the woods (D3 extreme) and down into the gorge. Then head back up into the sunny fields towards the lovely San Lorenzo rural chapel. From here, turn right and then immediately left onto the paved road in Pratonoero. Head up to Serravalle and, at the next fork in the road, take the dirt road to the right. Turn right again after a couple of kilometres onto a paved road and then head up (S1) onto the state highway just outside the village of Serravalle.

**Serravalle Langhe** once served to block access to the road along the crest of the hill (the Langhe state highway, which may follow the original Roman road, *Magistra Langarum*), but it lost its medieval castle in the 16th century. But the village has retained the marvelous building that is now home to the town hall, as well as the original St. Michael Oratory (12th century, noted for its sandstone rose window), which is now a multipurpose centre. Continue on from Piazza del Municipio along Via Baudana. At the end of this road, keep left (onto Via Monte Vacca), then head downhill on the paved road (Via Braia, D1) until a grassy trail to the right. This trail will take you (by keeping right at every fork until the waterway) to the steepest and most extreme of the gorge descents, down to Rio Inferno (an ominous name), which may flow gently between the sandstone cliffs, but this deep, muddy gorge is to be taken with great care. The climb back out (S3) until the highway, across from the San Lorenzo Chapel in **Roddino**, is wider, less steep, and not as muddy, but it is still quite challenging.

When you reach the highway, turn left and continue along the crest overlooking some of Italy’s most famous vineyards until you get to the small village, with an amazing view of the Barolo hills.
Leg 5
Roddino – Monforte d’Alba
From Roddino, a village on the border between the Alta Langa and the Barolo wine region, you will now return to the winemaking heart of the area as you pedal among some of the most famous of the Barolo crus and stop to visit amazing villages that are simply overflowing with history. The leg includes a long variation from Serralunga to Monforte by way of Castiglione Falletto for a somewhat different point of view over the landscape that surrounds you.

**DISTANCE/PROFILE**
15.5 km
+ variant 10.5 km

**ELEVATION GAIN**
START 580 m
FINISH 520 m

**DIFFICULTY**
BC
Leave Roddino in the direction of Serralunga. Once at Madonna della Neve Chapel, take the grassy trail to the right that runs along the side of the hill, then follow along the Bricco del Gallo road (initially paved to the left, then immediately to the right).

After the agriturismo, head under the road to the left, initially on a dirt trail and then to the right on a grassy trail through the vineyards and then a hazelnut grove. The road heads down gradually (D1-2) and into the woods before becoming a dirt road again near the base of the valley. Once back to the main highway, cross the highway and head back up to the village of Sinio, which features a castle and is situated almost vertically above the valley, so take the stairs to cut out the steep roadways of the village and take the church road to reach the upper square of the town hall and the castle (which is now a hotel). Turn left onto Vicolo del Castello, then turn right at the RV parking area to begin the climb to Montelupo.

After about 50 metres, take the first dirt trail to the right (S2) and follow it through the hazelnut groves to a village house. Turn left here and head up (S2) for a couple of kilometres and continue along a brief stretch of paved road in the hamlet of Protto. The paved section ends after Gabusi (rapid succession of right, left, right), then continue on the grassy trail to the left. This trail descends gradually near the village of Montelupo and past a gorge (which you will pass on the right as you turn left). Once past the bridge, you will arrive at a group of houses. After the last farmhouse, the road gets
55

steep and becomes a narrow road (D3) through the woods and vineyards, remaining very steep and rocky. Continue down through the fields and hazelnut groves, always keeping to the left until the Bricchi farmhouse. The descent remains very steep (D3 extreme); continue keeping to the left. After two gravelly switchbacks, the road will again be paved past Sinio in the direction of Valle Talloria.

Cross the highway to Valle Talloria and take the dirt road that heads down to the Talloria ford before heading back up steeply (S3, beyond the ford take the fork to the right) into the woods and then vineyards to the hamlet of Cerrati. From here, head down the paved road back to the main highway, which opens onto one of the most beautiful of the Barolo landscapes. Nearly all of the great Serralunga crus are found on this side, which overlooks the hamlets of Ginestra, Castelletto and Perno di Monforte. Right below you, you will see the famous Lazzarito. To the right of this is Meriame, with Garombo, Marenca and Parafada to the left.

Turn left and head to Serralunga, the most medieval of the Langhe villages with its castle dominating over a single circle of homes. Go through the archway to Piazza Umberto I with the main tower of the Falletti Fortress looming above. Don’t miss the opportunity for a visit to the castle (a national monument and museum that has maintained its defensive features intact) and of the main street.

Leave the town via Piazza Cappellano, from where you can also admire • Bar to Bar • Leg 5 Roddino – Monforte d’Alba
the vineyards of Vigna Rionda (perhaps the town’s most celebrated cru), and head along the paved road to the crossroads for Collaretto (another famous Barolo vineyard) to the right and then, once past the village, follow the dirt road in front of you, which heads down (D2) through truffle plants to the waterway below. Cross the waterway and continue to a three-pronged fork in the road. Take the middle fork, a rocky trail that heads up steeply (S3 extreme) through the woods and out to the Ginestra vineyards. Continue on the paved road through the hamlet, past a few sharp switchbacks and a cemetery, and then down, at last, to Monforte.

Monforte is another charming town and features the Saracca, the oldest part of town that rises steeply up to Palazzo degli Scarampi and the Horzowsky Auditorium (where the best jazz festival of the entire Piedmont region has been held every July for over thirty years), but which you will do in the downhill direction. The roads in this village are worth exploring in detail, and you will find a great many locales and lodging to serve your needs. The bell tower that rises between the Oratory and the Confraternity is the most significant sign of the medieval castle that once occupied the entire level area here. In 1080, the Cathars (although they were actually Manichaean) barricaded themselves to resist the militia of the Pope in what remained of the first case of heretic persecution. The poor inhabitants of the town were dragged in chains to Milan, where all 300 were burned at the stake. (Corso Monforte in Milan was named in memory of this event.)
bridge, leave the paved road to the left onto the headland trail of the Scarrone vineyard, stretched out below the Falletti Castle like an embroidered dress. The road rises steeply through several curves (S2-3) and vineyards to the medieval village. Since the road makes a loop around the entire village, it doesn’t matter which direction you take, but we recommend going to the right in order to get a better idea of the ancient geometry of the glacis and moat. The massive castle with its beautiful, cylindrical tower in the middle of the courtyard essentially defines the village itself, with the church and a few old, aristocratic homes being relegated to barely a couple of streets. In Castiglione, there is also a municipal wine cellar that often organizes wine tastings and tours.

Leave the village along the paved road and keep to the left in the direction of Monforte. The road will begin to rise up to the crest of the watershed where you can see, to one side, Perno and, to the other, the vineyards of the Barolo wine country nestled between Monforte and Castiglione. It was along this road that the Giro d’Italia once held the Barbaresco - Barolo time trial, which proved to be one of the event’s most thrilling stages.

Once past the Monforte city limits, leave the paved road near the Favot, the great farmhouse of Aldo Conterno, and head down to the left (D1) through the vineyards of Rocche di Castiglione then continue through the woods and past the farmhouse along a false flat. Once past the Favot, the road makes a sharp turn to the right and into the brush of the gorge (which is not very pronounced here) to then come out at the base of Santo Stefano, an ancient Romanesque parish that looks out towards the castles in Perno and Castiglione and was a popular stopping point for pilgrims and other travelers of these hills. The climb through the vineyards along the headland trail is very steep (S3) but rewarding due to the mystical tranquility of this tiny parish.

The hill descends gradually out before you towards the quaint village of Perno and its Castle (now more of an aristocratic palace), where Giulio Einaudi would meet in the summer with his editorial team way back in the 1970s. You will want to take a break here before taking on the steep climb up the mule track (S2), which cuts through the curves of the paved road, heading to the left immediately outside the town and running along the edge of the new cemetery. You will come out above the town just before a switchback.

This is one of the most panoramic spots anywhere in the Langhe, as it looks out over La Morra, Verduno and Roddi in the Barolo wine.
region, Castiglione directly in front of you, and the Church of Santo Stefano and the Perno Castle in the foreground looking almost surreal. To the right, there is the endless series of the rolling Serralunga hills with its castle pressed up against the darker hills of the Alta Langa. It’s a view that is as stunning as it is unexpected.

Continue along the paved road for a few hundred metres and then, past the crossroads for Castelletto (where the 16th century church and the ancient cemetery are worth a visit), head down to the hamlet of Gramolere, where, at the large purple bench, you will follow the markings on the walls of the farmhouses. Once past the houses, head from the courtyard onto the country road to the left, which runs along the hillside through woods and vineyards before meeting up with the main highway after a couple of kilometres. After a few curves along the paved road through the woods, you will see a crossroads to the left along a gravel road, which rises gradually up the Ginestra hillside to just before the public pool. Head down to Monforte from atop the Saracca (the old part of town that is hanging practically vertically to the rocky hillside).
Leg 6
Monforte d’Alba – Verduno
Another leg immersed in the Barolo wine region through the most famous, most sought-after crus among wine lovers around the world, as you take in this sea of vineyards from a privileged vantage point in La Morra. Be sure not to miss the detour towards Novello to enjoy a view of the Alps in the distance, and stop in every village to experience a bit of history in castles and ancient wine cellars as you enjoy a glass of some fine Barolo wine.
Bar to Bar • Leg 6 Monforte d’Alba – Verduno

Itinerary profile

0 Km Monforte d’Alba
3.5 Km C. Nuova
5 Km Novello
5.2 Km Barolo
8.5 Km La Morra
13.5 Km Verduno

470 m
390 m
460 m
310 m
490 m
355 m
Leave Monforte on the paved road to Barolo and continue on until the Church of San Pietro, where you will take the road to the right to Bricco. Continue along the paved road, in a half circle around the wooded hillside, until you find a headland trail that descends through the rows towards Cascina Sòt, then briefly joins the main highway to Barolo to the right. After a few yards, take the road to the left to Panerole and then turn immediately to the right between the first homes and head slightly uphill. After the final home, the road turns again to grass. Head over the crest of the hill and descend gradually (D1) into the valley below Novello. Here you will keep to the right at the various forks (all marked), while you enjoy the tranquility of this valley surrounded by vineyards and dotted with willow trees.

**Variant Case Nuove - Novello**

The nearby climb (S1-2) will take you to the local highway to Novello, and a final ramp (S2) through the Ravera vineyards will take you, on a brief detour, to the village and its enviable 360° view of your surroundings (hence the saying in the local dialect, “Soma sempre an mira ‘d Novel”, i.e. “We’re always within view of Novello”, meaning that, no matter how far you travel, you’re never too far away when you can still see Novello). In Novello, the remains of the Monastery and the Church of San...
The main route, though, heads to the right just past this point to take the old road to Terlo, a famous Barolo vineyard, which takes you along a false flat to the village, following the gentle ups and downs of the hills. Descend into Barolo from above along Via Vittorio Veneto, right above the historic wine cellar Cantina Pira in the upper square of the town. The road that continues downward runs between the houses and the Art Nouveau buildings from the 19th century expansion of the village. At the next crossroads, you will enter the medieval part of town and end up at Falletti Castle (now home to the Barolo Regional Wine Centre and the WiMu - Wine Museum), the local church and the confraternity in the manner typical of all Langhe villages.

Thanks to the noblewoman and philanthropist Juliette Colbert Falletti di Barolo, modern Barolo wine was born here in Falletti Castle, or, more to the point, it is one of the three historical birthplaces, together with Grinzane Cavour through the efforts of Count Camillo Benso and Verduno with King Charles Albert. Juliette Colbert Falletti di Barolo, whom Pope Francis has recently named Venerable and who is said to be on her way to sainthood alongside the
many other “Social Saints” from 19th-century Turin (including John Bosco and Giuseppe Benedetto Cottolengo, just to name two of the most famous), will also be remembered for her countless charitable activities (for orphans, single mothers, prisoners, and more) throughout her life as a widow and for her support (being from the Vendée in France) for the ideas and impulses of the unification movement in Italy (including hiring Silvio Pellico to serve as librarian). Be sure to also save time for a visit to the Corkscrew Museum, featuring Paolo Annoni’s private collection of corkscrews.

The itinerary continues from the upper square where you entered the village earlier. Head out in the direction of Alba and go past the roundabout to Novello (first exit), take Via Bergesia to the left and head steeply downhill (D3) from Cannubi (one of the most important of the Barolo crus) into the valley below.

From the crest at Cannubi, you can look out over the hills of La Morra, which reigns supreme in the Barolo region with its 513 metres of bulwark against the cold winds of the Cuneo plain to create the unrepeatable microclimate of this unique area. Laid out before you are the crus of Sarmassa, Fossati, Cerequio, La Serra, and Brunate, all of which are much loved by collectors for their unmistakable elegance.

Climb right back out of the valley up the headland trail (S2) through the Sarmassa and Cerequio vineyards and to the small village that is now home to a charming inn immersed in vineyards.

The next climb, which will take you to La Morra, is one of the steepest anywhere in the Langhe (S3 extreme, but fortunately paved) and heads practically straight to the Fontanazza crossroads (if you head down to the right from here, you will soon arrive to the Barolo Chapel, a crazy work of pop art by Sol Le Witt and David Tremlett). Continue along the hillside and into town after a final climb (S2).

La Morra is worth riding through from end to end, starting from the ramparts and following the checkerboard of roads that climb up to the bell tower (the remnants of the village’s castle, much like at Monforte). The square that everyone refers to as “Piazza del Belvedere” earned its name for the way in which it overlooks all of the Barolo vineyards. A good map at the top of the square will help you in identifying the villages that dot the horizon, as you look out across the hills to the impalpable border between Piedmont and Liguria and the sea beyond. Just this year, the statue of the vigneron revealed a traditional “secret” of these parts at its base: a stock of bottles of Barolo wine (from the year in which the statue was erected), which were hidden there as a sort of time capsule for the lucky discoverers to enjoy as they recall the wine’s producers.

Leave La Morra in the direction of Verduno. After a few kilometres of paved road, take the dirt road to the right at Loreto, which will take you down (D1) to the Loreto Chapel (on your right). Continue on to again cross the main highway. After another kilometre, take the aqueduct climb to the left and then head back down (D1) to the village of Verduno.
For the last leg of this long circuit throughout the Langhe region, the itinerary takes you from Verduno, where a stop at its Belvedere vista point, looking out over Roddi, is certainly worth your time, and on to Alba, the “City of a Hundred Towers”, as you ride through more Barolo vineyards, past truffle trees and the castles and towers of the Roero region in the background beyond the Tanaro river. And don’t miss a detour of just a few kilometres to Pollenzo. The itinerary comes to an end in Alba, where you can enjoy the many wonders and treasures of this town after an unforgettable ride through the Langhe.
Verduno is a quaint, well maintained little village that features a true royal residence (now a charming hotel) in which the entire House of Savoy lived until 1909, when the estate was acquired by the Burlotto Family. It was in these wine cellars that, by order of the King, General Staglieno began the “modern-day” wine production of the Royal House’s Barolo, a dry, still wine aged in oak barrels.

The Castello di Verduno Winery remains to this day in a sort of ideal embodiment of the amazing Bar to Bar tours through the Langhe from Barbaresco to Barolo (hence “Bar” to “Bar”), the two most prestigious of Italy’s red wines, given that the owner Franco Bianco is from Barbaresco while his wife, Gabriella Burlotto, is from Verduno.

From Verduno, if you look out towards the Tanaro Valley, you will see the Roero Castles of Pocapaglia, Monticello, Guarene and the Santa Vittoria Tower (the twin tower of the one in Barbaresco and which can just be seen in the background, beyond Alba, where the valley narrows and the Tanaro river bends to the east). Under this hill King Charles Albert had the monumental Cinzano wine cellars excavated, in order to create, in secret, one of Italy’s first Spumanti - sparkling wines - (the first was Gancia in Canelli) and to experiment with Vermouth, the father of all Italian aperitifs.

Halfway between the two royal estates lies the neo-Gothic village of Pollenzo (erected on top of the former Roman city of Pollentia, where Flavius Stilicho stopped the Goths one last time, but it was futile...
given that, just a few years later, Alaric I conquered Rome, and Stilicho was executed by the inept Honorius) and its University of Gastronomic Sciences and related Wine Bank, part of an ambitious, forward-looking project by the Slow Food organization. Finally, in front of you are the Langhe with the Barolo “crown” opening up between Roddi and Diano, with the Grinzane Castle in the middle, and the other towns arranged in a semicircle around Barolo. In a single glance, you can see all of the ancient fiefdoms of the Falletti Family of bankers; villages that are now dream destinations for most of the world’s wine lovers.

Leave Verduno in the direction of Cantina Alessandria (descending from the castle towards the town hall and then keeping to the right). Once past the wine cellar, the road continues down towards the new hospital, at which point you will leave this road to take a trail to the right and into the woods. After about a kilometre, this trail comes out onto a cart track along the crest of the hill through vineyards. Continue on until you find a downhill trail (D2) on the left through lush vegetation, which will take you down to the Monvigliero - Toetto highway (Monvigliero is the Verduno’s most famous cru). Cross the asphalt and continue along the crest of the hill on a particularly pleasant trail, which heads back down at the end into Roddi on the Toetto road at the entrance to town.

Roddi features an impressive castle that has been partially restored and is now home to the “Terra Academy”, the Alba White Truffle Cooking School, a project that is destined to grow on into the future. The Academy is definitely worth a visit both to learn more about the white truffle and for the poetry left behind from the poetry contests that have been held here for over twenty years.

From Roddi, head down along Via Fontanassa to the base of the valley, marked by a roundabout with a votive chapel. Cross the main highway and continue on in the direction of Tanaro, then enter the bike trail to the right just over the channel of the Verduno - La Morra hydroelectric plant. This spacious, flat trail follows the lazily winding river and then, after a few kilometres, runs parallel to the highway and then passes under it at a suspension bridge. At this point, the route turns back on itself and bends to the left towards the Ferrero Factory, where they make some of the best chocolate (and hazelnut) treats in the world!

The “Ferrero Foundation” is very culturally active and hosts many important exhibitions and conferences, and their “Research Facility Pietro Ferrero” is world class. Soon you will see the red-brick towers on the horizon, along with the hexagonal walls of the historical part of Alba Pompeia. Take the ring road and then enter the town of Alba, where the cobblestone streets, bell towers, terracotta rooftops, wine bars, and shops evoke the age-old charm and unexpected surprises of the unforgettable Piedmont region.
Not to be missed!

Along the way, take some time to set your bikes aside and enjoy some good wine and visit the castles, museums, churches and historical wine cellars. Here are just a few suggestions of products and sites that are simply not to be missed.

For everything else, visit the site

www.langheroero.it

or call the offices of the Alba Bra Langhe Roero Tourist Board for help planning your tour.

We’re certain you won’t be disappointed!
Barbaresco DOCG

Nebbiolo is the most regal of the Italian grapes, having chosen this corner of the planet in the Piedmont region all for itself, in which to flourish and offer up its exceptional fruit for some unforgettable wines. These wines made entirely from Nebbiolo grapes come with evocatively noble names such as Gattinara, Ghemme and Barolo, but the most evocative of them all is, without doubt, Barbaresco. This miraculous wine is made in just four Italian municipalities (Barbaresco, Neive, Treiso and in the San Rocco Seno d’Elvio hamlet of Alba) on just 650 hectares (1,600 acres) of unique microclimate and terrain, producing less than four million bottles of wine, so it is not by chance that Barbaresco (one of the first Italian wines to gain protected status, with DOC being assigned in 1966 and DOCG in 1980) was the first wine to achieve Menzioni Geografiche Aggiuntive (MGAs), which map out the position of vineyards that are now protected by their own specific designation. With 66 such designations, you can see how complicated the local geology and geography are.

The rules for making a Barbaresco wine are simple but inescapable: at least 26 months of aging, at least 9 of which in oak barrels (which explains why there is a three-year difference on the label), production of 8 metric tons per hectare, 72% grape-to-wine ratio and minimum alcohol content of 12.5%. In order to earn the designation Barbaresco DOCG, the grapes must come exclusively from the protected geographical area and the wine must be made and aged there, too (grapes aside, very few exceptions to the rules have been issued, for historical reasons, to winemakers outside the designated area).
Barolo DOCG

Nebbiolo is the most regal of the Italian grapes, having chosen this corner of the planet in the Piedmont region all for itself in which to flourish and offer up its exceptional fruit for some unforgettable wines. These wines are made entirely from Nebbiolo grapes and are given evocatively noble names such as Gattinara, Ghemme and Barbaresco, but the most noble of them all is, without doubt, Barolo.

Barolo has three historical founders: the noblewoman Juliette Colbert Falletti di Barolo, Camillo Benso Count of Cavour and King Charles Albert. With origins such as these, how could it not be considered the “Wine of Kings, King of Wines” (“Vinum Regum, Rex Vinorum”, to borrow a declaration by Louis XIV referring to the Tokaj wine region in Hungary). Due to its genealogy and, above all, to the efforts and research of Staglieno and Oudard, in the early 19th century this wine took full form, having been produced for centuries prior but without clear rules or a defined profile. It wasn’t until 1966 that Barolo was granted its protected designation of origin (DOC) as confirmation of the excellence of this area, now the only region authorized to produce Italy’s greatest red wine. The area encompasses all or portions of 11 municipalities that produce some 15 million bottles of wine. Under the Barolo umbrella, there are 180 additional distinctions and nearly 300 producers cultivating fewer than 2,000 hectares (4,950 acres) of vineyards. Barolo wines must be aged for at least 38 months, 18 of which in oak barrels, with an output per hectare of 8 metric tons, 65% grape-to-wine ratio and minimum alcohol content of 12.5%.

Production, vinification and maturation must take place entirely within the DOCG region (with very few exceptions for historical reasons).

But most importantly, it should be imbibed here to enjoy the view along with the wine.
The Alba White Truffle

The truffle is born and develops under the ground, an unseen and unexpected underground fungus. It grows spontaneously (it is impossible to cultivate) in the woods south of the Po to the Apennines of Liguria, in symbiosis with traditional plants (oak, poplar, linden, willow, hornbeam, hazel) in a delicate balance of conditions that make it rare and delicate. It matures between September and January and is ... an unfortunate result: being underground, in fact, it is not easily found! It is for this reason that the truffle has such an intense scent: to survive, to be found and to spread its spores in the woods.

The search for truffles requires patience, experience, memory, luck and ... a dog! If there were ever any doubt that the dog is man's best friend, the truffle alone would be suffice to prove it. The dog is often a mongrel with no family coat of arms, but he is nonetheless recognised for his pedigree and breeding in hunting for truffles; the dog, the most generous animal in the world swaps the precious truffles for just a piece of bread and a caress. The dog is the star of every search. The truffle hunter, who then extracts the truffle with a special hoe, speaks with his dog and pushes him to keep looking as a great game (for the dog) and a lottery (for humans) that every night takes them up and down the hills. To go searching for truffles is difficult and often comes to naught: in fact, nobody knows if and when they will find one. But it is beautiful. And remember, whatever happens, to make a truffle it takes a tree, and to find it takes a dog!
UNESCO, finally!

As of June 2014, Italy has a new UNESCO World Heritage Site, its fiftieth. But this is truly a very special site, because next to countless cultural sites known and dreamed of around the world, here today for the first time in Italy a Cultural Landscape is celebrated and protected, a landscape that the hand of man - or rather centuries of his work – has forged and transformed to give it the unique and wondrous character it has today: a sea of vineyards, hills, farms, villages, churches and castles that leaves every visitor astounded.

There are the wine-growing landscapes of Langhe-Roero and Monferrato, an uninterrupted system of hills incorporating a hundred municipalities (the buffer zone) with the best grapevines and the most famous Piedmontese wines, from Barolo to Moscato, from Barbaresco to Barbera. Five are so-called core zones, that is, areas of excellence, representative of each individual territory: Barolo with its noble castles, Barbaresco with its red tower and the archetype perfect village of the Langhe, the Moscato at Canelli with Underground Cathedrals of the historic cellars of Spumante, the Barbera of Nizza Monferrato with the Bersano Ethnographic Museum, and Vignale with its circuit of the Infernot (cellars excavated from the volcanic rock). Finally, the sixth pearl: the castle of the Count of Cavour with the Enoteca Regionale Piemontese, one of the most highly symbolic places in the winemaking of the region and in Italian prestige.
The medieval heritage of Langhe Roero is seen especially in the impressive number of fortified structures, castles and watchtowers that dot the thousand hills down to the sea. But it can also be found in often isolated (rural) Romanesque churches that offered asylum to pilgrims and protection (at least spiritual) to the inhabitants scattered across hundreds of farms in those self-same hills. For a thousand years it was a swarm of traders, pilgrims, monks, soldiers, tax collectors, artists and bandits, each of whom travelled the cart tracks (in the valleys) and mule tracks (on the ridges) for his own ends. Parts of these ancient streets are now our streets, parts of which once again swallowed by the woods: they are generically referred to as Vie del Sale (Salt Roads) and therefore often pass through a “pedaggera”, the old duty station. Castles and towers immediately take us back to the atmosphere of King Arthur and the cycle of the Provencal Paladins. The enemy (besides the lord of the hill opposite) were mostly the Moors, the pirates who raided from the sea located just inland. For this reason systems of “seeing” towers were built, capable of raising the alarm from the sea to Asti in about an hour. Centuries later, many of the grim medieval manors were softened, when converted into luxury Baroque residences, according to the tastes of the time and especially to the new power that from 1631 had made subject the whole of Piedmont: the Dukes of Savoy with their sumptuous Court in Turin.
Colophon

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