



AGLIANO TERME

Piedmont's Hidden Wine Gem

Discover Italy's Barbera Secret



Move over, Barolo—there's another Italian red ready to steal the spotlight. In Piemonte's rolling hills, Agliano Terme offers world-class Barbera wines, intimate tastings, and authentic Italian hospitality. For all wine lovers, it's a chance to discover incredible quality and value—without the hefty price tag.





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Discover why Agliano Terme is a must-visit for wine lovers all over.



Agliano Terme is a hilltop village in Piemonte's Asti province, surrounded by Barbera vineyards. When wine enthusiasts think of Italian reds, icons like Barolo (Piedmont's Nebbiolo) or Brunello (Tuscany's Sangiovese) often top the list. Yet Piedmont is "the land not of two but three Bs", as Jancis Robinson famously quipped. The third "B" is Barbera – the grape of Barbera d'Asti – long a local staple that has transformed into a world-class wine in its own right. Agliano Terme, a charming spa town in the Asti region, sits at the heart of Barbera d'Asti country and is emerging as a must-visit destination for those looking beyond the usual wine trail.

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Agliano Terme is ground zero for this Barbera renaissance. The town and its surrounding hills (part of a UNESCO World Heritage wine landscape) are one of the best places in the world to produce and taste Barbera d'Asti. Here, Barbera finds an ideal mix of sunny exposures and calcareous clay soils, yielding wines that combine ripe flavors with structure. Barbera d'Asti from Agliano Terme often delivers juicy notes of cherry and plum, brisk acidity and smooth tannins – a profile that's "modern" in its open fruitiness yet true to its Piemonte roots. In short, Agliano Terme offers all wine lovers the chance to discover Piedmont's unsung gem: wines that are vibrant, age-worthy, and remarkably affordable compared to Barolo. It's little wonder that savvy critics now consider Barbera an international calling card of Piedmont. For travellers seeking authentic Italian wine experiences (and perhaps tired of jostling crowds in Barolo), Agliano Terme presents an inviting new frontier.

Piemonte's Nebbiolo-based wines (Barolo, Barbaresco) are revered but can be expensive, tannic, and built for long aging. Barbera, by contrast, offers a more approachable charm without sacrificing complexity. Once dismissed as rustic, Barbera now produces "ripe, bold red wines of impeccable balance and poise". In fact, Barbera d'Asti and its top cru, Nizza DOCG, are proving they can rival Nebbiolo-based icons in quality – often at a fraction of the price. These Barbera-based wines boast naturally high acidity, moderate tannins, and rich fruit, a combination that gives them excellent food-pairing versatility and the ability to age 10–20 years in the best cases. Importantly for Asia palates, Barbera's generous fruit and lively acidity make it enjoyable even for those not deeply versed in wine. Antonio Galloni has noted that "Barbera...tends to be easily drinkable" and appeals to a broad audience.



Explore how Agliano Terme produces approachable, world-class Barbera wines.

Nizza DOCG is the pinnacle of Barbera d'Asti, and it begs the question: Can Barbera stand toe-to-toe with Barolo or Brunello? Wine experts increasingly say yes. In a Decanter feature, the author asks, "Does Nebbiolo have a rival in the hills of northwest Italy? Certamente: it is the noble Barbera grape." This confidence comes from Nizza's track record over the past decade. Nizza was only established as a standalone DOCG in 2014, yet it has already "gained an assured place among the élite of Piemontese wine". The best Nizza wines show a depth, structure, and elegance that invite direct comparison to Italy's heavyweight reds.

Let's break down the structure and aging potential. Barolo (Nebbiolo) typically has fierce tannins, high acidity, and aromas of tar and roses; Brunello (Sangiovese) offers firm tannin, high acidity, with dark cherry and herbal notes. Barbera-based Nizza, on the other hand, is known for softer, finely integrated tannins and very high acidity, which give it a vibrant, juicy character even in youth.

Don't mistake "softer tannin" for lack of structure - top Nizza comes from old vines and low yields, yielding concentrated wines that can age for well over a decade. In fact, producers treat Nizza with similar reverence to Barolo: mandatory oak aging (18+ months, often more for riserva) and an expectation of cellaring to reach its peak. The result in the glass is a wine that balances Barbera's joyous fruit (think ripe red berries, plums) with serious backbone. Acidity is Barbera's secret weapon - it's naturally higher than in Nebbiolo or Sangiovese, which preserves freshness and length even as the wine matures.

Many Nizza can age 10-15 years gracefully, developing tertiary notes of leather, smoke, and dried herbs while keeping an underlying core of sweet fruit. Tannin in Nizza is present but usually smoother and less drying than young Nebbiolo, making Nizza approachable a bit earlier without sacrificing longevity.

Critical recognition backs up these comparisons. In blind tastings and reviews, Nizza wines have repeatedly proven they belong in the top tier of Italian reds. A landmark moment came when Wine Enthusiast magazine named a Nizza wine as #1 on its Enthusiast 100 list. The 2015 Michele Chiarlo "Cipressi" Nizza DOCG beat out thousands of wines to claim 2018's top spot - "the first time that a Barbera-based wine has climbed to the coveted top of this list," noted the winery, highlighting that only Barolo, Chianti Classico, and Brunello had ever achieved that honor in prior years.

This stunning result announced to the world that Nizza can stand alongside Barolo and Brunello as one of Italy's finest. Top critics are now routinely awarding Nizza wines scores in the mid-90s, the kind of ratings once reserved for Nebbiolo and Super Tuscans. For example, James Suckling - traditionally a champion of Brunellos and Barolos - has awarded 95 points to a Nizza Riserva, praising its richness and complexity. Decanter's panel, in a review of Barbera d'Asti, gave an astounding 97/100 points to a 2019 Barbera d'Asti Superiore from Agliano Terme, a score on par with grand cru Barolos.

All of this evidence cements that Nizza DOCG can compete head-to-head with Italy's most prestigious reds in structure, finesse and age-worthiness.





See how Nizza DOCG rivals Italy's iconic Barolo and Brunello wines.

In terms of flavor profile, how does a great Nizza compare to its more famous counterparts? When young, Nizza offers a mouth-filling rush of black cherry and blackberry fruit, often laced with spice (Barbera can pick up peppery, clove-like notes from oak or the grape itself). It is full-bodied and bold, yet lively – the acidity giving it an almost juicy, mouth-watering quality.

A young Barolo, by contrast, might be more austere initially, with its fruit shrouded by tannin and notes of tar and earth.

Brunello will typically show more obvious tannin and a savory, woody character alongside its cherry fruit. As they age, all three wines gain complexity: a mature Nizza develops smokier, earthy tones and truffle-like nuances akin to aged Barolo, while retaining a core of sweet plum.

The tannins converge in feel – give a high-end Freisa (another Piedmont grape) or Nizza 10+ years and they can become “almost indistinguishable to Nebbiolo” in polish and perfume.





Perhaps the most compelling argument for Nizza's parity with the greats is this: the experience it delivers in the glass can rival a Barolo, yet it often costs a fraction of the price and is more versatile at the table.

You could spend upwards of EUR135 on a top Barolo from a famed cru, or you could pick up an acclaimed Nizza for a quarter of that price and get a wine that wowed the same critics. For oenophiles, this means more value and excitement. As Galloni has pointed out, Piedmont's best Barolos undoubtedly rank among the world's great wines – but Barbera (and by extension Nizza) offers a more accessible entry point to Piedmont's quality.

In summary, Nizza DOCG stands as proof that Nebbiolo isn't the only route to Piedmontese greatness. With its balance of power and charm, Nizza takes the humble Barbera grape to heights that demand a spot at the same table as Barolo and Brunello.



Meet the passionate producers shaping Agliano Terme's Barbera excellence.

Agliano Terme's reputation is built on the passion of its local winemakers. Many are small family-run wineries, some spanning generations, who have mastered Barbera on these hills. Here are some top producers to know – each bringing something unique to the Barbera d'Asti and Nizza DOCG story. There are many more Agliano producers that I could have called out...

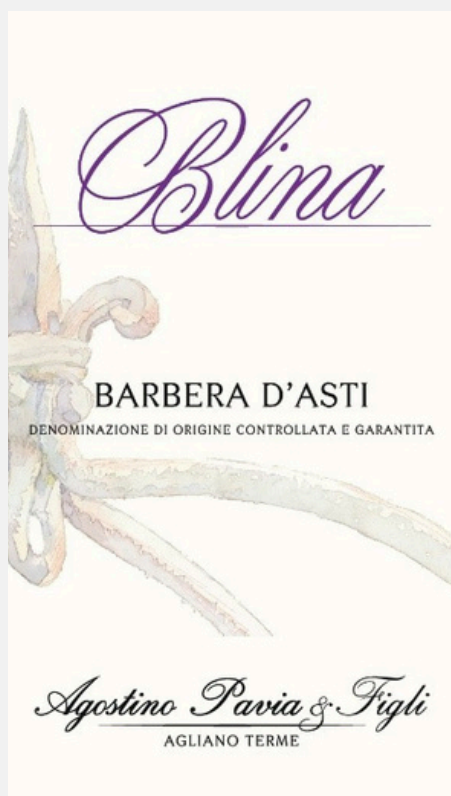
Roberto Ferraris – A name synonymous with Agliano Terme Barbera. The Ferraris family winery (founded 1923) cultivates old vines averaging 70+ years, which yield Barbera of remarkable intensity. Roberto Ferraris is a true Barbera specialist, producing several cuvées that showcase different expressions of the grape.

His flagship old-vine Barbera d'Asti "Nobbio" (from vines over 80 years old) is made entirely in stainless steel to let the fruit shine – and it famously won first prize in a major Barbera tasting competition, cementing Ferraris' reputation.

He also produces a Nizza DOCG from a prized vineyard, and more traditional styles aged in large oak casks. Year after year, Roberto's wines earn praise for their consistently high quality and terroir authenticity. If you visit, don't miss touring his 19th-century cellar, now a museum of ancient vine roots – a testament to the deep roots (literally) of Barbera in this area.



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Agostino Pavia e Figli – Another Agliano cornerstone, the Pavia family has devoted itself to Barbera for generations ([Producer Profile - Agostino Pavia](#)). Unlike many Piedmont estates that focus on Nebbiolo, Pavia is all about Barbera – they even joke that Barbera is their “first child.” Their range includes multiple single-vineyard Barbera d’Asti bottlings: Blina (bright and fruit-driven) and La Marescialla (a Barbera d’Asti Superiore with more structure).

The accolades speak volumes: Pavia’s Barbera d’Asti Superiore 2019 received 97 points from Decanter, an extraordinarily high score that places it among the top Italian wines of that year. They have also earned Tre Bicchieri awards and other honors for their wines. Despite the critical acclaim, Pavia’s wines remain excellent value – something any collector will appreciate.

For an immersive experience, visitors can even stay at Cascina La Marescialla, the family’s agriturismo opened in 2009 for wine tourists, waking up among the vines that produce these award-winning Barberas.

Poderi Rosso Giovanni – A third-generation family winery helmed by Lionello Rosso. They farm ~12 hectares entirely planted to Barbera in Agliano’s rolling hills, with a philosophy of sustainable agriculture (SQNPI certified) and meticulous vineyard work. Rosso Giovanni produces Barbera d’Asti in various styles, but their pride is the single-vineyard Nizza DOCG “Gioco dell’Oca.” This Riserva, made only in the best years, is aged about 18 months in French tonneaux plus 18 months in bottle, emerging as a powerful yet elegant expression of Barbera.

The Gioco dell’Oca 2020 Nizza Riserva recently earned 95 points in Daniele Cernilli’s guide, putting it on par with famed Barolos in that publication. Tasting notes often mention its deep color, lush blackberry and violet aromas, and long, refined finish. It’s a Nizza not to miss. The Rosso family’s commitment to quality – “achieve the highest quality with careful work in vineyard and cellar” – is evident in every bottle. They are an example of how Agliano’s boutique wineries are now competing with big names on the international stage.



Dacapo (Cà ed Balos) – Dacapo was founded in 1997 and in recent years merged with the Cà ed Balos estate, creating a dynamic winery that marries tradition with innovation. The owners, Paolo Daniele and Renata Bonacina, are known for championing indigenous grape varieties alongside Barbera.

At their vineyards in Agliano Terme and nearby Castagnole Monferrato, Dacapo grows not only Barbera but also Ruché, Grignolino, Freisa, and even some Nebbiolo and Chardonnay for a traditional method sparkler. They farm organically and even their wines are certified vegan. Dacapo's Barbera d'Asti and Nizza bottlings are excellent (their Vigna Dacapo Nizza Riserva has won accolades), but a visit there offers the chance to also taste rarities like their Ruché di Castagnole "Majoli" – an aromatic red with rose-petal and pepper notes – or their Renard Grignolino. This breadth makes Dacapo a "living catalog" of Piedmont's native grapes.

Still, Barbera is king: their cellars are stocked with Barbera barrels and tonneaux, and they strive for a style that is polished but not overly modern, allowing Barbera's fruit and acidity to shine. If you're lucky, Renata might pour you a barrel sample of an upcoming Nizza – a great insight into how these wines develop.



Ferro, Domenico Serra, and Castino – These are smaller, family-run wineries in Agliano Terme that uphold traditional, terroir-driven winemaking.

For instance, Azienda Agricola **Serra Domenico** (run by the Serra family) follows the credo of "putting the grape in the bottle" with integrity, using a traditional and consistent style to let Barbera's true character speak. They grow Barbera as well as a bit of Cortese (for white), Freisa, and Grignolino, reflecting the local heritage. Visiting their vineyard and rustic cellar, you'll likely be treated as friends, with informal tastings of their Barbera d'Asti, perhaps alongside some home-cured salumi.

Franco Ferro and the **Castino** family are likewise guardians of Agliano's Barbera tradition. They tend to small estate vineyards and craft honest Barbera wines that often end up on tables of local trattorie. While these names may not be internationally famous, they frequently earn commendations in Italian wine guides and represent the soul of Agliano Terme. Tasting their wines, you get a sense of the land itself – genuine, warm, and without pretense.



Together, these producers make Agliano Terme a treasure trove for Barbera lovers. From modern, highly-rated Nizzas to classically styled Barberas, you can experience the full range of what this grape can do.

Many of the wineries are within a short drive (or even a bike ride) of each other amid the scenic Monferrato hills. It's easy to fill a day or two hopping between them, and each visit will deepen your appreciation for Barbera's diversity.

Moreover, you'll often be welcomed by the winemakers themselves – pouring wines in their family farmhouses – which makes the tasting experience far more personal than in more touristy regions. Agliano's winemakers are proud of their Barbera, and as a visitor you can't help but get caught up in their passion.



Uncover rare local grape varieties that offer unique tasting experiences.



While Barbera is the headliner, the Agliano Terme area (and broader Asti/Monferrato) is home to other fascinating grape varieties. For wine adventurers, trying these offers a fuller picture of Piedmont's richness. Many Agliano producers make a little bit of these rarities as a side project or for family consumption, and local wine lists often feature them. Here are some worth exploring

Grignolino: A light-bodied red once as prized as Barolo in the 19th century, now a niche gem. Grignolino is pale garnet in color but don't let that fool you – it has surprisingly firm tannins and bright acidity. Aromas often evoke rose petals, wild herbs, and white pepper, earning it the nickname “baby Nebbiolo” or “a summertime version of Nebbiolo”.

It's traditionally served slightly chilled to tame the tannins and emphasize its refreshing nature. On the palate, expect cranberry and wild strawberry fruit with a savory, bitter almond twist on the finish. Agliano's sandy soils produce very elegant Grignolino. Leading producers: Agostino Pavia makes a fun Grignolino d'Asti (their 2019 won 3 “hearts” in Merum guide, and Dacapo's “Renard” is an organic example to seek out.

Food pairing: Grignolino's zippy acidity makes it extremely food-friendly – from antipasti and cold cuts to tomato-based dishes. It's one of those wines that can even handle hard-to-pair ingredients. (One writer noted it pairs with everything from creamy pasta to artichoke and lemon sauces. In the Asian Singaporean cuisine, you might try it with a bright Peranakan achar salad or lighter dishes like ngoh hiang; serve it a bit chilled for maximum joy.

Dolcetto: Piedmont's everyday charmer, whose name means “little sweet one” (ironically, the wine is dry). Dolcetto isn't widely grown right around Agliano (which favors Barbera), but you'll find Dolcetto d'Asti from nearby towns and certainly Dolcetto d'Alba on wine lists. It's typically deep purple in color, with soft, rounded tannins and low acidity – the opposite structure of Barbera.

Flavors run to black fruits: black cherry, prune, and plum, often with a hint of licorice or cocoa. It's meant to be enjoyed young, when the fruit is lush and the tannins gentle. Think of Dolcetto as the Italian equivalent of a Beaujolais-Villages or a youthful Merlot – easy-going and gulpable.

Food pairing: With its low acid and mellow profile, Dolcetto pairs well with hearty but not spicy fare. In Piedmont it's the classic match for tajarin pasta with meat ragù or a simple salami and cheese platter. In the Asian kitchen, Dolcetto would happily accompany soy-braised char siew pork or even dim sum; it won't clash or overpower the sweet-savory glaze. Its lack of sharpness makes it a red you can even enjoy with mildly spiced dishes or lunchtime fare.





Albarossa: A rare hybrid grape that actually combines Barbera and Nebbiolo in its lineage. Created in 1938 by crossing Barbera with a French grape thought to be Nebbiolo (actually a close cousin), Albarossa lay mostly dormant until a recent revival by Piedmontese vintners interested in innovation.

As one producer describes: "From the marriage of Barbera and Nebbiolo rises the Albarossa, a new and captivating crossing that reinterprets the Piedmontese terroir in a unique way." Albarossa wines often take the best of both parents – the deep color, fruit and softer tannin of Barbera with a hint of Nebbiolo's floral elegance.

You might notice blueberry and plum aromas, sometimes a touch of oak spice (producers tend to age it in barrique to soften it further). It's still very uncommon; only a few wineries (like Michele Chiarlo or Banfi's Piedmont project) bottle it.



Freisa: An ancient Piedmont red that is actually a close relative of Nebbiolo – DNA studies suggest Freisa might be Nebbiolo’s parent. Freisa is often described as Nebbiolo’s “wild and rustic kin”. It has Nebbiolo-like high tannin and acidity, but with a more brambly, funky character.

Traditionally, some Freisa wines were made slightly frizzante (fizzy) to balance their tannic bite, though today most are vinified still and dry. Expect aromas of strawberries, violets, and underbrush, with a palate that can be surprisingly powerful for an unheralded grape – give it a few years and a good Freisa can resemble a lighter Barolo. Agliano Terme’s producers like Serra Domenico and Allegria grow small plots of Freisa, usually bottled under the Monferrato DOC. These are worth trying for something truly local and off the beaten path.

Food pairing: Freisa’s tannic, earthy profile calls for rich foods. Locally, a rich stew or braised duck would be lovely (Piedmontese often pair Freisa with braised pork or rabbit). In , kong bak pau (braised pork belly buns) or roasted duck would work – the wine’s tannin cuts through the fat, and its fruity aspects complement the sweetness in the glaze. Just be aware of any chili heat; like Nebbiolo, Freisa doesn’t love too much spice.

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Food pairing: Similar to a bold Barbera or a Merlot blend. It can handle steaks, lamb or venison. An Albarossa with a grilled wagyu steak would be fantastic, as the wine has enough body and a velvety texture that complements juicy, marbled beef.

Ruché: A true indigenous gem, Ruché (pronounced roo-KAY) is a highly aromatic red unique to the hills just north of Agliano (around Castagnole Monferrato). If you enjoy floral, perfumed wines like Gewürztraminer or some Syrahs, Ruché will intrigue you. It bursts with aromas of rose petals, violet, potpourri and sweet spices – one taster famously likened it to “drinking a bouquet of roses with a sprinkle of white pepper and cinnamon”.

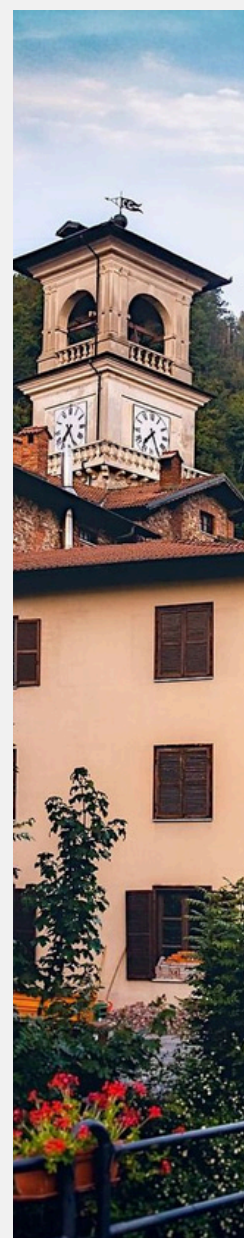
Ruché is medium-bodied with moderate tannin, and usually unoaked or only lightly oaked to preserve its fragrance. The best have an exotic, incense-like quality and flavors of cherry liqueur, dried herbs and peppery spice. Agliano Terme doesn't fall in the Ruché DOCG zone, but some local vintners like Dacapo have vineyards in the official area and produce excellent Ruché di Castagnole Monferrato. Ruché is quite limited (only about 100 hectares planted in total), so this is a wine-savvy find for your checklist.

Food pairing: Because of its aromatic intensity, Ruché pairs beautifully with flavorful cuisines – it can match Asian spices and herbs more gracefully than many other reds. Consider pairing Ruché with Peranakan dishes like beef rendang or ayam buah keluak. The wine's florals and spices will play off the lemongrass, galangal, and aromatics in the food, and its gentle tannins won't overpower even if there's some chili heat. It's also a fun match with Chinese roast duck or char siu – the sweetness in those dishes resonates with Ruché's sweet floral notes.

Arneis: Shifting gears to white, Arneis is Piedmont's most beloved indigenous white grape. While Arneis is grown chiefly in the Roero area west of Asti, some Monferrato producers dabble in it as well. The name Arneis means “little rascal” (for its tricky nature in vineyard), but in the glass it's extremely charming.

Arneis is typically aromatic and medium-bodied, with notes of pear, apricot, white flowers, and a hint of almond on the finish. It has moderate acidity – not searing like a Riesling, but enough to keep it fresh – and a silky texture. An Arneis from a good producer (like Vietti or Giacosa) delivers a lovely balance of fruit and minerality, sometimes a whiff of fennel or herbs. If you're touring Agliano Terme wineries, you might encounter Arneis as a welcome aperitif before the reds.

Food pairing: Arneis shines with food that isn't too heavy or spicy. It's excellent with seafood and shellfish – in Asian context, think chilli crab (if you can handle red wine with chilli crab, Arneis would actually be a better white option to tame the spice), or more appropriately, pepper crab where its fruit and floral notes could soothe the palate. It also pairs with lighter Italian fare; at home, try it with a plate of aglio olio seafood pasta or simply grilled fish with herbs.



Exploring these lesser-known varieties is a rewarding part of an Agliano Terme wine journey. Not only do they provide a break for your palate between all the Barberas, but they also connect you to Piedmont's deep winemaking heritage - one where dozens of local grapes, each with its own story, have been lovingly preserved by dedicated vintners. Ask the winemakers about these grapes; you'll likely end up hearing delightful stories (perhaps how someone's grandfather kept a patch of Freisa for "medicinal use," or how a storm led them to plant Arneis). For any wine lover, tasting these side-by-side with Barbera is an educational experience, highlighting how diverse Italian wines can be. And who knows - you might discover a new favorite in a grape you hadn't even heard of before!





Plan your visit with tips on the best times, stays, and experiences.

Inspired to visit Agliano Terme and taste these wines at the source? Here are some practical tips to help an travelers plan an unforgettable wine trip.

Getting There:

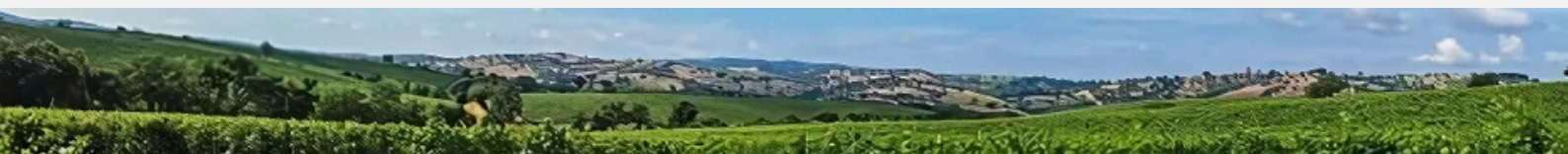
Agliano Terme is conveniently located in northwestern Italy's Piedmont region. The nearest big city is Turin (Torino), about 70 km away, and Milan is roughly 130 km away. From Singapore, you can fly into Milan Malpensa or Linate Airport, or Turin's Caselle Airport (often via a stop in a European hub).

From Milan, it's an easy journey of ~1.5 hours by car (via the A21 highway) or about 2 hours by train. If you prefer public transport, you can take a train from Milan to Asti (the provincial capital, well-connected by rail), then a local train from Asti to Agliano-Castelnuovo Calcea station, which takes only ~20 minutes.



From Turin, driving takes just about 1 hour (80 km) heading southeast. Trains also run from Turin to Asti frequently (about 45 minutes), making it straightforward to reach Agliano Terme via Asti.

Renting a car is highly recommended to explore the countryside and hop between wineries at your own pace. The roads in Monferrato are scenic, winding through vineyards and tiny villages, and driving gives you the freedom to visit those tucked-away hilltop wineries (just designate a driver if doing extensive tasting!).



Best Time to Visit: Agliano Terme and the Piedmont region have something to offer year-round, but autumn (Sep–Nov) is arguably the best season for wine lovers. September and early October are harvest time for Barbera and Nebbiolo – you’ll catch the vineyards heavy with grapes and the intoxicating smell of fermenting must in the air.

By mid-October, the landscape turns into a tapestry of red and gold vines, and it’s also the start of white truffle season in nearby Alba. In fact, October and November weekends host the famous Alba White Truffle Fair, where you can savor truffle-laden dishes and even join a truffle hunt in the woods. Imagine spending the day in Agliano tasting Barbera, then heading 30 minutes west to Alba for a dinner of tajarin pasta with truffles – a Piedmontese dream come true.

Autumn weather is cool (10–18°C), great for travel (just pack layers). Alternatively, late spring (May–June) is wonderful too: the vineyards are green and lively, temperatures mild (15–25°C), and you miss the summer tourist crowds.

Agliano Terme has its own events as well – for example, there’s “Barbera Unplugged” wine festival often in May, and the biennial Barbera Fish Festival in early October (an event pairing Barbera with Norwegian cod dishes, reflecting a unique cultural exchange).

If you visit in summer (July–August), expect hot days (30°C) and note that many Italians take summer holidays then, so some wineries or restaurants might have limited hours in mid-August. However, summer does bring festive evenings and the chance to attend open-air winery parties under the stars.

Winter (Dec–Feb) is off-season – quiet and cold, with some restaurants on holiday – but you’ll have an intimate experience and could enjoy spa time in Agliano’s thermal baths (Terme). In summary, September–October hits the sweet spot for wines + truffles, with May–June as a close second for beautiful weather and vineyard scenery.

Where to Stay: Agliano Terme offers several charming accommodation options, often amid vineyards, giving you a true wine country immersion. For a rustic experience, consider a farm stay (agriturismo) or vineyard B&B.

Cascina Dani is one such agriturismo right in Agliano, known for its warm hospitality and rooms overlooking their Barbera vineyards (and yes, they make wine too).

Another is Agriturismo La Mussia or La Maggioreina in nearby villages, offering home-style cooking and cozy farm atmospheres. If you prefer more upscale comforts, the Naturalmente Wine Resort in Agliano Terme is highly rated – “a lovely small resort overlooking the vineyards. Relaxing pool and deck,” notes one review. You can sip wine on a rooftop terrace with panoramic views of rolling hills, and even enjoy a spa massage among the vines.

There’s also Villa Fontana, a boutique hotel and spa in Agliano built around an old estate – it has modern rooms, a wellness center (with those thermal springs water), and its own restaurant. Because Piedmont isn’t overrun with tourism like Tuscany, prices for accommodation remain reasonable, and the hospitality is genuine.



Many places offer packages that include winery tours or truffle hunts in season – worth checking when you book. For a truly unique stay, you could even rent a countryside villa or farmhouse on home rental platforms such as AirBnB; a few are available around Agliano with private pools and vineyard views, which is great if traveling with family or friends.

Our own home (pictured above), is open for rental too. Casa Ambrogina is our charming century-old country home featuring five spacious bedrooms, a private outdoor pool, and a mature garden perfect for relaxation. The house offers a fully equipped kitchen, a cozy living area, and ample indoor and outdoor dining spaces. Guests can enjoy the shaded terrace, the pool and sunning area with scenic views of the surrounding vineyards.



Wine Tasting and Tours: Unlike large commercial regions, most wineries in Agliano Terme are small, family-owned and thus require a bit of planning to visit. The good news is that they are very welcoming to visitors – you often get personal tours by the winemaker or a family member. To arrange visits, appointments are essential.

It's best to email or call the wineries a few weeks in advance to schedule a tasting. Many speak English (or will rope in a son/daughter who does). The local consortium Barbera Agliano (association of producers and locals) can help coordinate; their website ([Barbera Agliano](#)) has contacts and sometimes lets you book tasting experiences or events.

Some wineries, like Agostino Pavia or Dacapo, have contact forms on their sites to arrange visits. Don't be shy – they are used to enthusiasts coming from afar to taste their wines.

Tastings in Piedmont are often very generous: expect to try multiple wines, possibly including older vintages or straight-from-barrel samples, often accompanied by grissini (breadsticks) or cheese. Tasting fees are often nominal (€10–20) or sometimes waived with purchase of a bottle or two.

Given the value, you'll likely want to purchase some bottles to enjoy during your trip or bring home; wineries will usually sell at cellar door prices, and some can ship internationally (though note 's alcohol import duties – you might prefer to hand-carry your allotted amount).

Beyond Wine - Things to Do:

While wine is the main attraction, Agliano Terme and surroundings offer delightful extras. "Terme" means thermal baths - the town has natural hot springs. You can spend an afternoon at the Agliano Thermal Spa, soaking in mineral-rich waters that locals swear by for wellness.

Foodies should definitely explore the local cuisine: try Agliano's restaurants for specialties like carne cruda (beef tartare) paired with Barbera, agnolotti del plin (tiny stuffed pasta) in sage butter, or tjarin pasta with a rich ragù, these dishes all sing with the local wines.

Agliano is also not far from Asti city (20 km), known for Asti Spumante and its stunning Gothic cathedral - worth a half-day trip. If you're there in September, Asti holds the Festival delle Sagre (a huge food and wine festival) and the historic Palio di Asti horse race.

Another short excursion: Nizza Monferrato (15 km from Agliano), the town that gave Nizza DOCG its name, has a Wine Museum and plenty of enotecas to sample Barbera. For nature lovers, there are walking and biking trails through the vineyards - the Tourist Office in Agliano (or your hotel) can provide maps for a scenic hike with views towards the Alps on clear days.

Lastly, an insider tip: try to time a visit during a local festival or event. The Barbera Agliano association often hosts an annual Barbera Days or "Agliano Barbera Weekends" where multiple wineries open their doors with special tastings, food pairings, and music.

The mentioned Barbera Fish Festival (usually October, every other year) is a unique event where international chefs join local cooks to create seafood dishes to match Barbera - a great opportunity to experience creative food pairings (and the locals go all-out; it's like a big village party).

In truffle season, several wine estates offer truffle hunts on their property - imagine walking at dawn with a truffle hunter and dog, then enjoying a Barbera tasting lunch featuring your found truffles shaved on top of tjarin! These are the kinds of memorable experiences Agliano Terme can provide, away from mass tourism and in an authentically Italian way.



Language-wise, basic Italian pleasantries go a long way, but you'll find English is spoken at most wineries and restaurants that cater to visitors. The pace of life here is relaxed; don't expect shops or eateries to be open in the afternoon (riposo time) or very late at night. Plan your winery visits late morning and mid-afternoon, leaving the evening for dinners.

For any wine lover, the appeal is clear: here is a corner of Piedmont where you can experience world-class wines without the pretension or price tag that often accompanies the big names. Barbera d'Asti and Nizza DOCG from Agliano Terme offer that magical trifecta of quality, value, and authenticity. They are wines that serious collectors can cellar and marvel at in a blind tasting (as we've seen, they can beat the best in competitions, yet they are also wines that newcomers can immediately enjoy, full of fruit, balanced and food-friendly.

This approachability makes Agliano's wines a perfect gateway into fine Italian wine for those in who may be more familiar with Bordeaux or Shiraz. You don't need an advanced wine degree to love a sip of juicy Barbera, but if you have one, you'll find plenty of complexity to ponder in the glass.



Now is the perfect time to visit – before the tour buses find their way here, and while you can still have that intimate tasting with a winemaker who has time to sit and chat. There's a certain charm in "getting there first," in returning home to and introducing your friends to a fantastic Nizza wine they've never heard of, or pouring a Barbera at a dinner party and watching everyone be pleasantly surprised. You can be an evangelist of sorts for Agliano Terme's wines.

Wherever home is, seek out some Barbera d'Asti or Nizza DOCG bottles (many fine wine shops and Italian restaurants stock them now, labels like Braida, Michele Chiarlo, or Tenuta Olim Bauda are good starts). Try them with your favorite dishes and I guarantee you'll gain a new appreciation for how versatile and delightful these wines are.

As you swirl a glass of Barbera, consider this: you're tasting a bit of Piedmont's soul, a wine that locals drink at lunch and at celebrations, a wine that can be rustic or refined, a wine that has endured through Piedmont's history from peasant tables to Michelin-starred menus.

Agliano Terme encapsulates that journey. It deserves a spot on every wine enthusiast's travel itinerary because it delivers an experience that's educational, enjoyable, and enriching. You'll come away with not just bottles of excellent wine, but stories and memories imbued with the warmth of Piedmontese culture.

So whether you're a casual wine drinker eager to expand your palate, or a seasoned collector hunting the next great discovery, Agliano Terme invites you with open arms - and a glass of Barbera - to discover a Piemonte beyond the famous Barolo. It's often said in wine that the best wine is the one you like.

Don't be surprised if, after an encounter with Agliano's Barbera d'Asti and Nizza, you find a new personal favorite. Salute - here's to Barbera, to Agliano Terme, and to your next Italian wine adventure!





CREDITS & CLOSURE



This paper was created to help wine lovers discover the unique charm and quality of Agliano Terme and its wines, especially Barbera d'Asti and Nizza DOCG.

Sources Consulted:

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I thank the many winemakers, wine writers, and local producers whose work and passion continue to elevate Barbera and its place in global wine culture.

Closure

Agliano Terme may be small in size, but it is large in personality, flavour, and hospitality. Whether you're a seasoned collector or new to Italian wines, the village and its wines offer a meaningful experience — rooted in authenticity, driven by quality, and always ready to be shared.

Salute. Here's to your next glass, and perhaps, your next adventure to Piemonte.

Nico Nanninga