

BARBACAN
(Valtellina, Lombardy)

May 2026



With the two brothers of Barbacan at the Fracia Vineyard - Luca (on the right) and Matteo.

Matteo suggested that Ramona and I should take a meal at the local restaurant La Corna on a little hill while we were staying in the village during our last visit to Barbacan. In *Valtellina*, “a little hill” means a vertical cliff clinging to a side of mountain. When the hostess sat us at the table, I needed a few minutes to chill from the suicidal driving.

The meal was extraordinary. We ordered a pitcher of the house wine. Poured straight from the vat in the cellar, the wine was cool, fragrant and pearly. It was one of the best wines that I had at a restaurant. When I complimented the wine, the server said that the owner of the restaurant makes the wine from the vineyard that surrounds the restaurant, as he pointed through the windows towards the vines. It was a Saturday evening and the restaurant was packed. When we finished our meal and made our way to the restaurant parking lot, all cars were double-parked and we could not get out. The owner of the restaurant had to choreograph the movements of double-parked cars with the various owners before we were able to exit the parking lot. It was a beautiful scene - no voice was raised. It was like watching a ballet of cars. What a civilized society.

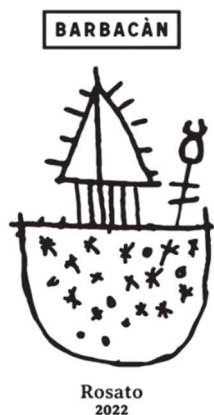
I can't think of no other appellation that is as dramatic and beautiful as the vineyards hanging on the cliffs of *Valtellina*. The cliffs look so inhospitable that it is a miracle the vines can thrive. *Valtellina* has a series of free-standing stone walls (you can see them behind Luca and Matteo on the photo above) that enclose each vineyard. The *Valtellina* vineyards are so inhospitable that one wonders why the ancients would spend their back-breaking labour to plant vines. That is until one downs a great bottle of *Valtellina*. The prize is worth the suffering.

Valtellina is located in Lombardy, which is about a two-hour mountainous drive northeast from Milan. *Valtellina* is a series of terraced granite vineyards that are chiselled out of a single south-facing mountain. There are five classified subzones in *Valtellina*: *Grumello*, *Inferno*, *Maroggia*, *Sassela*, and *Valgella*. Barbacan vineyards are in the subzone of *Valgella*. Broadly speaking, *Valgella* is known for perfume and elegance.

Barbacan is a family farm run by the two brothers Matteo and Luca Segà. Their semi-retired father Angelo still helps with the vineyard work every now and then. Matteo and Luca farm a tiny total surface of nine hectares, including some recent additions. The vineyards of *Valtellina* are like no other and its wines are like no other.

Rosato 2024

SKU: 386819 SPECULATIVE 750ml 12 bottles/case
\$42.07 Wholesale / \$55.00 Retail per bottle



A blush of rose hue – a hallmark of Barbacan rosato. Rosato like no other. Fragrant nose of *Chiavennesca*. From the *Chiavennesca* (the local dialect for *Nebbiolo*) vines grown at extreme 700 meter in elevation. In the Alpine granite vertical slope of *Valtellina* at this elevation, the *Chiavennesca* grapes ripe just so to make an ideal rosato. The farming is back-breaking work on these steep slopes. It takes guts to produce a rosato like this. The label adorns an artistic impression of Noah's Ark – perhaps a symbolic gesture of Matteo and Luca, who are determined to preserve the various strains of *Chiavennesca* and the other ancient varieties of *Valtellina*, as you will see in their other wines below.

(Labels are not current vintages and are shown for illustration purposes)

Rosso 2024

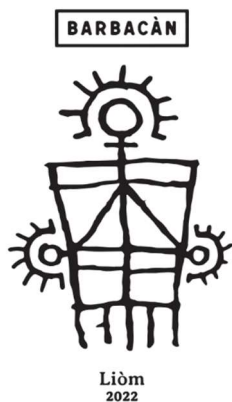
SKU: 386827 SPECULATIVE 750ml 12 bottles/case
\$38.18 Wholesale / \$49.00 Retail per bottle



A hint of alpine strawberries with spices. Perfume of roses. So pretty. Shimmering burgundy colour. Fresh. Maceration is short to bring out the fruit forwardness of this Rosso. Made predominately with *Chiavennesca* (the local dialect for *Nebbiolo*). Fermentation is with ambient yeasts, like all of *Barbacan* wines. A portion is aged in neutral vats, while the remaining portion is aged in neutral big barrels (*botti*). The wines are then blended after about nine months of *élevage* and bottled without filtration. Charming and compelling Rosso from one of the most unique and stunning appellations of Italy. Matteo and Luca's hands-on work in the vineyards and hands-off approach in the cellar really shine. One of the best valued *Chiavennesca/Nebbiolo* wines that I come across.

Liòm 2023

SKU: 338812 SPECULATIVE 750ml 12 bottles/case
\$51.13 Wholesale / \$66.00 Retail per bottle



Pretty and haunting red. Summer fruits with violets. A hint of spices adds complexity. Velvety texture but with some structure. A very attractive lingering finish. Beautiful aromatics from ancient varieties that are grown on a tiny parcel that sits 800 meter high in elevation. The vineyard is full of ancient varieties of *Valtellina - Rossolino, Rossola, and Rossolino Rosa*. Matteo of Barbacan tells me: "*Liòm is about a contadino (farmer) but also about the place. Liòm was a friend of Matteo and his brother Luca's grandfather. Over the years, Liòm became a family friend that now spans three generations. Liòm lived close to his vineyard. Liòm loved nature and tended his vines lovingly.*" Matteo and Luca now farm the vineyard in Liòm's honour. The grapes are raised in amphorae with its skins for six months prior to bottling.

Curnàl 2024

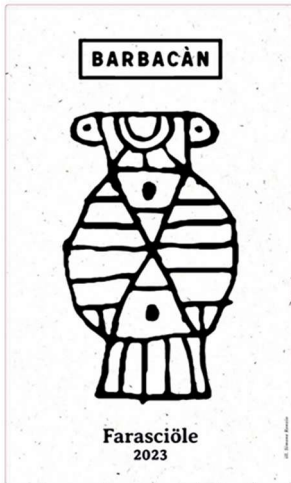
SKU: 262491 SPECULATIVE 750ml 12 bottles/case
\$51.13 Wholesale / \$67.00 Retail per bottle



Deep fruit and lasting finish from the old vines. The vines are so old that Matteo and Luca of Barbacan can only guess. The family, who used to own the vineyard, did not keep documentations – like the majority of farmers back then. Wine was not the only crop in those days. Hillsides were planted with vines to make wines for table; less hilly lands were for grazing cows to make cheeses – a typical, timeless scene in the alpine hills of *Valtellina*. *Curnàl* comes from the vineyard that sits at 750 m above sea level. Due to its high elevation, the vineyard is outside the appellation of *Valtellina*. The vineyard is comprised of about 50% *Chiavennasca* (aka *Nebbiolo*), 20% *Pignola*, 15% *Chiavennaschino*, 10% *Rossola*, 5% *Brugnola*. There is something special about wines grown in alpine hills – so crystalline and fresh. *Élevage* is in amphora.

Farasciöle 2023

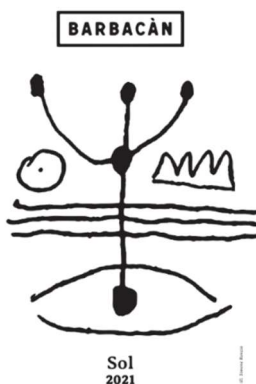
SKU: 630481 SPECULATIVE 750ml 12 bottles/case
\$51.13 Wholesale/ \$67.00 Retail per bottle



This is a new cuvee – a white. Straw colour from the brief skin contact. A hint of pear/quince with mountain freshness that ends with a saline mineral finish. It is primarily made with the varietal Chiavennesca Bianca – sometimes called Biancaretia. Some Chiavennaschino is added. Vinification is in amphorae with short maceration. After racking, a balance of Chiavennaschino is added (about 40% in the 2023 vintage). As more Chiavennesca Bianca vines mature, the addition of Chiavennaschino will diminish. The seed for this cuvee started about fifteen years ago in the Farasciöle vineyard. Metto and Luca discovered there were only 30 vines of Chiavennesca Bianca left. It is the only ancient white varietal indigenous to *Valtellina*. Little by little, the Chiavennesca Bianca was propagated by *selection massle* and finally reached sufficient vines to make this wine. History of *Valtellina* in a bottle.

Valtellina Superiore Valgella Söl 2022

SKU: 386824 SPECULATIVE 750ml 12 bottles/case
\$51.13 Wholesale/ \$67.00 Retail per bottle



Perfume of flowers, fruits and spices. Complex from the vines struggling on the chiselled vertical slope. Harmonious. From the tiny classified *cru* of *Sol* in the subzone of *Valgella* in *Valtellina*. It is 100% *Chiavennesca* (aka Nebbiolo). Elegance shining through from the *Chiavennesca* grown on the alpine hills. This wine has that beautiful, mouth-watering *Chiavennesca* structure and tannins. Nervous. Vibrating with energy. The finish is lingering petrichor – the earthy scent after a summer rainstorm. It is the scent that I associate with great *Valtellina* wines. It is best to decant if you are enjoying this wine now.

Valtellina Superiore Valgella Jazpémi 2023

SKU: 386910 SPECULATIVE 750ml 12 bottles/case
\$58.91 Wholesale / \$77.00 Retail per bottle



Jazpémi is the most stunning terraced vineyard that I have ever seen. The vineyard seemingly hangs off the cliff. *Jazpémi* is a patchwork of terraces. The beauty of this vineyard is etched in the wine. There is only a tiny road that separates *Sol* from *Jazpémi* but the wines taste so different. *Sol* is always structured when released and takes a few months to unwind, whereas *Jazpémi* is open and complex from the start. Luca tells me *Jazpémi* is open even when it is in *botti* and stays open throughout its life, while gaining complexity. From the century-old vines in the subzone of *Valgella* on the classified *cru* of *Jazpémi*. Magical perfume of *Chiavennesca*. Sappy from the old vines. Graceful. Complex taste of flowers and spices. It is 95% *Chiavennesca* with the remaining portion being *Rossola* and *Pignola*, which are also indigenous varieties in *Valtellina*.

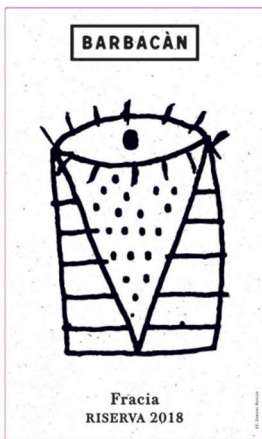
Valtellina Superiore Valgella Livèl Riserva 2018
SKU: 489220 SPECULATIVE 750ml 6 bottles/case
\$85.59 Wholesale/ \$112.00 Retail per bottle



This Riserva spends considerable time (about six years) in the winery cellar before being released. From the subzone of *Valgella* on the classified *cru* of *Livèl*. The parcel was planted by Matteo and Luca's great, great parents in the 1920's. It is one of the highest elevations of all the classified *crus* at 550 – 600 meters. Very thin soil, which causes vines to yield very low but astonishing grapes. This wine is aged for three years in a large traditional large *botti* (big chestnut barrels), followed by additional two years in bottles to settle down. Spices. Haunting fragrance. Beautiful light burgundy colour. Put away a few bottles in a cold cellar for special occasions. It is made with about 90% *Chiavennesca* with smatterings of *Chiavennaschino*, *Rossola*, *Pignol* – which are indigenous varieties. (**Note:**

This wine comes in 6 bottles per case.)

Valtellina Superiore Valgella Fracia Riserva 2019
SKU: 61969 SPECULATIVE 750ml 6 bottles/case
\$85.59 Wholesale/ \$112.00 Retail per bottle



There are two riservas from Barbacan: *Livèl* (see above) and *Fracia*. From the subzone of *Valgella* on the classified *cru* of *Fracia*. The parcel was also planted by Matteo and Luca's great, great parents in the 1920's. It is one of the highest elevations of all the classified *crus* – close to 600 meters. Spices. Cashmere texture with stunning nose. Shimmering light burgundy colour. Elegant. Complex. *Élevage* is long – three years in *botti*, followed by an additional year in bottles. Concentration without weight from the old vines and natural farming. Only made in certain vintages when Matteo and Luca feel the designation 'Riserva' is warranted. Wine of grace and distinction. One of the finest expressions of *Chiavennesca*. (**Note:** This wine comes in 6 bottles per case.)

Valtellina Sforzato 2022
SKU: 489217 SPECULATIVE 750ml 6 bottles/case
\$93.35 Wholesale/ \$122.00 Retail per bottle



Sforzato is made from partially dried *Chiavennesca* grapes. By the DOCG law, the grapes must be dried for least 110 days. Only made during certain vintages that allow perfect conditions. After the grapes are hand-picked, the bunches are laid in single layers in the attic, where there is constant flow of air. After 110 days of constant caring and drying, the grapes lose about 30% to 40% of juice. The loss is compensated in gains of amplified taste and complexity. The dried grapes are pressed and fermented with ambient yeasts. It is a dry wine. Beautifully balanced. Aging is in the traditional *botti* (big chestnut barrels) for about two years, followed another year in bottles to rest. Intense ruby colour. Beautiful bouquet. Smooth in the entry with some *Chiavennesca* structure showing at the finish. Elegant and complex. Unique. This *Sforzato* has a long life ahead. A wine for occasions. *Sforzato* pairs well with *Osso Buco*, meat or cheese pastas, and aged hard cheeses. (**Note:** This wine comes in 6 bottles per case.)