
BARBACAN
(Valtellina, Lombardy)

June 2024



With Luca Sega in the terraced vineyard of Jazpémi (photo by Christine Reyes).

It is a sunny day in May. After meeting Luca of Barbacan at 10 AM at the front of their winery, we are off to the vineyards in Luca's vintage 1985 Toyota Landcruiser. "My brother Matteo and his team are already at the vineyard", says Luca as we climb into the truck. To ride in the truck with Luca on the hills of *Valtellina* is a harrowing experience. There are no protective guard rails on the impossibly narrow, winding and cliff-hanging roads. Once the truck rolls, it is about 500-meter vertical drop to the valley floor. I began to wonder if having no life insurance was a wise decision.

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 that the *Chavennesca* (*Nebbiolo*) vines can thrive. *Valtellina* has a series of free-standing stone walls 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 experiences a great bottle of *Valtellina*.

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*. The slopes are so steep that the ancients had to hand-build narrow stone stairs just to access the vineyards. You can see a glimpse of what is like to grow vines in *Valtellina* in the photo above. A tractor cannot access these vertically chiselled vineyards and all work must be done by hand. Farming is heroic.

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. Their vineyards are in the subzone of *Valgella* in *Valtellina*. 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.

Rosso 2022

SKU: 386827 SPECULATIE 750ml 12 bottles/case
\$37.04 Wholesale per bottle

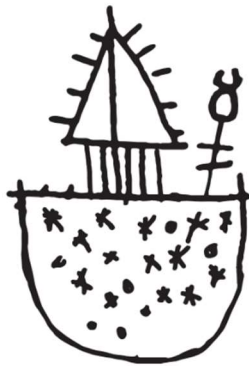
BARBACÀN



Shimmering burgundy colour. Fresh. A hint of alpine strawberries with spices. Perfume of roses. Maceration is short to bring out the fruit forwardness of this Rosso. Made with *Chiavennesca* (the local dialect for *Nebbiolo*). The 2022 vintage was sunny, which is a good thing in this part of northern Italy. This Rosso is fruitier and forward than the previous vintage. 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.

BARBACÀN



Rosato
2022

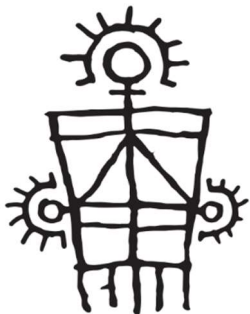
© Matteo And Luca

Rosato 2022

SKU: 386819 SPECULATIE 750ml 12 bottles/case
\$39.69 Wholesale per bottle

Rosato like no other. A blush of a faintest rose hue. Uplifting aromatics 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. Like the Rosso above, the 2022 vintage was sunny and this Rosato is fruitier than the previous vintage. 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 varietals of *Valtellina*.

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Liòm
2022

© Matteo And Luca

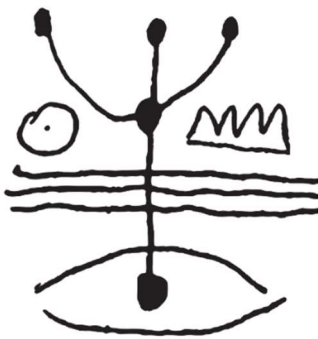
Liòm 2022

SKU: 338812 SPECULATIE 750ml 12 bottles/case
\$50.45 Wholesale per bottle

This is a new wine. Liòm is about a *contadino* (farmer) but also about the place. Liòm was a friend of Matteo and Luca's grandfather. Over the years, Liòm became a family friend that now spans three generations. Liòm lived close to his vineyard, which sits at 800 meters above sea level. Liòm loved nature and tended his vines lovingly. Matteo and Luca now farm the vineyard in Liòm's honour. The vineyard is full of ancient varietals of *Valtellina* - *Rossolino*, *Rossola* and *Rossolino Rosa*. The grapes are raised in amphorae with its skins for six months prior to bottling. This is not a skin-contact wine since all the varietals are reds. Liòm is like a Georgian wine with an Italian accent. Summer fruits with violets. A hint of spices adds complexity. Velvety texture but with some structure from the long skin maceration. A very attractive lingering finish.

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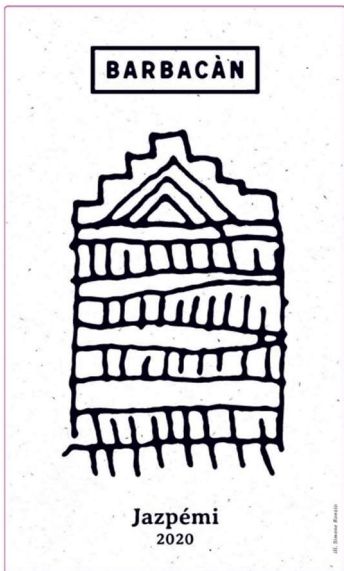
Sol
2021

© Matteo And Luca

Valtellina Superiore Valgella Söl 2021

SKU: 386824 SPECULATIE 750ml 12 bottles/case
\$48.05 Wholesale/ \$60.00 Retail per bottle

From the tiny classified *cru* of *Sol* in the subzone of *Valgella* in *Valtellina*. It is 100% *Chiavennesca*. Perfume of flowers, fruits and spices. Complex from the vines struggling on the chiselled granite vertical slope. Harmonious. Elegance shining through from the *Chiavennesca* grown on the Alpine mountains. This wine has that beautiful, mouth-watering *Chiavennesca/Nebbiolo* 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.



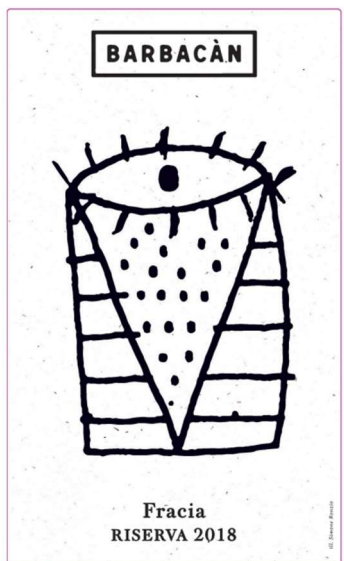
Valtellina Superiore Valgella Jazpémi 2020
SKU: 386910 SPECULATIE 750ml 12 bottles/case
\$55.23 Wholesale per bottle

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 summer fruits, flowers and spices. It is 95% *Chiavennesca* with the remaining portion being *Rossola* and *Pignola*, which are also indigenous varietals in *Valtellina*.



Valtellina Superiore Valgella Livèl 2018
SKU: 489220 SPECULATIE 750ml 6 bottles/case
\$80.22 Wholesale per bottle

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 varietals. **(Note: This wine comes in 6 bottles per case.)**



Valtellina Superiore Valgella Fracia Riserva 2018
SKU: 61969 SPECULATIE 750ml 6 bottles/case
\$79.83 Wholesale/ \$103.00Retail per bottle

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*. Both riserva wines of *Fracia* and *Livèl* are extraordinary. **(Note: This wine comes in 6 bottles per case.)**



A lone sticker declaring the entrance to the winery.

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