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Ex-Vietti owners announce new Serralunga project

A year after resigning from Vietti in Barolo, Elena Penna and Luca Currado announce a new venture. 'Cascina Penna-Currado is a return to our origins,' said Penna.



Michaela Morris
March 19, 2024



Luca Currado (second from left), Elena Penna (r) and their children, Giulia (l) and Michele, (second from right). Credit: Molchenphoto

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Early last year, Elena Penna and Luca Currado seized the opportunity to purchase the historic Cascina Lazzarito, which crowns the Lazzarito cru at the entrance to the village of **Serralunga d'Alba**. Built in 1554 and originally called Santa Giulia, the farmhouse was owned by the Marchesi Falletti before being passed onto the Opera Pia Barolo (a charitable institution).

Cascina Lazzarito boasts sweeping views of the **Barolo** region. According to Penna it is: 'A magical place where we can start our new family voyage.' They immediately set about restoring it according to UNESCO's stringent guidelines.

Concerning the vineyards, the family has pieced together approximately 20 hectares. The lease of 13 contiguous hectares in the hamlet of San Sebastiano was facilitated by a 20-year friendship with the estate's former owners. While within the Monforte d'Alba township, it sits just outside the Barolo zone.

Penna describes its positioning as strategic, particularly with respect to climate change. The vineyards look towards the mountains and are moderated by cool outflows. The property also boasts forest and a small natural lake, which will prove to be an advantage in arid vintages when emergency irrigation is permitted. 'This site has everything for the future,' she said.

The first wines under the Cascina Penna-Currado label hail largely from the 2023 vintage and will be released later this year. Alongside a Langhe Nebbiolo and Dolcetto d'Alba from the San Sebastiano property, the range includes a Timorasso from a 2.5-hectare leased plot in the Colli Tortonesi.

The 2023 Barbera d'Alba and Nebbiolo d'Alba will follow in 2025, while the 2023 Barolos will be launched in 2027. For the latter, Penna and Currado secured several long-term rental contracts of 20 to 25 years totalling five hectares.

'We control everything in the vineyard from A to Z,' Penna said. The estate's calling card will be the 'classic' Barolo which blends plots in the villages of Verduno, Barolo and Monforte d'Alba. It will be complemented by two Barolo MGA bottlings. Without disclosing their specific identities, Penna simply says that they are among the denomination's most highly regarded. 'We are very proud of what we were able to do in just a few months,' she stated.

After selling Vietti to American business mogul Kyle Krause in July 2016, the couple's non-compete agreement expired in 2019. However, they **continued managing the property until January 2023**. They waited for this split before assembling the elements of Cascina Penna-Currado.

Total production is currently a projected 70,000 bottles. 'We wanted something we could manage as a family,' said Penna.

While the couple's children, Michele and Giulia are already involved, they are still in university. Both plan on joining their parents full time after completing their studies and internships at other estates.

Penna underlines that this is a new project with potential to evolve. 'We are in our mid-fifties and still have plenty of ambition,' she said.