



Roberto Bava is winemaker and co-owner of Azienda Vitivinicola Bava, a Piemontese winery that was founded 100 years ago and now sells its wines across the globe.

This is a very difficult question. There's more than one answer. We have wines like our Ruche which we have been making for some years and now we are launching an Albarossa - a cross between the Nebbiolo and Barbera which was created in the 1930s and was really forgotten about until around 10 years ago. Presenting it will be quite an exercise... I have found that with new grape varieties, the first wave is driven by curiosity. This varies from one market to another. The Californians, for example combine knowledge with natural curiosity. They always want to try something new. The British are quite curious, but they often want to play safe. In Asia they don't care if the variety is known or unknown. They are looking for a wine they like and can pronounce. You can have a fantastic wine but if they can't name and recognise it, you are wasting your time. There is a market for something new if you

address the bored sommeliers who have tried everything and the sophisticated journalists who know everything. These are people who are no longer interested in Barbera. But curiosity only sells the first vintage. The second vintage will sell because people have tried it and liked it. The number of people ready to try a new variety like Ruche and Albarossa is quite small, so we only produce these from individual vineyards, in volumes of 4-5,000 bottles. That's a drop in the ocean when you consider the world - 120 bottles each for each of our 50 importers. I don't like to say 'no' to people, so we sell these wines under our separate Casa Brina label which we reserve for 'experimental' wines.

Of course, in some markets, Barbera is as unknown as Albarossa and Ruche, but there is a difference. If people like Barbera and want to buy more, we can supply it. When promoting grapes like Barbera it can help to work with others. We need Barbera to be a category and to get a section on a wine list like Cabernet Sauvignon and Barolo. People have to discover that there is more than one. In fact, it's maybe a problem that 99% of the world's Barberas come from one part of Italy. Maybe if they made it in other countries it would be good for the cause. Years ago I didn't think that. Now I realise that there are too few of us and we are too small to create a global brand. Producers in so many countries are helping to build Chardonnay and Merlot and Pinot Grigio. It's a big challenge for anyone trying to introduce something new. I'm also beginning to think that linking new grapes to ones that people already know may help. It's a little like strawberry-and-banana yoghurts. Some buy it for one fruit; some buy it for the other.