



## Dolcetto

**Synonym:** Dolcetto Nero, Nibiò or Nibieu, Ormeasco

**Commonly mistaken for:** Charbono, Douce Noire, Nebbiolo

**Origin:** The first reference to the cultivation of this variety dates back to the end of the sixteenth century in Cuneo, north-west Italy. It is believed to be native to Piemonte although Ligurians would argue otherwise. According to Molon (1906) this vine was one of the most cultivated in Italy before the arrival of phylloxera (1879 in Piemonte) but has since lost ground to Barbera and Nebbiolo. The name “dolcetto” refers to the sweetness of the berry and its low level of acidity, producing a soft mouthfeel, the wines are dry.

**Agronomic and environmental aspects:** Depending on clone, Dolcetto can be highly productive or yield very little. It is a challenge for grape growers, as buds are fragile and later in the season, the grapes hang loosely from the bunch, even falling on the ground before harvest. It ripens up to four weeks earlier than Nebbiolo and

is thus suited to cooler parts of vineyards; it does not like humid conditions nor excessive temperature swings at ripening time. It prefers VSP training and spur pruning, leaving 3-4 buds per spur.

**Diseases, pests and disorders:** Sensitive to fungal diseases such as downy and powdery mildew, good resistance to spring frosts and winter cold. A few clones can show “hen and chicken” and it may drop its bunches before harvest.

### Description:

Growing Tip:

Leaf:

fully open, cottony, of green colour with reddish edges.

Medium size of blade, pentagonal shape, 5-lobed. Has an open V-shaped petiolar sinus, lateral superior sinuses are deep, shaped like a semi-closed lyre, while inferior are not so deep and open. The profile is flat with revolute edges, hairless, but with a few tufted hairs on the lower surface.

Bunch:

Berry:

Medium, long, of pyramidal form, winged, with loose berries.

of medium dimensions, but rarely uniform, round; thin skin of blue colour, covered by high bloom.

Vegetation Growth Habit:

Vigour:

Average bunch weight:

Average Bunches per shoot:

semi-drooping

medium

medium-low (120-180 g.)

1 or 2

### Growth Stages:

Time of budburst:

Time of flowering:

Time of veraison:

Time of harvest:

medium-early

medium

early

medium-early

### Wine characteristics:

Dolcetto wines are deep in colour and offer a soft, round mouthfeel. It is a bright and fragrant variety, showing red and black fruit flavours as well as notes of almond and liquorice. It offers the unusual combination of low acidity and high tannins. The wines should be consumed young – within two to three years of the harvest.

**Australian Experience:**

Very little plantings of these clones exist in Australia, likely because much of the Australian viticultural area is too hot to grow quality Dolcetto. The data below is from our Merbein nursery block and as you can see dolcetto suffers from very low acidity and low baume in these conditions. These clones could be very interesting in cool climates but as yet we have no data.

**Available Clones:****Dolcetto MAT 1**

- The vine has low vigour, with short internodes.
- The bunch is characterized by a long-conical form and loose density of berries;
- Medium-large size of clusters.
- The berry is small with a round shape.
- Good resistance to powdery mildew.

**Dolcetto MAT 3**

- Vines of medium-high vigour.
- The bunch is medium-large;
- The berry is medium-small with a blue-violet colour
- berries have thin skin covered by high bloom levels.

**Dolcetto MAT 4**

- The vine has low vigour, with an irregular production.
- The bunch, long and pyramid-shaped, is medium-small size,
- Bunch has one wing and a moderate density
- The berry is medium in size, blue to black in colour,
- Berries have a good quantity of bloom.

**Dolcetto MAT 5**

- Vines of medium vigour,
- Low and irregular yield
- The bunch is small, with medium density of berries and short wings
- The berry is small, round or oval, blue to black in colour, with a good quantity of bloom.

**Dolcetto MAT 7**

- The vine has low vigour, with a low and irregular yield.
- The bunch is medium in size, of pyramidal or conical form, with a low density of berries;
- The berry is small, with a thin skin.
- It shows good resistance to powdery mildew.

### Maturity Data Clonal Comparison: Chalmers Merbein Vineyard

	22/2/17	28/2/17	3/3/17	14/3/17	21/3/17	28/3/17
<b>Dolcetto MAT 1</b>						
<b>Baume</b>	11.0	11.4	11.4		10.4	
<b>pH</b>	3.62	3.63	3.76		3.59	
<b>TA</b>	4.6	4.8	4.7		5.2	
<b>Dolcetto MAT 3</b>						
<b>Baume</b>	9.6	12.2	9.8	13.6	13.6	13.4
<b>pH</b>	3.56	3.73	3.58	3.96	3.95	3.90
<b>TA</b>	4.7	4.1	5.3	4.0	4.0	4.0
<b>Dolcetto MAT 4</b>						
<b>Baume</b>	11.8	11.4	12.0	13.2	11.2	11.4
<b>pH</b>	3.69	3.72	3.84	3.98	3.85	3.86
<b>TA</b>	3.9	4.1	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
<b>Dolcetto MAT 5</b>						
<b>Baume</b>	10.2	10.4	11.4	11.4	11.0	11.0
<b>pH</b>	3.78	3.74	3.82	3.81	3.84	3.93
<b>TA</b>	4.7	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
<b>Dolcetto MAT 7</b>						
<b>Baume</b>	9.6	11.2	11.0	12.0	12.2	12.2
<b>pH</b>	3.40	3.51	3.57	3.76	3.69	3.69
<b>TA</b>	5.2	4.6	5.1	4.1	4.0	4.0

### Principal Viticultural and Physiological Characteristics:

	<b>Vigour (1)</b>	<b>Fertility (2)</b>	<b>Bud Bust (3)</b>	<b>Ripening (4)</b>
MAT 1	-	1.6	+	++
MAT 3	++	1.5	+	-
MAT 4	--	0.8	+	--
MAT 5	+	0.9	-	-
MAT 7	--	0.8	+ -	+

(1): The vigour of these clones can be classified between medium and high, but inside this category can be noted some differences: + (more vigorous); - (less vigorous).

(2): The fertility is expressed in number of clusters per shoot.

(3): The bud burst in this variety is medium-early, approximately five days after Chardonnay, but inside this group of clones there are some differences: + (later); - (earlier).

(4): The ripening in this variety is medium-early, approximately two weeks before Cabernet Sauvignon, but inside this group of clones there are some differences: + (later); - (earlier).