



HOOKED ON WINE

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## David Fletcher Arrives At His Station



**David Fletcher, the young Australian working as assistant winemaker at Ceretto in Piedmont for the last two years, has bought the derelict Barbaresco railway station for his first winery.**

He and his wife Eleanor plan to turn it into a small-scale winery in which to vinify and mature their wines under the budding Fletcher label (tastings). The station is in a tranquil valley at the foot of the hallowed Martinenga vineyard of Marchesi di Gresy (tastings), close to the famous 'cru' vineyard Asili.

Fletcher, 35, says he and his Eleanor will be paying the property off for many years but, having decided to make his future in Piedmont, he was advised to get his foot in the door while he was still young. There is no vineyard and no plantable land attached, but Fletcher says good grapes are not difficult to buy, and working for the Ceretto family (tastings) helps. Indeed, one grower who sells him Barbaresco grapes is a neighbour, living within sight of the railway station.



*(Dave Fletcher at the Barbaresco station.)*

Fletcher has already produced 2009 and 2010 vintages of Barbaresco (as well as Australian nebbiolos from the Pyrenees region, ongoing) and is soon to release a 2010 Barolo and a 2012 Langhe Rosso (which is equal parts nebbiolo, cabernet sauvignon and merlot) to the portfolio. These, together

### About

Huon Hooke is a leading Australian wine expert, critic and show judge, best known for his weekly columns in Sydney Morning Herald Good Food, and is contributing editor, tasting panel member and columnist at Gourmet Traveller WINE Magazine.



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with a 2011 Barbaresco, will be on sale in Australia within six months and will also be distributed in Europe. They are excellent wines, and the Langhe Rosso will be especially good value.

Eleanor, a litigation lawyer and mother of their young child, will return to work to help pay for the rebuilding. It will be a major project as there is water damage from the leaky roof and there are trees growing through the entrance steps. But Fletcher says local builders are eager for the job as the building industry is in a slump. There's a long-term plan to pull up the railway tracks and turn the route into a bicycle path – much as has been done in the Clare Valley.

It's a bold, brave move by the Fletchers, but I'm sure David is going to make his mark in Piedmontese wine.

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