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Thieves Stole 3,000 Barolo Bottles From a Prominent Piedmont Winery

Investigators said four masked men spent about three hours inside Conterno Fantino before fleeing in company vans.

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More than 3,000 bottles of Barolo were stolen in recent days from the Conterno Fantino winery in Monforte d’Alba, in Italy’s Cuneo province, in a break-in that investigators believe was carried out by a professional crew.

Italian reports said the theft involved bottles worth hundreds of thousands of euros. The winery is in the Langhe, the Piedmont wine area known around the world for Barolo and other high-value wines. Conterno Fantino is considered one of the better-known producers in the area.

According to early accounts of the investigation, four thieves entered the property at night after crossing nearby vineyards on foot. Security cameras reportedly captured the group with their faces covered. Investigators believe the men spent about three hours inside the winery before leaving.

The suspects appeared to know the layout of the cellar and the labels they wanted to take, according to those initial findings. They moved through the winery using a forklift, then loaded the bottles into two company vans before escaping. Authorities have not publicly identified any suspects.

The method of the theft has raised concern in the region because of the level of planning involved. The group did not appear to be looking for easy-to-sell items at random. Instead, they seem to have gone directly to selected stock, a detail that has led to early speculation that the theft may have been carried out on order for a specific buyer or resale channel.

Law enforcement is now reviewing surveillance footage and physical traces left at the scene in an effort to identify the thieves and reconstruct their route in and out of the property. It was not immediately clear whether the stolen vans have been recovered or whether investigators have linked the case to other crimes.

The break-in at Conterno Fantino is not the first recent theft to hit a winery in Piedmont. In July, about 3,000 bottles were also stolen from Banfi’s winery in Strevi, where thieves took pallets of Alta Langa, the region’s traditional-method sparkling wine. That case was also described as the work of professionals.

The similarity between the two thefts has prompted discussion in Italy about whether a specialized group may be targeting prominent wineries in the broader Piedmont area. Authorities have not publicly confirmed such a link, but the repeated focus on large volumes of premium wine has drawn attention from producers across the region.

Wine thefts of this scale can create damage beyond the immediate financial loss. Premium bottles are often part of tightly managed inventories, and wineries track them by lot, vintage, and market destination. When stock disappears in large quantities, producers can face insurance claims, distribution problems, and concerns that stolen wine could re-enter the market through unofficial channels.

In this case, investigators are expected to focus on how the thieves were able to operate inside the cellar long enough to move thousands of bottles and take company vehicles without being stopped. The use of a forklift suggests the crew was prepared for heavy handling and likely understood the internal logistics of the site.

The Langhe has long been one of Italy’s most valuable wine-producing areas, and bottles from top Barolo estates can command high prices in restaurants, retail shops, and secondary markets. That makes them attractive targets for organized theft, especially when the wines are recognizable and easy to move across borders or through private resale networks.

For producers in the region, the latest theft is likely to renew questions about security at wine estates, many of which are spread across vineyard landscapes and have large storage areas. At Conterno Fantino, the focus for now remains on identifying the four men seen on camera and tracing where the stolen Barolo went after it left the cellar.