

Guide to Italian Wines

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**Ripe Nebbiolo Grapes in Serralunga d'Alba vineyard
These will be used for production of Barolo
(PHOTO ©TOM HYLAND)**

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RATINGS

******* OUTSTANDING**

****** EXCELLENT**

***** VERY GOOD**

**** GOOD**

2005 BAROLOS

From the start, the 2005 Barolos are faced with a problem – they follow the spectacular 2004 vintage. Any time that happens, the lesser vintage will suffer in the eyes of the press.

The truth about 2005 is that is a good to very good vintage with some excellent wines, but this is not a vintage that could be rated as great. There is good depth of fruit, but not the intensity of 2004 or the aromatics or fruit persistence. Acidity is good as is the overall balance.

I had a problem with some Barolos from La Morra, which seemed a bit dull and lacking some fruit. The wines from this commune are normally lighter than those from Serralunga or Monforte, so the strength of La Morra Barolos are based upon their aromatics and suppleness of tannins. These qualities are not that evident in 2005 for too many bottlings.

However, there are many fine offerings from Castiglione Falletto as well as Serralunga and Monforte. The best of these wines will offer optimal drinking pleasure in 15-20 years, so while these are not powerful wines, the finest are well made and offer very good complexity.

****** EXCELLENT**

FAMIGLIA ANSELMA

Lovely young garnet with aromas of Earl Grey tea, orange peel, cedar and a hint of sage. Medium-full with excellent concentration. Round, lengthy mid-palate, nice complexity and an elegant finish. Nice harmony of components. Best in 12-15 years.

ELVIO COGNO “Ravera” (Novello)

Lovely garnet with aromas of cedar, dried cherry, rose petals and date. Medium-full with very good to excellent concentration. Pinpoint acidity, nice use of oak and polished tannins. Round, long finish. Elegant, well made wine that will be at its best in 12-15 years.

GIANFRANCO BOVIO “Arborina” (La Morra)

Beautiful young garnet with aromas of balsamic, dried cherry and cedar. Medium-full with very good concentration. Generous mid-palate, very good fruit persistence and beautifully structured. Excellent complexity and beautiful acidity. Best in 12-15 years.

MASSOLINO - VIGNA RIONDA “Margheria” (Serralunga)

Beautiful young garnet with gorgeous aromas of cedar, red cherry, truffle and sandalwood. Medium-full with very good to excellent concentration. Generous mid-palate, lively acidity and round tannins. Excellent complexity with nice subtle characteristics. Finesse over power – best in 12-15 years.

MASSOLINO – VIGNA RIONDA “Parafada” (Serralunga)

Lovely young garnet with aromas of cherry, orange peel and currant. Medium-full, this has a generous mid-palate and a beautiful finish with excellent fruit persistence, elegant tannins and lively acidity. Nicely balanced wine that beautifully expresses its terroir. Best in 12-15 years.

GIACOMO FENNOCHIO “Bussia” (Monforte)

Beautiful young garnet with aromas of rose petals, red cherry and cedar. Medium-full with very good concentration. Round, elegant tannins, lively acidity and very good fruit persistence. Traditionally made, this will be at its best in 10-12 years.

CASCINA DEL MONASTERO “Bricco Luciani” (La Morra)

Lovely young garnet with lovely aromas of red cherry, cedar, currant and a hint of truffle. Medium-full with very good concentration. Round, elegant tannins and nice complexity. Best in 12-15 years.

ANDREA OBERTO “Brunate” (La Morra)

Bright young garnet with aromas of currant, cedar and a hint of nutmeg. Medium-full with very good concentration. Round tannins, nice fruit persistence and very good acidity. Best in 12-15 years.

RECENT BAROLO VINTAGES

2004 – OUTSTANDING

Beautiful aromatics, excellent fruit concentration and lively acidity. Complete and complex – the best will age for 20-25 years.

2003 – GOOD TO VERY GOOD

From a torridly hot year, the wines are slightly alcoholic and not all that well balanced. As always, there are some notable successes, but most examples are for the short term (7-10 years) and lack finesse

2002 – GOOD

Though huge hailstorms ruined much of the crop in La Morra, there are some nicely crafted wines. Lighter than most years- drink over the next 3-5 years.

2001 – OUTSTANDING

Richly flavored wines with great concentration and complexity. Beautifully structured wines with great intensity and precise acidity. 20-25 years.

MASSOLINO – VIGNA RIONDA • SERRALUNGA D’ALBA

Led by Franco Massolino, this is one of the most respected producers in Piemonte. The wines are traditional in style and offer great varietal purity.

2007 LANGHE CHARDONNAY

Brilliant light yellow with aromas of pineapple and dried pear. Medium-full with very good concentration. Very good acidity and a round, elegant finish with tasty fruit. Enjoy over the next 2-3 years. ***

2008 DOLCETTO D’ALBA

Light purple with aromas of black plum and black raspberry. Medium-bodied, this has a soft finish with modest tannins and good acidity. Good varietal character. Enjoy over the next 2-3 years. *** (\$24)

2008 BARBERA D’ALBA

Light purple with aromas of blackberry and clove. Medium-bodied, this has soft tannins, and ripe, plummy fruit. Elegantly styled with modest tannins and lively acidity. Enjoy over the next 2-3 years. *** (\$27)

2006 BARBERA D’ALBA “GISEP”

Light purple with aromas of blackberry, vanilla and mincemeat. Medium-full, this has a generous mid-palate, soft tannins, very good acidity and light spice in the finish. Very nice expression of Barbera. Best in 3-5 years. ****

2005 LANGHE NEBBIOLO

Bright garnet with aromas of red cherry, cedar and a hint of strawberry. Medium-full with very good concentration. Young tannins, but nicely integrated along with very good acidity. Nicely balanced. Best in 3-5 years. ***

2005 BAROLO

Lovely young garnet color with aromas of currant and cedar. Medium-full with good concentration. Elegant, supple tannins and good acidity. Round, soft finish. Not a big wine, but quite drinkable. Best over the next 5-7 years and will hold for a few more years after that. *** (\$50)

1999 BAROLO “VIGNA RIONDA” RISERVA “Diecianni”

Beautiful garnet with aromas of truffle, cedar and dried cherry. Medium-full with excellent concentration. Lengthy finish with very good fruit persistence, lively acidity and refined tannins. Best over the next 7-10 years. ****

2005 BAROLO “PARAFADA”

(Reviewed on page 11 ... ****)

2005 BAROLO “MARGHERIA”

(Reviewed on page 11 ... ****)

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