

(laying down)



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BARBARESCO 2004 UNA GRANDE ANNATA

Nicolas Belfrage MW presents a revealing tasting of an underappreciated wine, in a vintage that should win round many of the remaining skeptics. He was joined by Simon Larkin MW and Franco Ziliani

Barbaresco has always been seen as playing second fiddle to Barolo, and while that image may remain largely justified, this tasting did much to undermine its influence and to establish Barbaresco as a potentially world-class wine in its own right.

We should perhaps begin, however, by dispelling another idea about Barbaresco that some people, including the occasional Master of Wine (a breed that, to this day, tends to look down its nose at Italian wines, perhaps because MWs are as baffled as most by the wild proliferation of generic, geographic, and fantasy names that they can't pronounce), tend to nurture in the confused-about-Italian-wine corner of their mind: that it has something to do with Barbera. It doesn't. Or anyway, it shouldn't—which, come to think of, it isn't the same as saying it doesn't.

Barbaresco, as all well-informed readers of this august publication are doubtless aware, is named after a commune east and slightly north of the Piedmontese town of Alba—one of three in whose vineyards Nebbiolo grapes may be grown for the purpose of making the 100 percent varietal wine that is Barbaresco, the other two being Neive and Treiso. (Barolo, on the other hand, can come from any one, or mix, of eight communes.) Blending with any grape other than Nebbiolo—such as Barbera, or (heaven forbid!) Cabernet Sauvignon—is strictly forbidden, which is why certain famous producers who shall be nameless (for now) have taken some of their extremely illustrious and even more expensive cru wines out of the DOCG denomination and downgraded them to Langhe Nebbiolo—a DOC that permits blending with either of the above, or others, at up to

Original illustration by Charles Martin, *L'Art de Boire*, Établissements Nicolas, Paris, 1920

15 percent. We may say, parenthetically, that blending with small amounts of Barbera is not only traditional but can be qualitatively positive (something one can't claim for Cabernet, which completely de-natures the result). It remains, however, illegal. Moreover, good as the end result may be—and Gaja (whoops!) has shown with his Langhe Sorì Tildin and Sorì San Lorenzo just how good it can be—where blending is practiced, the inimitable character of Nebbiolo is inevitably shrouded.

To those (and I believe I may have been one of them) who suggest that it might be in Barbaresco's commercial interest to drop the name and opt instead for "Barolo"—much better known and more clearly recognized and capable of commanding a substantially higher price; those, that is, who consider that, at the highest level, it is virtually impossible to distinguish between Barolo and Barbaresco, it should be objected that there is one, if only one, major distinction between the two DOCGs: length of aging. Barolo must be aged for three years from the January following the vintage, of which two must be in wood. Of Barbaresco only two years is required, one in wood. But this difference is more theoretical than anything, since producers on both sides of Alba tend to do things their own way, and the best Barbaresco-makers, especially the traditionalists, will, like their brother Barolistas, age in large *botte* for considerably longer than the law requires.

2004 was a good vintage for Barbaresco to display its glories because it was a year of typicity and balance. Summer brought heat and precipitation in the right measure, unlike 2002, which was marked by low average temperatures and excessive rainfall, especially during picking, or 2003, which was too hot and dry. In 2004 everything went well both up to and during the vintage, September and October delivering some nice fluctuations between day- and nighttime temperatures. The result was fruit of good but not excessive physical and polyphenolic maturity.

So the premise was there for grapes of excellence; but that, as we have seen in the past few years, is only half the battle. What transpired from the tasting was that, while respect for the natural attractions of Nebbiolo—aromatic delicacy and complexity, good tannic and acidic structure countered by sweetness and ripeness of fruit—is growing, or returning, there remains a tendency on the part of some (followers of guides, believers in wine for the pedestal rather than for drinking) to want to impress with unnaturally deep colors (perhaps via new, supposedly "improved" clones, if not via illicit blending), extractive flavors, high alcohol

levels, and foreign aromas mainly in the form of oak. Franco Ziliani (never a man for half-hearted expression) called this tendency "absurd and pathetic."

In any case, the tasting showed that a substantial majority have got the message: that what most punters, and even a growing number of points-givers, want and are prepared to pay up for is wine of individual character that can be consumed with pleasure, as distinct from being held up for admiration. Although the three tasters expressed quite divergent views on a number of individual wines, what we did agree on was that the general standard was surprisingly high, and that it had been an excellent tasting; according to Franco, it was "fantastic—one of the most interesting and satisfying tastings of recent years."

Of particular note was the fact that there was a number of really good wines for early drinking but also a good number suitable for laying down for many years. A case in point was the Rabajà of Bruno Giacosa—often described as the best winemaker in Piemonte if not in all Italy—which was found by two tasters to need time to bring together its various parts. Marking wines that are not yet integrated but have the possibility of becoming great is always a problem in blind tasting, and this excellent wine came only 13th.

Conclusion

Those who don't know Barbaresco or who, like many, have never been quite convinced could not do better than to dip into the 2004s, starting with the wines that are giving pleasure now and moving on to those that need time. No doubt they will be overshadowed by the 2004 Barolos when they come on stream toward the middle/end of 2008. And we are very much looking forward to that tasting. But Barbaresco does have one important advantage over Barolo: it costs less (the three Gs—Gaja, Giacosa and di Gresy—notwithstanding). If it is indeed a world-class wine—and in the opinion of at least two of the panel, it is—Barbaresco right now is a bargain. But for how much longer?

Average and range of scores

| | <i>Average</i> | <i>Range</i> |
|---------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Nicolas Belfrage MW | 15 | 7–18 |
| Simon Larkin MW | 13 | 7–18.5 |
| Franco Ziliani | 14.5 | 9–19 |
| All wines | 13.5 | |

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(laying down)

Castello di Verduno Rabajà - 16.5

NB: Medium ruby with hints of garnet. Low-key but correct nose. Very good components—acids, fruit, tannin (firm but non-obtrusive)—yet to come together. Firm, sweet finish of length and personality. Great purity, and the possibility of growing into a great bottle. Drink from 2015. **18**

SL: The wine shows good substance in the glass. There is a marked floral, scented character on the nose. On the palate it remains elegant and taut. There is ample fruit with fine-grained tannins. This lacks some generosity—but aside from that, there is a sense of finesse. Modest length. If nitpicking, a touch of tannic dryness. **13**

FZ: Intense ruby color. A rich and complex bouquet, with ripe but not overripe layers of fruit, oriental spices, leather, tar, earth, tobacco, aromatic herbs, dried roses, and so on. Notes of great density and finesse. The taste is splendid, perfectly balanced, richly flavored but nuanced: soft, velvety tannins, broad and harmonious, with vibrant acidity, great freshness, and a long, very satisfying, finish. Marvelous now, but I think it will be better and better with some years in the bottle. Great aging potential: buy and lay down (if you can resist the temptation to drink it). Great, outstanding wine. **19**



Cigliuti Serraboella - 16.5

NB: Unusually deep. Oaky, Porty fumes, alcoholic. Rich Parkeresque perfumes, almost Rhône-like in their opulence. Full palate with, however, good acid/tannin structure. Long, alcoholic, but in the end not that typical, if unachievable with any other variety. This is the sort of wine you drink one or two glasses of before it gets too much, but very seductive. **16.5**

SL: Bright, vivid in the glass, with a bold accent to the ripe fruit expressed on the nose. First impressions suggest a more modern style, with vanillin nuances from new oak in the background. The palate underlines this with a broad swathe of creamy, coated, succulent red fruits. Modern, yes, but inherently balanced. There is a fine nature to the tannins, graceful and long. Perhaps the only thing this is missing here is a little complexity, though bottle age is sure to see that mount. A floral lift leads to a long finish. **18**

FZ: Dark ruby-purple color. Overextracted green nose, with herbs, unripe tannins, and vegetal and oaky notes. Very rich, with solid and slightly aggressive firm tannins. The finish is drying, with powdery tannins. This would be better with more elegance and fruit sweetness. **14.5**



Ressa Canova - 16.5

NB: Deepish ruby; slightly garnet rim. A certain pungency of aroma. Plenty of concentrated fruit, firm acid, but perhaps *un po' troppo* (a little too much). Lacks sweetness on the finish. Tannins okay. But has good Nebbiolo flavors in the mouth, not compromised by oak, and acid will keep it. Not great but a keeper, even though it's hard to say how it will pan out. **14.5**

SL: Bright, vivid. The aromas show a lovely sweet sense of ripeness, floral and scented. The elegance and poise here are impressive: cherry red fruits with a sour nature, enlivening acidity, and a pleasing floral lift. The tannins are both silky and fine, and there is nothing harsh on show. Superbly balanced. There is that ripeness that suggests soft-skinned summer fruits, beautifully offset by a sour vein. The purity here is most impressive, as is the length. **18.5**

FZ: Dark ruby color. Very sweet, fruity notes (cherries and strawberries). Good, earthy structure, powdery tannins with great persistence and a long finish. Old-style, well-made Barbaresco, with good aging potential. **16.5**



Ugo Lequio Gallina - 16

NB: A very traditional style, but highly successful as such. Evolved of color and style, nose showing some stewed fruit and tar, palate with good acids and savory flavors, nice integration and follow-through,

with a sweet finish and good length. Drinking now but will last well. A treat for followers of the old-fashioned. **17**

SL: Deeper in the glass than many. The nose here offers dark fruit, with pleasing ripeness, almost morello cherry in character. The palate is substantial, with glorious volume of fruit and very finely grained but very assertive tannins. This is ripe but cool, with a vibrant accent throughout. Discreet, aromatic, herbal/floral characters come through well, as does that sweet/sour contrast that Nebbiolo can create. Very impressive. This is a standout Barbaresco in a bolder style but with such fine layers of fruit and terrific length. **18.5**

FZ: Dark, concentrated ruby color. The nose is overripe, with plums, cherries, vanilla notes—no elegance. Simple, nice fruit; good tannic structure; just a little rustic, with dry, astringent tannins. Unbalanced and unharmonious. **12.5**

Cascina delle Rose Rio Sordo - 15.5

NB: Medium depth. Quite acceptable Nebbiolo type on the nose. Racy, clean palate, with nice penetration and length. Quite long. Drink from 2010. **16**

SL: Paler than most in hue. Lifted and floral (roseate) on the nose. The palate shows elegance and vigor, with finely grained tannins. This is at the lighter end of the spectrum, graceful but perhaps lacking a little volume. The fruit shows good complexity with a touch of undergrowth and tea-chest. Good length to the finish. Correct, but uninspiring; clipped on the finish. **13**

FZ: Brilliant ruby color. The bouquet is complex, elegant, harmonious, with ripe, fleshy fruit (cherries and raspberry), an elegant hint of sweet tobacco, oriental spices, rosemary, and aromatic herbs—very fluid and lively. Ample, very appealing, with solid, vibrant tannins, very earthy and rich of taste, long persistence and finish. Great terroir wine. Still young but with great aging potential. **17.5**

Ceretto Bricco Asili - 15.5

NB: Medium depth, garnet rim. Modern style, with oak competing on the nose and palate with fruit—of which, however, there is lots, concentrated and full. Probably very expensive; beautifully made but a little bit too smooth. **16.5**

SL: Bright, vivid garnet hue. The aromas reveal a fine sense of ripeness, with a violet, floral touch. Reasonably elegant if a little punchy on the palate; silky tannins, with a sweet, scented nature to its vibrant cherry-red fruits. A lively style, well framed and substantial, but with a very marked acidity. Good length. The overall impression is of a young wine that is not particularly well knit at this stage. **13.5**

FZ: Dark ruby color. A distinctive Barbaresco, based on mineral and graphite notes, very individual and appealing, salty and elegant. No great body, but very drinkable, with good

balance between acidity and tannins (just a little firm at present). Very appealing, fresh, and lively, with an almost Pinot Noir character—a bottle that I would happily drink now. **17**



Fontanabianca Sorì Burdin – 15.5

NB: Medium-deep, turning. Attractive, correct perfumes of rose and raspberry. Straightforward, no-nonsense, classic Nebbiolo in updated traditional style, with good sweet fruit, balanced acid, and correct tannin. Copybook. **16**

SL: A pleasing garnet hue in the glass with some solidity. Closed on the nose, but the palate reveals a tightly coiled nature, not heavy but with a lively acidity and gently assertive tannins. This is an elegant style, though perhaps a little lean on the finish. The fruit shows a modest complexity, with tea-chest notes and a little warmth on the back palate. Correct if not inspiring. **13.5**

FZ: Dark ruby-purple color. The nose is intense, with layers of fruit (including rhubarb), ripe but not overripe, aromatic herbs, minty, and mineral notes; very fresh and lively. Very good structure, full-bodied, with solid, earthy tannins, good mid-palate persistence, and a long, harmonious, savory finish. Good aging potential. **16.5**

Gaja Barbaresco – 15.5

NB: Medium depth, slightly quiet. Good perfumes; fruit and some floral notes. Good acid-fruit balance, elegant and medium-bodied. Plenty of typicity without being flash. **15**

SL: Solid, deep in hue. The aromas are quite bold, with deep, dark cherry fruit. The palate is packed with cool, ripe fruit. This is comparatively modern in style, fruit-forward, but shows good volume and poise. Perhaps one of the wines to broach earlier than most. The tea-chest-like complexity is really compelling, as is the sour touch to the fruit. The tannins remain fine and silky, allowing the fruit ample expression. A little clipped on the finish. **13.5**

FZ: Dark ruby/violet color. Wild-tobacco, smoke, and mineral (graphite) notes, leather, truffle, rose, aromatic herbs—complexity and freshness on the nose. Very supple, velvety tannins, and a vibrant, fleshy fruit, very rich and complex, with great persistence and a well-balanced, savory finish. Still very young,

but very appealing and with great aging potential. Full of character; a terroir wine. **17.5**

Giacosa Fratelli Basarin – 15.5

NB: Attractive, bright ruby. Hints of aromatics on the nose, not yet developed. Quite a structured palate, with most of the components in place but not coming together. Has the wherewithal to improve, but needs time. **14.5**

SL: Modest depth in the glass. Sweet, scented, dark cherry fruit on the nose. The palate shows a coolness, with a rasp of enlivening acidity, but also a pleasing, seemingly loose-knit texture. There is a warmth to the finish that is slightly off-putting, however, and the fruit shows only modest complexity. A correct example, if not completely convincing. **14**

FZ: Ruby/purple color, concentrated and deep. The nose is discreet, with earthy, mineral notes and a little fruit, with a hint of tar and truffle. The palate is very rich, harmonious, very old-style, but well made, with layers of fruit and tannins, great persistence, and an earthy, savory finish. Still very young, but I think that in time this will be a great wine. **17.5**



Giacosa Fratelli Gianmaté – 15.5

NB: Quite deep of color, a very attractive ruby/garnet. A mix of varietal perfume and subtle oak on the nose. Brilliant fruit and texture. This is Barbaresco plus, like great Burgundy is Burgundy plus. It has the aromas and fruit character, and it has oak, but it has been used judiciously and the result is a stunningly complex wine, not necessarily perfectly typical of Barbaresco but not far off. Beautifully balanced. Will last for a long time but could be drunk now. **18**

SL: This is at the darker end of the spectrum. The aromas offer cherry fruit, and an almost Porty sweetness. The palate is very textural, gentle and expressive; plenty of volume, but nothing harsh or bold, with finely-grained tannins. There is an effortlessness here as well as a complexity that is not easily found. Tea-chest, dark cherry, some sweetness, some bitterness, and something sour. It all seems to come together well. An elegant, expressive, pure, refined, classical style with a long, lingering finish. A pleasure to taste. **18.5**

FZ: Dark ruby/purple color. The nose has green, unripe notes, neither pleasant nor appealing. Good structure, but dominated by oak and astringent, bitter tannins. No balance, no pleasure to drink. Not a problem of youth with this wine, but rather the style of the wine, and I don't agree with it. **10.**



Rizzi Pajoré Suran – 15.5

NB: Lightish color. Some heady rose aromas. Good attack and penetration on the palate, and follows through well. Has side-to-side flavor and mineral/savory character; fills the mouth and lasts. Very correct and considerable finesse. **16**

SL: Good depth of color. The aromas hint at ripe cherry and plum fruit. On the palate there is already a sense of complexity, with undergrowth notes adding to the sour cherry nuances. Tea-chest, too. There is admirable complexity, though also a sense that the wine is not totally knit, even though all the components are present, and there is still a touch of aggression. Correct if uninspiring. **13.5**

FZ: Brilliant ruby, splendid color. The nose is floral (rose and violet), fruity, and mineral, very individual and intriguing. Great freshness and elegance. Very full-bodied, broad and harmonious, with present but not aggressive tannins, great persistence and a long, earthy finish, full of character. Still very young but great. Very good now, but has long aging potential. **17**

Piero Busso Borgese – 15

NB: Attractive ruby/garnet. Clean, somewhat scented nose, some oak but quite well handled. Full but elegant palate, loads of ripe Nebbiolo fruit, firm tannin, exotic spices. Very good length. Modern style—very soave, and with a sweet, Porty finish—but plenty of character as well. Drinking from 2012, but will also last well. **17**

SL: Bright, even vivid, with a sense of solidity. An enticing fragrance, notes of sweet, ripe fruit with complex touches of violet and tea-chest. At once there is an effortlessness about the style on the palate, glossy and textural, with flowing, silky fruit. The grippy tannins are assertive but unobtrusive. An elegant style, with a pleasing volume of fruit and admirable texture. Very appealing, with fine length. **18**

(laying down)

FZ: Medium intensity, ruby color. The nose is both unusual and unpleasant, with a green, unripe character that continues onto the palate. Aggressive, drying tannins, and a bitter finish; too much oak and no pleasure. This is not my kind of Barbaresco. **10.5**



Falletto di Bruno Giacosa Rabajà - 15

NB: Medium depth. Typical Nebbiolo, rose-perfumed nose. Plenty of sweet fruit on the palate; tannins, acids, and fruit not coming together yet, but good potential. Leave till 2010. **15**

SL: Revealing a good depth of color in the glass, with scented aromas of cherry and damson. The palate shows some gentle undergrowth characters allied to dark fruits. There is modest complexity here, a layered impression but not much expression. This style comes across as being very restrained—correct, without the complexity or harmony of a great example. Modest length. **13**

FZ: Dark ruby color. The nose is rich and complex, with an evident mineral character (graphite) that makes this wine very original. The bouquet is completed by wild cherries and aromatic herbs. Solid structure, powerful tannins, very rich, with a vibrant acidity that gives energy to the fruit. Very persistent finish and real character. Still young; to lay down. **17**

Montaribaldi Sorì Montaribaldi - 15

NB: Medium depth, garnet rim. Classic up-and-down Nebbiolo of good vintage style. Straightforward rose/floral aromas and lots of sweet concentrated fruit on palate, which is well knit. Not spectacular, but a good example. Drinking now for purists; others may care to wait till 2012. **16**

SL: The wine is deep and dusky. The aromas show dark fruit but also a beef stock/Worcester-sauce aroma—sweet but savory. The palate shows fine proportion, with gently assertive tannins and a dense texture. Dusky fruits meld with more savory aspects and again a characteristic tea-chest character. There is a good sense of volume here, though the fruit lacks a little purity and the structure is a little too grippy. Not as harmonious as one would have wished. **12.5**

FZ: Ruby-garnet color, very brilliant. Lively, fresh nose with rose, tar, earth, spice, leather, and a slightly sweet, well-expressed fruit. Full-bodied and harmonious, with great structure, solid tannins, great intensity, and a long, long finish. Very typical, well made, and an excellent example of Nebbiolo greatness. **17**

Rivella Serafino Montestefano - 15

NB: Lightish color, classic style, nice acid/fruit balance, and good length. First bottle may have been defective (slightly), but second has very good length and character. **15.5**

SL: Relatively pale in hue, quite solid to the core. The aromas are mute, though the fruit on the palate shows pleasing lift and a dusty, tea-chest complexity. Light, reasonably elegant, but a little lean and drying. Is this totally clean? The second bottle is a marked improvement: less drying, more lively, finishing with greater freshness. There is a lift here, with pleasing complexity and persistence. **12.5**

FZ: Brilliant ruby, lively color, with garnet note. Sweet, complex bouquet, with rose, tar, spice, raspberry, tobacco, and all the nuance, elegance, and finesse of Nebbiolo wines. Soft, velvety tannin, good structure, good balance between fruit, alcohol, and acidity (very lively), with great persistence and an earthy, gamey, savory finish. Very young, but still very good. Excellent potential; to lay down. **17.5**



Sottimano Cottá - 15

NB: Medium-deep, beginnings of garnet. Pungent, floral nose of type. Very good acid/fruit balance, with good follow-through on the palate. A firm tannic base, Nebbiolo flavors all in place, the wine not together yet but the potential for excellence. Great length. Drink from 2015. **16.5**

SL: Good depth of color. The aromas suggest fine, ripe, red fruits, a touch of tea-chest, but above all, a floral, nuanced fruitiness. There is a layered sense to the palate, some undergrowth notes, but also layer upon layer of sour cherry fruit. The tannins assert themselves gently and make for an elegant style with a fine finish. A little grainy and austere, nonetheless. **15**

FZ: Dark ruby/purple color. The nose is dominated by oaky, coffee, toasted flavors

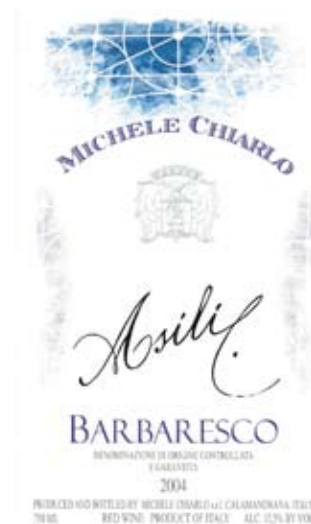
with ripe fruit and plum notes and a hint of vanilla. The wine lacks complexity and elegance and is one-dimensional, with astringent oak tannins and a bitter, dull finish. **13**

Michele Taliano Ad Altiora - 15

NB: Medium ruby/garnet. The nose is a little closed. The acid is a bit low, the mid-palate not quite happening; some finesse there, but not realized yet. **15.5**

SL: Deep, even to the rim. The nose shows a creamy, confected cherry note. Simple, straightforward, and commercial on the palate, this is decidedly modern and none the better for it. A succulent touch, but this errs on the one-dimensional side; a touch of complexity here but nothing more. **12**

FZ: Ruby-velvet color of great intensity. Very intriguing, wild nose with rose, leather, plum, spices, cocoa, and earth notes, very distinct and perfectly harmonious. Supple, fleshy fruit, with solid tannins, broad and harmonious, very savory, with great character and personality. A very good Barbaresco, still young and with great aging potential. **17.5**



Michele Chiaro Asili - 14.5

NB: Medium depth with a definite turn on rim. Heady perfume, ladies'-scent nose. Bags of sweet fruit and spices on the palate, with firm but integrated tannins and good but non-excessive acidity. The oak is a bit over the top. Good for modernists. Drink from 2014. **15**

SL: A little evolved in appearance; orange, brick on the rim. Fewer primary fruit characters on the nose, with a leafy, undergrowth touch. Almost akin to tea-chest aromas. The palate is harmonious, with complex characters of cherry. Curranty notes, sweet, almost Porty on the back palate. There is a pleasing lift to the fruit and a glossy sense of depth. Fresh, well knit, with fine, gently assertive tannins and a long, lingering finish. An ethyl acetate touch on the first bottle is not apparent on the second. **12.5**

FZ: Dark ruby color, and the nose very ripe; almost overripe fruit, with sweet tobacco, vanilla, rhubarb and black China notes. The palate is austere, with slightly astringent tannins. I think that the wine is very young now and needs time to soften and harmonize. Good aging potential; to lay down. **15.5**

Gianluigi Lano - 14.5

NB: Medium depth; okay. Quite aromatic, slightly heady perfume. Structured, medium-full-bodied wine of good character, but a bit backward now; has the necessary stuff to mature well. **15**

SL: Darker than most, with some solidity. There is a pleasing scented accent to the dark cherry fruit on the nose. Ripe and intense, with rounded tannins on the palate. There is a pleasing sense of volume here, with layer upon layer of sour cherry fruit. This strikes me as a modern interpretation, with modest complexity. There is modest length to the finish, too. **13**

FZ: Dark ruby/purple. Wild, rustic nose with earth, licorice, and a dominating oaky note. Lacks balance and elegance. Aggressive tannins, great structure, and a long, earthy finish, but the wine needs some time to soften and become more appealing. Lay down and hope! **15**



Marco e Vittorio Adriano Basarin - 14

NB: Predominately ruby hue, medium-deep. Oak and spice on the nose, but are these typical of Nebbiolo? Modern-style wine, extremely well made. Nicely integrated oak and a beautifully balanced palate; but the final impression is still of oak, not wine. One could mark this very highly for sheer quality, but as Barbaresco it is less impressive. **15.5**

SL: Good depth of color, but quite closed on the nose. The palate is substantial, a little foursquare, without the lift and silkiness that distinguishes the best of these wines. Plenty of volume, and certainly an assertive, tannic frame—quite grippy, almost grainy, in fact. The fruit is dusky, with a savory nuance. A sound, acceptable example that has yet to come together, though this is a wine that lacks class or grace. Austere and perhaps lacking ripe fruit. **10**

FZ: Medium-dark ruby color. Wild cherries and raspberries on the nose, with notes of aromatic herbs, licorice, game, and truffle. The taste is old-style but very well made,

with great structure, solid tannins, an earthy character, and great richness of flavor. Lively, fresh acidity, and a long, mineral finish. Very young still, but good aging potential. **16.5**



Carlo Boffa Vitalotti - 14

NB: Medium-deep color. Plummy fruit and Christmas spice emerging. Somewhat backward on the palate, full and characterful but as yet unintegrated. Has the right constituents—firm tannins and correct acidity, plenty of fruit—so could be excellent, but wants lots of time. Drink from 2015. **16.5**

SL: Bright, vivid appearance, but the aromas are comparatively mute. The dense palate has grippy, defining tannins and dark fruit characters, even a little beef stock. Certainly a very masculine style, but there is also a touch of tannic dryness here, almost a little dusty. In spite of the bold core of fruit, this is a bit lacking in terms of purity and expression. The finish is slightly aggressive, and the fruit soon dissipates. **11**

FZ: Medium-dark ruby. Overripe, sweet fruity notes on the nose, neither very deep nor complex. The palate is simple, with green and astringent tannins, not well balanced by the fruit. The finish is slightly bitter and without balance. Too young? **14.5**

Rizzi Boito - 14

NB: Medium depth to the color. Floral bouquet. Very nicely balanced palate, with penetrating redcurrant fruit and floral aromas. Lovely acid/fruit balance and consistency through the mouth, growing to an excellent climax. Great length. Could drink now but will last well. **18.5**

SL: Solid hue, the aroma quite muted. On the palate it is sweaty, stringy, bitter, and confected. Lacks precision, typicality, and focus. Someone has lost their way. There is nothing distinguishing here. **7**

FZ: Medium intensity ruby. Elegant, well expressed, good complexity and richness; ripe fruit and original talcum notes on the nose. Good structure, solid tannins, and an earthy finish, not broad but very long. **16.5**

Castello di Nieve Vigneto Santo Stefano - 14

NB: Light. Insubstantial nose and thin palate, if sound enough. **11.5**

SL: Deep hue, solid rim. Ripe fruit on the nose, with almost foresty nuances. On the palate, tea-like nuances, with fine harmony, and a certain grace. This is not high on volume but is high on elegance. Lingering and persistent. Modest stature and tightly wound. **13.5**

FZ: Ruby color of medium intensity. The bouquet is distinctive and fascinating: cocoa powder, dried roses, aromatic herbs, licorice, tobacco, and talc. Great freshness, lively and vibrant, with fleshy fruit, solid tannins, and great structure. Very satisfying, with a long finish. A great expression of Nebbiolo, and a true terroir wine. Good aging potential: buy and lay down. **17**

Pelissero Vanotu - 14

NB: Another wine deepish of color without much Nebbiolo character on the nose. Slightly metallic palate, tannic and somewhat skewed to berry aromas. Has Nebbiolo structure but not the perfume. Okay as wine; not great as Barbaresco. **12.5**

SL: Substantial in the glass. The aromas suggest undergrowth, dusky cherry fruit. The palate shows substance, with assertive, spicy tannins and dusty tea-chest notes. A powerful wine, fruit currently in check, with a savory nuance to the fore. A more assertive style of Barbaresco, more tannic and bold than most—certainly at the masculine end of the spectrum. Perhaps a bit more akin to Barolo than Barbaresco. **14**

FZ: Dark color, very concentrated. Overripe fruit notes, with earth, leather, and tobacco on the nose. Very broad and harmonious, the tannins still slightly aggressive on the long finish. Still very young, so it may become more interesting over the next few years. To lay down. **15**



Produttori del Barbaresco - 14

NB: Bright, relatively light. Good Nebbiolo type on the nose, floral and inviting. Very typical Barbaresco style—deceptively light, with good penetration, firm acid, correct tannin, good length, and a sweet finish. For drinking early. **15.5**

SL: Bright and vivid. The nose reveals creamy, coated, dark-cherry fruit. This seems confected, with ample damson and cherry but few distinguishing features. There is a touch of astringency here; quite bitter

(laying down)

and lean on the finish, which is of only modest length. **9**

FZ: Ruby garnet, brilliant color. The nose is very appealing and open, with fresh fruit (raspberries and black cherries), tobacco, truffle, aromatic herbs, earth, and cocoa powder. The wine is well balanced, rich in flavor, with solid, earthy tannins, mineral and salty notes, and a fresh, vibrant acidity. Still very young, but with considerable aging potential. **17.5**



Albino Rocca Vigneto Brichi Ronchi - 14

NB: Unusually deep in color. Atypical nose; fine enough but not Nebbiolo. Similar on the palate, deep and rich, oak not obvious but there—and whatever else. I suppose they will say this is the “new clone.” Marked down not for lack of quality in absolute terms but for lack of type. **14**

SL: One of the deeper wines tasted. The nose reveals forest fruit with vanillin nuances. The palate is bold and dense, with plenty of fruit, but is more akin to the Barolo stereotype, being more masculine and grippy in style. A more substantial style of Barbaresco, with plenty of fruit and structure; more extracted, but it does work. With complex undergrowth and tea-chest nuances, there is plenty of interest here. The only issue is a little warmth on the back palate; it does not share the cool ripeness of the best of this tasting but is still very fine. **18**

FZ: Dark, super-concentrated, and not Nebbiolo in color. The nose lacks elegance, with predominant oaky and toasty notes. Very ample and ripe on the palate, but the oaky tannins still predominate, with an astringent, bitter, dull finish. The wrong modern interpretation of Barbaresco. **10**

Sottimano Currá - 14

NB: Deepish color. Another wine that for depth of fruit and style doesn't seem typical, or perhaps it is the “new clone.” Whatever it is, it misses the point of Barbaresco, which is the aroma of Nebbiolo. Good wine of international style. **14**

SL: Very solid, very youthful in appearance. The nose offers plenty of ripe-fruit nuances. The palate is grainy, tannic, quite powerful. There is a solid core of fruit but a grainy nature that is off-putting and a tough tannic note—austere, even overextracted. A struggle here; hard to get to grips with, but

good length on the finish. **12.5**

FZ: Very dark, concentrated color. Foxy, spicy notes with very ripe fruit, leather, licorice, and light mint notes. Solid, rich, intense, broad, and harmonious, with powerful tannins that need time to soften. Very young, with slightly excessive oak, but very interesting. Lay down. **16**

Varaldo Bricco Libero - 14

NB: Medium depth. A little quiet on the nose but correct, with floral hints. Nice, sweet fruit and good follow-through; typical acid/tannin character; needs time but should come through. **15**

SL: Deeper hue than most. The nose is subdued. The palate is showy, with creamy, damson-like fruits, reminiscent of a simple modern Tempranillo. Why? Where is the character here? Simple, relatively anonymous, confected, dark cherry fruit. Some undergrowth-like nuances but this misses the mark by a distance. Modest length. A shame. **11.5**

FZ: Dark ruby color. The nose is not perfectly clean, with some wild game and meat notes. The taste is much better, very broad and harmonious, with great structure, good balance between lively acidity, solid tannins, fruit, and alcohol. Still young, with good aging potential. **15.5**



Piazza Armando Sori Fratin - 13.5

NB: Attractive medium-depth color, turning on rim. Clean, slightly scented but currently quiet nose: herbs and flowers. Old-style, tannic (a bit too much); good fruit, with a slight dip in mid-palate. Drying finish. **15**

SL: Some solidity to its appearance, slightly mute on the nose. The palate is fuller than most, with a greater sense of extraction, and fairly rough tannins. Certainly young, but even so, there is no overriding sense of harmony here. A little severe, angular almost—not sure how this will come together in time. The fruit is straightforward, if a little dusty, the finish a little clipped. **10.5**

FZ: Dark ruby color. The nose is discrete, with no great expression, wild earthy notes hinting at mint, spices, leather, and dried prunes. The palate is dominated by firm, solid tannins that need time to soften. Medium body, good persistence, long finish. **15.5**

Prinsi Gallina - 13.5

NB: Bright, attractive color. A correct nose that grabs and holds: savory and floral. Acid a bit low on the palate, with an unusually creamy texture. A very good bottle now, but not sure how it will age. **15.5**

SL: Quite deep in hue, with aromas of dark cherry fruit, quite scented. On the palate the style is modern, stringy, lacking poise and precision. The tannins seem coarse and the fruit possesses a creamy coating that creates an almost confected feel. Almost one-dimensional in style; plenty of volume but no real complexity. Modest length. **13**

FZ: Dark, concentrated ruby color. The nose is not perfectly focused, with overripe toasty and oaky notes, a hint of herbs, and vegetal “green” flavor. The mouth is tired, without tension or energy; one-dimensional, with a bitter, dull finish. **12**



Carlo Giacosa Montefico - 13.5

NB: Medium-deep, garnet rim. Okay nose but a bit dilute in the mouth; falls mid-palate. Okay finish; acceptable but nothing more. **13**

SL: Deep garnet with good depth. The aromas are not forthcoming, though the palate reveals a vibrant, almost feminine character, with ripe red fruits, and almost powdery soft tannins. Nothing harsh or obtrusive; graceful and elegant, if lacking a little stature. There is an appealing note and some substance, though it is a little difficult to see where this may be going from here. Correct, if a little dull. Good finish. **11**

FZ: Dark, inky, concentrated color. The nose is rich, complex, very fresh, and full of energy, with herbal aromatic notes, rhubarb, truffles, and dried mushrooms. A solid structure, with firm tannins well harmonized with a fleshy, vibrant fruit. Good balance and persistence, with salty, mineral notes. **16**

Cascina Luisin Rabajà - 13.5

NB: Bright, slightly evolved color. Lovely rosy waftings issuing from the glass. Less generous than expected on the palate; a little thin, but, very correct, very Nebbiolo, firm acid and nice tannic grip. Just worried a bit about concentration. **14.5**

SL: Quite deep. The aromas suggest ripe, scented, cherry fruit. The palate is full, with

plenty of bold, cherry-like fruit. There is ample volume, with an expansive, dark, forest fruit. There is also a fragrant lift, before the tannins assert themselves and close down the palate. The style is very appealing here, with a long, flowing finish and the merest sense of warmth. **14.5**

FZ: Deep ruby/purple color. The nose is very ripe, with alcohol that tends to dominate and a little (ghostly) elegance of fruit. Very simple, dilute, one-dimensional in the mouth, with a green and slightly astringent finish. From Barbaresco, one desires more. **11**



Angelo Negro Basarin - 13.5

NB: Deepish color. Grape aromas a bit covered by oak. Lots of sweet, well-typed fruit on the palate, though. Oak follows them through but doesn't cover. Concentrated and serious, firm tannins, good finish. Needs time; start drinking around 2010. **15.5**

SL: A deep hue. The aromas reveal fine cherry fruit. The palate is compact, with tea-chest notes and an admirably deep cherry fruit. There is a fine sense of volume here. Quite bold, full, with layers of fruit. Once again, a more masculine style, with assertive tannins and serious backbone. There is a fine persistence, if also a little warmth. **13.5**

FZ: A color that you don't expect to find in Nebbiolo! Dark purple, inky, super-concentrated (the effect of "new clones" of Nebbiolo, of course!). The nose is wild, absurdly oaky and toasted, and devoid of elegance. The palate is rich, with ripe fruit and solid tannins but no complexity or development, only concentrated fruit, high alcohol, and oak. Poor for Barbaresco. **12**

Dante Rivetti Bricco - 13.5

NB: Correct Nebbiolo aromas and sweet, evolved fruit—perhaps a bit too evolved for its age. But drinking well now and quite correct. **14**

SL: Bright but no great intensity of color. Creamy, damson fruit, but loose and lackluster, as if the soul has departed. Almost cream-soda notes. There is a confection here that is so disappointing, especially in the context of this tasting. Anonymous, one-dimensional, straightforward. A shame. **9**

FZ: Brilliant ruby color, full of energy. The nose is complex and very elegant, with great Nebbiolo typicity: rose, tar, spice, game, leather, cherry, plum, and earthy violets. Very rich but well balanced, with very good body,

powerful tannins, and a very persistent finish. Still young, with good aging potential. Drinkable now; even better with age. **18**



Bruno Rocca Rabajà - 13.5

NB: Some fullness of ruby/garnet hue. Nose is somewhat expressionless. A load of fruit on the palate, combined with plenty of oak, which is probably responsible for dampening the nose and is not integrated in mouth. An excellent wine, though somewhat for lovers of the modern style. **14.5**

SL: Deep, glossy hue. The aromas suggest dark forest fruits allied to notes of vanillin. On the palate there is a broad swathe of fruit, with a touch of tea-chest complexity. Quite a bold style, the appeal depending on the silky texture. The tannins are quite grippy, but there is a lovely core of fruit allied to a cold-tea character. Very assertive in style, with plenty of drive and expression. **16.5**

FZ: This appears to be from a winery that that has forgotten that the style war in Barbaresco is over. A warrior fighting for the the jungle (Allier or Tronçais, I don't know). Absurdly dark, inky-purple color, with oak-dominated notes of coffee and toast that mask the fruit and rob the wine of elegance. The palate is equally disappointing, with dry, bitter tannins and off-putting opulence. Some may like it, but I do not. **10**

Valardo Bricco Sorì Loreto - 13.5

NB: Middle-of-the-road aroma. A good wine of Nebbiolo style but nothing special. **15**

SL: Dark and solid. The aromas here suggest ripe, dusky, dark fruits. There is a floral lift to the wine. This is quite bold, with an assertive tannic frame. There is a deep, tarry nuance here, and a grainy touch to the tannins. The fruit seems locked in, with the promise of more to come. Lacks the length of many, as well as the precision. **13.5**

FZ: Dark ruby/purple color. Sweet vanilla, oaky and toasty notes on the nose. Dull and

bitter in the mouth, with oak overwhelming all other aspects of the wine. **11.5**

Ca' del Baio Asili - 13

NB: Relatively deep, attractive, youthful ruby. Plenty of structure on the palate, but no great charm: a teeth-grinder. May improve with time, but I wouldn't count on it. **12**

SL: Great depth of color, and very scented, with bold, ripe cherry aromas. The palate is finely proportioned, with sour cherry fruit, notes of undergrowth and tea-chest. The balance here impresses, as do the sleek tannins. There is marked acidity, but it is nonetheless well knit to the wine. This has fine length and persistence, with a pure, lingering fruit. **16.5**

FZ: The dark side of Barbaresco, or lost in the middle of a forest. Ruby/purple, inky, concentrated color (the "new clones" of Nebbiolo, of course!). The nose is inky, oaky, toasty—very far removed from Nebbiolo and Barbaresco. The palate lacks energy and expression, with bitter tannins and an astringent finish. **10**

Carlo Giacosa Narin - 13

NB: Nondescript, to the eye and on the nose. Correct but short. Fine if it's cheap. **12.5**

SL: Deep hue. The aromas are fairly mute, with some charr oak. The palate, however, reveals a pleasing volume and substance; far bolder than most—almost more textbook Barolo in style. The fruit is dark, with a slight bitterness, the tannins quite rugged. Masculine, assertive, and not yet together, with the suggestion of promise to come, but the oak influence dominates, charr and toasted. The proportion and length are impressive. Sound but nothing more. **15**

FZ: Dark ruby. Green, unripe notes on the nose. Astringent, drying tannins on the palate. One-dimensional and unpleasant. **11**



Cantina del Glicine Marcorino - 13

NB: Medium-deep, ruby garnet. Hints of floral aromas, not strong. Well-knit palate, warm and inviting, with good fruit/acid balance and nice, ripe tannins. Nothing outstanding, but a really good drink of quite reasonable type. **15**

SL: The color highlights the youth of the wine, barely brick to the rim. The nose has a confectioned cherry note. Very damsony on the

(laying down)

Simon Larkin MW

I was very impressed by the overall quality on show in this tasting—perhaps more so than by that of any other vintage-specific *World of Fine Wine* tasting in which I have been involved. Having just returned from Piemonte as I write this, and having had the chance to retaste many of the wines first tasted blind in London, with only two or three exceptions I felt comfortable with the original assessment published here.

2004 is certainly a striking vintage, partly on account of having a fine tannic frame and generous fruit. The tannins seem rounder than in 2001, the wines being perhaps slightly less intense, but that is not to say that they lack substance. The key to their success is that they exude refinement.

Aside from highlighting the value of the 2004 vintage, which will undoubtedly age well yet permit enjoyment throughout its lifespan, the tasting clearly underlined the consistently high quality of the winemaking among today's Barbaresco producers.

palate; loose knit, too. This is simple, commercial, and stands out like a sore thumb. One-dimensional, lackluster, and grainy on the finish. **8**

FZ: Medium ruby color. Very elegant and typical Nebbiolo nose—rose, earth, cocoa, leather—good complexity and freshness. Rich, medium-bodied, with good structure and balance. The tannins are present but well harmonized with the fruit, and the finish is long. **15.5**

Marchesi di Gresy Martinenega - 13

NB: Dull color. You have to struggle a bit to get the nose, which, when it comes, is fairly typical. One expects it to be a little dilute on the palate, and it is, fading quickly and leaving little. **12**

SL: Pale hue, already brick to the rim. There is a sweet aspect to both the nose and the palate, as well as a floral lift. Vibrant cherry fruit, with gently grippy tannins. This is a light, elegant, traditional style that shows

modest complexity. Certainly correct, with a pleasing, cool sense of ripeness. Quite glossy and textural, with a fine, flowing finish. Good but not inspiring (if that's not to damn with faint praise). **13.5**

FZ: Deep ruby color. Wild and earthy notes, as well as ripe cherry and plum on the nose. The fruit is well expressed, with a hint of licorice and spice. Medium body, no great structure or persistence; light, simple, no great complexity. **13.5**



Oddero Gallina - 12.5

NB: Traditional ruby/garnet. Scented nose of type, but the oak comes through slightly clumsily on the palate. Some good wine here, but it suffers from added aromatics. Concentrated, complex fruit; hard to decide whether one likes it or not. **14**

SL: Paler in hue than many. Gentle, red-fruit aromas. On the palate, the fruit is bold, not overly rich, with a pleasing complexity. Tea chest and undergrowth once more. The fruit is quite forward, though there is marked red-fruit acidity that cuts across the palate. The finish is short and clipped. **12**

FZ: Concentrated, dark ruby/purple color. The nose is very particular, with vegetal, peppery, spicy notes that dominate the fruit, with a hint of new oak. The palate is dry and dull, with astringent tannins. No balance, elegance, or pleasure. **11.5**

Massimo Rivetti Froi - 12.5

NB: Bright, medium depth. Slightly uneventful on the nose, clean but going nowhere. The bland palate confirms the initial impression. Okay, but lacks any real excitement. **12.5**

SL: The wine is vivid, with a deep core. The aromas are comparatively mute, though the palate shows a leafy character. This is not as well knit as many other examples. Seemingly simple and straightforward, with modest complexity and comparatively little grace. Short on the finish. **11**

FZ: Concentrated, dark ruby/purple color. The nose is very ripe, cherry and strawberry, with hints of spice and vanilla. The palate is concentrated and rich, but just a little bit simple, lacking complexity and nuance. Powerful structure, long and persistent, but one could expect even more from a good Barbaresco. **14.5**



Renato Vacca Cantina del Pino - 12.5

NB: Medium deep. Perfumed, with some oak. Palate a bit gauche, drying tannins and firm acid combining to make it seem like hard work. May improve, but a slight off note in the aroma is off-putting. Probably just oak. A certain void on the mid-palate. **13**

SL: Good density of color, with ripe, scented, cherry fruit on the nose. The palate shows pleasing breadth, with fine-grained tannins and a silky texture. The fruit on the palate is cool, with a fine ripeness and modest complexity. The wine seems compact, with a tightly coiled structure and the sense of something to come. The finish is remarkably fine, with good fruit length. **14.5**

FZ: Dark ruby, very concentrated and deep. Very ripe fruit, the oak very present, with toasty notes. The palate is dull, with neither balance nor pleasure, and the finish is bitter and drying. Still very young, but I don't think that the wine will ever come into balance. Modern style, yes, but not my style! **10**

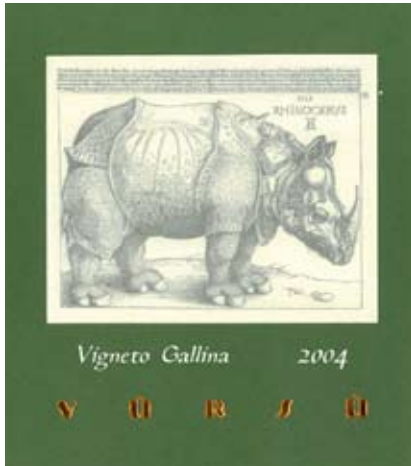


Paitin Sorì Paitin - 12

NB: Among the very deepest in color (suspicious). Nose of quality, but not necessarily of Nebbiolo, with quite some oak. Deep, gutsy wine that could almost be from anywhere but would not be my choice for a blind tasting of Nebbiolo. **12.5**

SL: Deep in hue. The aromas are mute. The palate is not hugely expressive—one of the more tightly locked in. Not hugely expressive, though there is clearly some substance here and tannins that are finely grained. There is a more masculine note to the structure, and a sweet/sour contrast, but this fails to convince. Lacking some purity and expression. Good as opposed to great. Time will tell. **13**

FZ: Very dark, concentrated color. The nose is dominated by oaky, smoky notes, not Nebbiolo fruit. Astringent tannins overwhelm everything on the palate. The finish is bitter and out of balance. **11**



La Spinetta Vigneto Gallina - 10.5

NB: Medium-deep, garnet rim. Flowers but also garlic/onion (truffle) on nose. Unusually rich palate, with a Porty finish. Very attractive and of good composition, the acid perhaps a touch low, but the tannins firm and ripe, and the fruit long and satisfying. Needs time; drink from 2012. **16**

SL: Good, solid color. The aromas are at the riper, sweeter end of the spectrum. A little too worked on the palate, the fruit sweet, confectioned, and unpleasant. Commercial stuff about which there is very little to say. Sweet, ripe, and anonymous. **7**

FZ: Dark, concentrated color. The nose is very particular: green vegetables, cabbage, overextracted, and unripe, with a hint of vanilla. Very special if you want an exotic, strange wine! The palate is even worse, with astringent green tannins and a strong, cutting acidity. **9**



Giuseppe Cortese Rabajà - 10.5

NB: Unusually light color, but correct for Nebbiolo. Slight reduction on the nose (could be oak) compromises an otherwise well-structured wine. The wine is potentially good but flawed. **7**

SL: Modest hue, some solidity. The aromas suggest confectioned, cherry fruit, lacking freshness or richness. The palate lacks poise, purity, and complexity; very contrived and simple in style, despite some substance. Sound, nothing more. **8**

FZ: Brilliant ruby color of medium intensity. The nose is very old-style, with earthy, gamey, slightly "animal" notes, truffle, dried mushroom, aromatic herbs, and rhubarb. The taste is very appealing and satisfying, with layers of fruit, earthy tannins, cocoa powder, and salty mineral notes. Vibrant acidity and a long, straight finish. Splendid with game. Could be drunk now, but lay down some bottles if, like me, you enjoy the rustic character of more mature Barbaresco! **16.5**



La Ca' Növa Montestefano - 10

NB: Medium-deep, turning. Some H₂S on the nose. Plenty of sweet fruit on the palate but compromised by sulfur. Firm acid and slightly drying tannins, a little mineral/metallic, maybe a touch coarse, but with underlying quality. **12.5**

SL: Deep hue. The aromas are sweaty, leathery, and unpleasant. The palate is flat, with some loose, confectioned fruit and little more. Astringent, grippy, and dismal. **8**

FZ: Dark ruby color. The nose presents the rustic side of the old-school style: reduced and animal (Bretty?) notes, foxy, leathery, almost meaty, and with no elegance at all. Cutting acidity; hard, green tannins; no balance, no pleasure. **10**

Poderi Colla Roncaglie - 9.5

NB: Garnet. Reeks of oak or reduction. Good wine compromised. **7**

SL: Pale, watery to the rim. The nose has off-putting medicinal aromas and notes of capsicum. The palate is Bretty and sweaty. Very difficult to judge, and there is very little to describe. Second bottle showed a little more fruit, but still with a dominating sweaty character and coarse, grainy tannins. **7**

FZ: The rustic side of Langhe wines. Great concentration of color. Animal, foxy, reduced, and maybe Bretty as well, with a hint of graphite, mineral, and salt. Good structure, solid tannins, and good balance, with a long, straight, savory finish. But you can hope for more from Barbaresco. **14.5** ■

Franco Ziliani

Generally, I don't believe in scores, still less in analyzing them. But for this tasting—one of the most interesting and satisfying of recent years—I think it may nevertheless serve some purpose. Of the 48 wines that we tasted, 26 received from me a score between 15 and 19. I gave 18 wines more than 16, and only 11 wines 11 or lower.

The tasting wasn't too tiring overall, since the general quality of the wines was very good. There were some outstanding wines, where the elegance and the rich aromatic spectrum of Nebbiolo triumphed. Many of these Barbarescos are already very appealing because they are so well balanced, and you can begin to drink them now. At the same time, the potential for aging is also very high.

There are two reasons for this ideal scenario. The first is the classicism of the vintage, which allowed the Nebbiolo to ripen perfectly. The second is the sensitivity of most of the producers, who have found a good balance between fruit, tannins, and acidity. Some have exaggerated the use of oak, especially new oak (barriques, to be precise). But only dogmatic adherence to the exemplar of the modern style—overextracted and overoaked—insists on such an absurd and pathetic rendition, which belongs to Barbaresco's past rather than to the present or the future of this splendid wine.

Prices—with the exception of Gaja's and Bruno Giacosa's wines—are not high, and there are still a great many bargains to be had. Whether to drink and appreciate now, especially with food, or to lay down in your cellar for later, there are many excellent reasons to invest in Barbaresco 2004!