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[Barbera Meeting 2010: Day 2, But Looking Back at Yesterday](#)

Posted by Fredric Koeppl under [Barbera 2010](#)

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Snow lies on the hillsides of Piedmont, blanketing the dormant vines. The weather is chilly, but the clouds cleared away and the sun shone all day. The wineries we visited yesterday afternoon were chillier, as they always are, with their cellars dug into the ground and their tank rooms paved in concrete. As one estate owner said, though, with unerring truth, “You have seen many steel tanks and wooden barrels. I won’t detain you here.” These are not fancy or elaborate wineries; no celebrity architects designed these facilities. All is simplicity, family tradition and concentration on a singular purpose.

Yesterday morning, at the Barbera Meeting, we tasted 68 or 70 examples of Barbera d’Asti and Barbera d’Asti Superiore from 2008 and 2007, with a few from 2006. After a light lunch, mostly roasted vegetables, our group boarded a small bus and drove into the countryside, where in the course of the afternoon we visited three small family-owned properties, each with its



unique — O.K., eccentric in some cases — philosophy and emphasis. I think our favorite of these properties was Tenuto Il Falchetto, where the Bricco Paradiso 2007, Barbera d’Asti Superiore, was one of those wines that makes you go, “Oh, right, this is what we’ve been looking for.” (There were also dawgs outside. which I liked.) At each estate we were welcomed and provided with spreads of focaccia and other wonderful breads, salamis and local cheeses, delicious and intriguing, some of which I would like to find at a cheese shop in Asti, if possible.

We got back to Asti about 7:30 and were taken — after our driver run a stop sign and got into an



altercation with a man whose little delivery truck he almost ran over — to Villa Basinetto for *another* tasting at which many of the producers from the morning event presented their full roster of wines. I tasted through the lines of Giacomo Bologna

“Braida” — unusually for the region, they make a riesling — and Tentuta La Pergola (they make an untypical blend of nebbiolo, bonarda and barbera in the Bric du Siva 2004, Monferrato Rosso, a wine of great dignity and character) and was pleased to discover the eccentric and entirely lovable wines (like a rollicking blend of syrah and ruché!) of Bricco La Morra, presented by the highly eyewear-conscious Marco Maria, whose photo you see here.

This tasting was followed by a pretty damned splendid dinner catered by Ristorante Il Cascinanuovo, about which I will have more to say in a follow-up post. Our group was joined by two winemakers, Massimo Pastura, of Cascina La Ghersa, and Franco Cavallero, of Cantine Sant’ Agata, who of course went and obtained bottles of all their wines for us to try with the meal. I



was particularly taken with two of Pastura’s white wines, his Il Poggio Gavi 2009 and the Timian 2007, made from the timorossa grape, and I thought that his La Ghersa Viguassa 2005, a Barbera d’Asti Superiore from the Nizza sub-region, was one of the best of the whole day. Not to get too far ahead of the dining post, but Viguassa ‘05 was terrific with a shallow bowl of *Zuppa di patate e fagioli borlotti con maltagliati all’uovo*, that is a soup of potatoes and beans with egg pasta, a prosaic description of a modest but rich and mellow dish I thought about with pleasure long into the night.

That whole day added up to tasting about 120 wines. And now it’s another day, and the waiters are starting to pour the first flight.



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