

Condividi Segnala una violazione Blog successivo»

REFLECTIONS ON WINE

VIEWS ON WINES FROM ITALY, CALIFORNIA, CHILE, ARGENTINA AND OTHER GREAT REGIONS OF THE WORLD FROM A FREELANCE WRITER AND PHOTOGRAPHER

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17, 2010

Barbera: The Good, The Bad and The Oaky



I recently returned from a strange week in Asti to taste hundreds of examples of Barbera from several appellations. Unfortunately, I didn't get to taste as many wines as I would have liked, as I caught a terrible cold and throat infection and was forced to spend three days in my hotel room (the weather was very, very cold and windy with no shortage of snow). I did get to taste several dozen Barbera d'Asti the first day, so I was able to get a bit of a feeling for the wines.

From what I tasted that first day, I seem to be in agreement with several other American journalists and bloggers who also attended. Several reports have been published over the last few days, including those from Tom Maresca, Jeremy Parzen and Whitney Adams, with a common theme being that too many examples of Barbera were imbued with way too much oak. As Maresca says in his blog, this is an

MY BLOG LIST

🌸 **Vino al vino**
Stamford Bridge: la magica notte interista che mise a tacere i guffi
1 hour ago

🌸 **Vino Wire**
Live wine blogging at Barbera Meeting 2010 represents a point of no return
3 hours ago

VINTROSPECTIVE --> An Italian Wine Blog» - Vintrospective -> An Italian Wine Blog
La Bracesca Bramasole Cortona Syrah 2003
4 hours ago

Brunellos Have More Fun
Nascetta- The Other White Grape
10 hours ago

📧 **On the Wine Trail in Italy**
Cerasuolo is the Name & Gumbo is the Game
12 hours ago

🍷 **The Pour**
The Reds of the Loire
19 hours ago

The Blend
(Definitely Not) Any Given Sunday: Our honeymoon visit with Giacosa
1 day ago

📅 **Do Bianchi**
My date with the city (of Milan)
1 day ago

🍷 **learnitalianwines**
Aging Barbera
2 days ago

🍷 **Eat Wine**
Robust & Ready: Coyam 2007

example of vintners trying to craft a “serious” wine. That’s unfortunate, as Barbera is such a pleasant wine in its own right. But today, with so many countries producing so many types of wine, more and more producers believe they need an edge when it comes to selling their wine. Thus the thought process behind shifting Barbera from its simple pleasures to a more ageworthy, full-throttle wine.

Besides too much oak, I also found that many of the bottlings were far too ripe with a distinct jamminess. This trait appeared regularly in the newly released 2007 Barbera d’Asti Superiore bottlings. The Superiore designation refers to a wine aged longer before release, meaning it is a bigger, richer wine to begin with, as compared to the regular bottling. So the decision often comes before the grapes are harvested – leave them on the vine longer and the vintner can make a riper, more powerful wine. That in turns leads to more time in oak and ultimately a wine that is quite often, not well balanced.

2007 was a year with excellent ripeness and too many vintners pushed their wines towards the ripe, blockbuster style. I guess these vintners have read too many wine articles and truly believe that consumers in America (a large export market) love these inky black, candy-like wines. Some people do, but try enough of these wines and I think even the most ardent fan will start to back off a bit. The wines aren’t balanced and they’re tiring to drink. They’re wines for tasting, not for drinking, meaning they don’t pair that well with food. If that’s the case, what’s the point?

To be fair, I did enjoy quite a few bottlings of Barbera the one day I did taste. I found several from 2008 that I enjoyed. This was a more subdued vintage and the wines are fresh and drinkable. Why we can’t get more wines like this is a mystery to me, but then again I probably answered the question above. We could get low-key, elegant wines all the time, but too many producers go for the obvious, as they think that’s what consumers want.

Here are the wines I recommend. At this point, there’s no reason for me to name the wines I don’t:

2008 BARBERA D’ASTI (recommended)

Cantina Sociale di Mombercelli “Terre Astesane”

Caudrina “La Solista”

Marco Crivelli “Colline La Mora” (highly recommended)

Fratelli Trincheri “La Trincherina”

Montalbera “La Ribelle”

2 days ago

Montalcino Report

The New York Times article on the Val d’Orcia (Orcia River valley where is produced the Brunello di Montalcino)

1 week ago

Charles Scicolone on Wine

Some Favorites at the Tre Bicchieri Tasting

2 weeks ago

Vinonostrum

Visiting passionate winemakers in Friuli and Tuscany

7 months ago

The Wine Camp Blog -

BLOG ARCHIVE

▼ 2010 (9)

▼ March (2)

Barbera: The Good, The Bad and The Oaky

Tre Bicchieri in Chicago

▶ February (3)

▶ January (4)

▶ 2009 (45)

▶ 2008 (10)

ABOUT ME



TOM HYLAND

[VIEW MY COMPLETE PROFILE](#)

Prunotto “Fiulot” (highly recommended)

Giacomo & Figlio Scagliola

2007 BARBERA D’ASTI (recommended)

Bersano “Ca d’Galdin”

Ca dei Mandorli “La Bellaida”

Cantina Vignasone “Selezione”

Cantina Vignasone

2007 BARBERA D’ASTI SUPERIORE (recommended)

Pavia Agostino “Moliss”

Cantina Sociale Barbera dei Sei Castelli “Le Vignole”

La Ghera “Muscae”

La Ghera “Vignassa” (very highly recommended – my top scoring wine)

Tenuta dei Fiori “Rusticardi 1933”

Tenuta La Flammenga “Paion” (highly recommended)

Tenuta La Pergola “Vigne Vecchie della Cappelleta”

Marchesi di Gresy “Monte Colombo” (highly recommended)

La Ballerina “Ajé”

One final point: I've always enjoyed Barbera d'Alba and Barbera Monferrato, as these wines tend to be more restrained. I'll post again when I taste some excellent examples of these wines.

POSTED BY TOM HYLAND AT 9:13 AM

LABELS: BARBERA, BARBERA D’ASTI, LA GHERA, PRUNOTTO

o COMMENTS:

POST A COMMENT