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10 Outstanding Barbarescos

New reviews of Nebbiolo-based Italian reds priced under \$50, some to drink now and some for the cellar

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Tasting Highlights bring the best wines from our editors' most recent tastings to WineSpectator.com members.

This group of Barbarescos hails mainly from northern Italy's warmer 2009 vintage, a year that generally produced charming, fruity wines. The 2007s are similar in style, while the 2008s are leaner and higher in acidity and the 2006s dense and structured. Barbaresco is generally approachable six to seven years after the vintage and ages well for an additional 10 to 15 years after that. All of the examples below offer distinctive Nebbiolo character for less than \$50.

PUNSET Barbaresco 2008 Score: 93 | \$40

Aromatic and flavorful, exhibiting rose, cherry, licorice, tobacco and briar notes. Both supple and vibrant, with an elegance that belies the extremely dense tannins. Shows excellent length and an aftertaste of fruit, underbrush and mineral. Best from 2015 through 2030. 1,200 cases made. —B.S.

PUNSET Barbaresco Riserva 2006 Score: 93 | \$45

Though the dense tannins are still present, this is now beginning to show the haunting floral essence of mature Nebbiolo. Light-footed, if muscular, with a long licorice and spice aftertaste. Drink now through 2024. 250 cases made. —B.S.

PRODUTTORI DEL BARBARESCO Barbaresco 2007 Score: 92 | \$38

This is elegant and charming, featuring cherry, rose and tobacco flavors, with just a hint of earthy, underbrush. The tannins are beginning to soften and integrate. Approachable now, but will improve with time. Drink now through 2024. 6,000 cases imported. —B.S.

CASTELLO DI VERDUNO Barbaresco 2009 Score: 92 | \$45

Balanced on the soft side, with moderate tannins lifting the cherry, strawberry and floral flavors. Delicate and harmonious, with everything in the right place. Fine length, with a savory mineral aftertaste. Best from 2014 through 2025. 150 cases imported. —B.S.

MARCHESI DI BAROLO Barbaresco 2009 Score: 91 | \$45

This is rich and dense, with cherry, berry, licorice and sweet spices buoyed by a bright structure. Well-proportioned, if on the beefy side, offering a long finish. Best from 2014 through 2025. 400 cases imported. —B.S.

CA' DU RABAJÀ Barbaresco 2009 Score: 91 | \$48

Round and chewy, with cherry, raspberry and leather notes that persist through the finish. The tannins are firm and dusty, while the aftertaste lingers with fruit and spice accents. Drink now through 2024. 600 cases imported. —B.S.

FIORINZO NADA Barbaresco Manzola 2009 Score: 91 | \$40

A compact, linear style, exhibiting floral, cherry, berry and spice flavors matched to a steely structure. A bit dry, but needs time to find balance. Fine length. Best from 2015 through 2027. 208 cases imported. —B.S.

BEL COLLE Barbaresco Roncaglie 2007 Score: 90 | \$40



Michele De Vita

The Punset winery grows Nebbiolo grapes outside the village of Neive, in Italy's Piedmont region.

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Round and fruity, offering cherry, black currant, licorice and spice flavors. Though this starts out gently, a rhythm section of dusty tannins maintains focus and drive through the finish. Drink now through 2024. —B.S.

PAITIN Barbaresco Serra 2009 Score: 90 | \$35

This red starts out with a supple texture, offering cherry, berry, leather and earth notes before turning firm and dry. Assertive tannins grip the finish for now, but this has plenty of fruit. Best from 2015 through 2023. 1,500 cases made. —B.S.

PAITIN Barbaresco Sori' Paitin 2009 Score: 90 | \$47

A brooding, backward style that requires some time and air to coax out the flavors of currant, cranberry, plum and tobacco. Firm tannins add structure, but will require time to round off and become integrated. Best from 2015 through 2027. 1,250 cases made. —B.S.