

DECANTER RECOMMENDED BAROLO 2010



Marchesi di Barolo
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Prowein:
 Hall 12 / B30-40
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Highly Recommended 17-18.25pts (90-94pts)



Marchesi di Barolo, Sarmassa, Barolo 17 (90) IDA 16.75 MG 16.25 EOH 17.75

Chocolate and coffee mingle with dark cherry and tar. Super classic: sings of its grape variety and place. Finishes with peppery, slightly drying tannins. Needs time. Drink 2020-2028 Alc 14%

Decanter PANEL TASTING

Barolo 2010

Piedmont's star red is on a roll, and its success has been boosted by a string of stellar vintages - including 2010. Ian D'Agata is confident wine lovers will find plenty to enjoy

BAROLO HAS NEVER been better, and a seemingly endless run of successful vintages should help it conquer new markets and generations of wine lovers.

Aside from the rain-plagued 2002 and incredibly hot 2003 vintage, there have been nothing but above-average, classic or outstanding years since 1999, and 2010 looks to be one of the best of recent times. The year began with a snowy winter that guaranteed lots of water reserves - a good thing given the high average temperatures of April and May, and especially of the last part of August and September. This led to very ripe, sugar-rich grapes, and most 2010 Barolos are not shy about their high octane levels. If the high temperatures caused Barolo's magical floral perfume to get lost in some 2010s, the wines do present a creamy charm and a ripe, fruity personality that makes them easier to approach when young. It also means that the wines will probably evolve slightly faster than some other vintages, like 2001 or 2006.

Comparisons with Burgundy

When well made, Barolo is one of the world's truly great wines, characterised by a perfume of roses, violets, sweet spices, minerals and sour red cherry, and an uncommon blend of powerful tannins yet delicate flavours similar to the aromas. Barolo is also one of the world's most age-worthy wines (a well kept 1947 or 1961 Barolo is unforgettable), so it's easy to understand why many wine lovers and collectors hold it in such high esteem.

Another plus is that Barolo, much like red Burgundy (to which it is often compared) is very site-specific, with evident differences between the communes. Generally speaking, wines from La Morra and Barolo, with their magnesium- and manganese-rich soils, develop faster and are drinkable at five to eight years from the vintage (though wines from great vintages will easily keep 40 years or more). Those from Castiglione Falletto, Monforte d'Alba and Serralunga d'Alba are slower to develop, given their harder soils, and are best opened eight to 15 years from the vintage; clearly, they can live even longer when cellared well. Other less well known communes that are producing wonderful wines are Novello (similar to those from Serralunga and Monforte) and Verduno, where wines from the extremely high quality Monvigliero cru are starting to turn heads.

Just like with Burgundy, it pays to know the names of the most dependable producers. Though the astringently hard, brutally tannic wines devoid of fruit and flesh are mainly a thing of the past, some poor Barolos are still being made. Such Barolos are most often light-bodied, quickly maturing wines with little depth or concentration of perfume and fruit. That said, those who still think that Barolos are tough and unenjoyable simply don't know enough about the wine or the producers. One last word: as Barolo is 100% Nebbiolo, it will never be pitch black in colour; it is light to medium-dark gamet. Never make the mistake of thinking that the deep, inky wines are the best.

Wine lovers can turn confidently to the 2010 Barolos, just as they could to the lovely 2009 and classic 2008s before them. There are many great bottles to choose from.

Ian D'Agata is a DWWA Regional co-Chair for Italy



Barolo: know your vintages

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| 2011 Hit by rains; naturally reduced yields due to flowering difficulties. | 2005 Underrated; the best wines are remarkably fresh and perfumed. |
| 2010 Potentially outstanding, but not all wines are as great as they should be. | 2004 Overrated. Some are too ripe and evolving too quickly. |
| 2009 Pleasant, soft wines of early appeal. | 2003 Dry, hot year; wines high in alcohol and super-ripe. |
| 2008 Classic wines that will age well; less fleshy and showy than 2009 or 2010 | 2002 Rain-plagued vintage; lighter bodied wines, but some positives. |
| 2007 Warm vintage of softer wines; some overripe. | 2001 The best Barolo vintage since 1989: balance, charm, perfume and power. |
| 2006 High acid, tannic wines. Most will only start to be ready from 2020. | 2000 Charming, creamy wines but not at the level of 2001, '06, '08 or '10. |

Barolo: the facts

Total hectares 1,800 hectares
Annual production 12,000,000 bottles
Production area 11 communes in the DOCG; 85% of wine coming from Barolo, La Morra, Castiglione Falletto, Serralunga d'Alba and Monforte d'Alba. Other communes are: Cherasco, Diano d'Alba, Grinzane Cavour, Novello, Roddi and Verduno.
Production guidelines 100% Nebbiolo. Must be aged at least two years in oak and at least one year in bottle before release. Riservas are aged five years, with at least three in oak. ➤