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© Turismo in Langa | Barolo immediately brings to mind quality, longevity and deep ethereal flavors – has the 2014 vintage delivered?

The vintage didn't look promising, but the wines turned out to be like past greats.

By Tom Hyland | Posted Saturday, 07-Jul-2018

Sometimes it's best to seek a second opinion – take the 2014 Barolos, for example.

That year was cold and rainy with several hail storms, hardly the recipe for greatness. Yet now that the wines are being released to the marketplace, the results are far greater than many predicted. "The Barolos from 2014 offer freshness and great acidity," says Luca Currado, winemaker at Vietti, one of Barolo's most renowned estates. "2014 is an amazing, old school, classic vintage."

Given the warm, sometimes hot temperatures of recent years in the Langhe where Barolo is produced (such as 2011, 2012, 2015-2017), it's easy to understand the knee-jerk reaction of some critics and journalists that 2014 might not be a vintage worth remembering. "2014 is a vintage where we had a hard time in the vineyards," remarks Alessandro Ceretto, winemaker at the prominent family estate in Alba. "Hail and many days of rain characterized this year, and production was low."

Yet while that year's growing season was difficult to some degree, conditions were not as gloomy as some perceived. "If we analyze the year as a whole, 2014 is considered to be very rainy, yet if instead we consider only the vegetative process of the vine, from March to September, we are not far from the average," comments **Valentina Abbona**, co-proprietor of the historic **Marchesi di Barolo winery** in the town of **Barolo**. She notes that the earlier ripening varieties such as Dolcetto and Barbera had to endure a more critical situation, while the late-ripening **Nebbiolo**, "took advantage of the September climate, that slowed down harvest operations, with outstanding results." Abbona is extremely pleased with her 2014 Barolos. "They display a deep color and a body with strong tannins, which will enable the wines to stand the passing of years."

The unusual climate that year did cause problems, one being a significant loss in crop, in part due to damage from hail. "We had two hail storms in our single vineyard Parussi in Castiglione Falletto, so we didn't produce this single-vineyard wine from 2014," recalls Franco Massolino, winemaker at his celebrated family winery in Serralunga d'Alba. At Marengo in La Morra, winemaker Marco Marengo noted the lower temperatures and almost 20 days of rain in July, and realized that he needed to secure ideal conditions for October, when the Nebbiolo grapes would be harvested. "I decided to reduce crop more than usual – in fact, production is 40% less than normal – so the vines could spend their energy on fewer bunches to ensure perfect maturation," notes Marengo.

So production was down, but the wines have emerged in beautiful shape. You'll just have to consider that the 2014 Barolos are not as ripe, with the plummy and dark fruit notes as most recent vintages; they are in fact, wines that recall the Barolo style of past decades. "The 2014 Barolo show a totally different character from warm recent vintages," Ceretto exclaims. "The wines remind me of a classic vintage from the 1980s, with more elegance and fruit and a lot of drinkability."

Currado gushes about these wines. "Nebbiolo – like [Pinot Noir](#) – loves a cooler climate, and 2014 was exactly like vintages such as 1974, 1971 and 1961, vintages today that are perfectly preserved are making the reputation of

today's Barolo." For Massolino, his 2014 Barolos are ideal. "The style of these wines is very well balanced, with good complexity, deep color and outstanding freshness. I'm sure they will be a big surprise for many people. Many of our clients have begun to describe this vintage as one of the best surprises of the last several years!"

Tasting through these wines, one notices the lovely harmony, excellent varietal character and very good acidity of these Barolo. Among the standouts are the Luigi Einaudi "Terlo Vigna Costa Grimaldi"; Ravera and Rocche di Castiglione from Vietti; **Marchesi di Barolo Cannubi**; Poderi Oddero Rocche di Castiglione; Massolino Margheria and the Marengo Brunate. The Einaudi has been a marvelous Barolo for the past decade, and though it does not receive the attention that the producer's Cannubi Barolo receives, the "Terlo" is as good and even better in some vintages; the 2014 offers exceptional length and grace.

For Vietti, the Ravera has been his shining star over the past few vintages, as this wine from Novello's most distinguished cru is beautifully styled with rich tannins that are remarkably elegant. His Rocche di Castiglione has been the winery's most famous single vineyard Barolo for more than 50 years, and the 2014 displays the depth of fruit, spice, persistence and structure that have made this wine a classic Barolo for so many years.

The **Marchesi di Barolo Cannubi** has plenty of spice and herbal notes with excellent depth of fruit; the best examples of Cannubi always reveal greater complexities over many years, and this 2014 is no different. The Oddero Rocche di Castiglione displays the power of this cru combined with the beautiful harmony this great producer is so well known for; while the Massolino Margheria is simply a classic Serralunga Barolo, with impressive richness on the palate and bold, but balanced tannins in the finish.

Lastly, a wonderful revelation in the form of the Marengo Brunate, from the renowned cru in the commune of La Morra. I've admired this producer's wines for some time now, but rarely place them among the upper echelon of great Barolo estates. However, the Brunate 2014 is a great wine, with lovely aromas of strawberries, cedar, dried orange peel and dried flowers; there is very good acidity, and the wood notes are beautifully integrated, a situation not always evident with this producer's wines. But this year, the 2014 Marengo Brunate is a standout and is a great wine, not just for 2014, but an exceptional, classically structured Barolo from any vintage. "Brunate is undoubtedly a great vineyard, and in the most complicated years, it always expresses its maximum potential," notes Marengo. Well said, and in reality, a nice overview of how well the best producers performed in 2014, a challenging year.

One final note on the 2014 Barolos has to do with the decision of a few producers to not bottle certain cru Barolo, as they believed that while the wines were very good, they did not display the brilliance the producers were seeking. For Michele Chiarlo, this meant that they have not bottled their Cerequio and Cannubi Barolos for 2014, but rather have included that fruit in their 2014 Tortonian Barolo. Keep an eye out for this wine!

Ceretto reports a similar story for this vintage, as he did not bottle a Bricco Rocche or Brunate from 2014, but instead incorporated that fruit into his classic Ceretto Barolo. This is a rare opportunity to taste a Barolo from such great sites in a blended Barolo; this is an old-fashioned, beautifully balanced Barolo that is a great value – don't miss it!



© Tom Hyland/Wine-Searcher | Vietti has once again produced an exceptional wine.

2014 Barolo

Outstanding

[Marengo Brunate](#)

[Vietti Rocche di Castiglione](#)

[Vietti Ravera](#)

[Einaudi Terlo Vigna Costa Grimaldi](#)

Excellent

[Poderi Oddero Rocche di Castiglione](#)

[Massolino Margheria](#)

[Marchesi di Barolo Cannubi](#)

[Marchesi di Barolo Sarmassa](#)

[Marcarini Brunate](#)

[Marenco Bricco delle Viole](#)

[E. Mirafiore](#)

[Germano Ettore Prapò](#)

[Ceretto Prapò](#)

[Ceretto](#) (classic bottling, outstanding value)

[Very Good](#)

[Vietti Lazzarito](#)

[Cogno Ravera](#)

[Marchesi di Barolo Coste di Rose](#)

[Marcarini La Serra](#)

[Massolino Parafada](#)

[Germano Ettore Ceretta](#)

[Rivetto Barolo del Comune di Serralunga d'Alba](#)

[Marchesi di Barolo Tradizione \(very good value\).](#)

Regarding the newly released 2015 [Barbaresco](#), these wines are more typical of the recent warm growing seasons in the [Langhe](#). The winter was snowy, with a mild spring and stable temperatures, and no rain throughout most of the summer. Daniela Rocca of Albino Rocca in the town of Barbaresco notes that the vineyards were not stressed by the heat, and that harvest began quite early. "The Barbaresco 2015 are full bodied and very well balanced. They are drinkable sooner, but also have a great aging potential."

For Ceretto, "the wines are dense but beautifully structured, more approachable than 2013 and 2014. The great balance of these wines is their success."

Notable 2015 Barbaresco include the Ceretto Asili with a charming note of cocoa powder, the classic Ceretto Barbaresco, and the Albino Rocca Montersino and Ronchi, both offering subdued spice in the finish and ideal ripeness.