



The Black Dress Traveler

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Back to the Beginning: A Heartwarming Wine Reunion with Marchesi di Barolo



Such a joy to catch up with Anna Abbona of the iconic Marchesi di Barolo winery.

In the early days of my wine writing journey I was invited to an intimate tasting in Manhattan featuring the wines of **Marchesi di Barolo**. Back in 2012, I had never visited Italy, probably couldn't find Piedmont on a map, and had no idea that Nebbiolo was the grape used to make Barolo. Taking my seat at the table, I wondered how I ended up with a Master of Wine to my right and a major wine critic across from me. Humbled and exhilarated, I soaked up every bit of knowledge as the experts discussed the nuances of the exquisite decades-old wines in our glasses. But my strongest memory that day is of the Abbona family, the owners, producers, and ambassadors of Marchesi di Barolo: Anna the elegant matriarch, Ernesto the stoic patriarch and fifth-generation winemaker, Valentina the charismatic eldest child who translated for her father, and Davide the shy but sweet youngest member of the *famiglia* Abbona.



Meet the Abbona family! Ernesto, Valentina, Davide, and Anna.

So much has changed in my life since that day seven years ago. I've learned more about wine, been to Italy more than a dozen times, and know many wonderful winemakers. But I've never forgotten that tasting with the Abbona family. The beauty of their wines and closeness as a family left a big impression on me. But I also remember that every member of the Abbona family treated me with warmth and respect. They made me feel just as important as the big shots in the room.



So when I received an invitation a few months ago to meet with Anna Abbona while she was in NYC, my heart skipped a beat. Too many years had passed since our last meeting and I could not wait to taste Marchesi di Barolo with Anna by my side. Greeting each other with big hugs, it felt like no time had passed at all. But some things had certainly changed. Her daughter Valentina is now known globally as a passionate ambassador of her family's wines and Davide's teen years and shyness are behind him and he is also an integral and visible part of the family business. Anna told me that she's so happy that her children genuinely love the business and that she doesn't take it for granted.

And the Marchesi di Barolo wines were as wonderful as I remember. Anna said, "Every wine is different. You can recognize our style but each wine has its own personality." But Anna also acknowledges that as "the winery where Barolo was born, we have to maintain tradition."



100% Cortese, crisp and refreshing **Marchesi di Barolo Gavi di Gavi DOCG 2017 (\$20)** is a great match with the mood and meals of summer. Full and vibrant citrus flavors with touches of chamomile, almond, and salinity.



Austere but elegant, **Marchesi di Barolo Tradizione Barolo DOCG 2014 (\$58)** is a fine example of a traditional Barolo and the house style. Earthy and nuanced flavors of tart cherry, truffles, and tea leaves.



Full and round, **Marchesi di Barolo "Ruvei" Barbera d'Alba DOC 2016 (\$21)** gets added complexity from a dash of Nebbiolo (15%). Robust cherry and red-fruit flavors with hints of herbs and white pepper.



100% Barbera, **Marchesi di Barolo "Peiragal" Barbera d'Alba DOC 2014 (\$32)** is a charming and fruit-forward vino. Soft and juicy with great acidity with some tantalizing toasty notes. Elegant and easygoing.



Anna proudly cradles a bottle of **Marchesi di Barolo "Sarmassa" Barolo D.O.C.G. 2013 (\$119)**. A stunning single-vineyard Barolo, Sarmassa transmits the story of terroir and impeccable winemaking. A powerful and complex wine with precise structure, Sarmassa has the capacity to age at least 25-30 years.

It was such a joy to reconnect with Anna and to learn more of the Abbona family's story through her words and their wines. Now that I can find Piedmont on the map, I hope to visit the Marchesi di Barolo estate on a future trip to Italy. Are you headed to Piemonte? [Make your reservation](#) for a wine tasting or dinner at Marchesi di Barolo. And no passport is needed to take your palate on a journey with their expressive and elegant wines.