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PIEDMONT 2014 AND 2015 NEW RELEASES ARE MORE “GOOD NEWS”



This year we (my son Jack and I) tasted more than 1,100 wines from Piedmont, the legendary wine region of Italy. We already reported earlier this year that [we were impressed with the quality of the 2014 Barolos](#) we tasted despite the difficulty of the growing season, and more still of these better-than-expected bottles feature in this report.

The even better news is that we are much more excited about the 2015 vintage after rating so many outstanding wines from Barbaresco as well other appellations in our tasting. The prospect of trying 2015 Barolos in bottle is tantalizing. It should be a great year all around.

“We love our 2015 Barolos and Barbaescos, but don’t forget the excellence of the 2014s in cases where producers treated their vineyards properly and made the right decisions during harvest,” says Bruna Giacosa, owner of the legendary wine house of [Bruno Giacosa](#).



James tasting with Roberto Conterno, owner of the legendary Giacomo Conterno estate, in January 2018.

Her [Bruno Giacosa Barbaresco Asili Riserva 2014](#), scored 99 points, was one of our favorite wines tasted in Italy this year. As for the [Bruno Giacosa Falletto Barolo Vigna Le Rocche 2015](#), also scored 99 points (prerelease), it's the surest confirmation yet that 2015 should prove to be a classic year for the region.

As mentioned previously, if we just judged the vintage on the wines of the top producers such as Conterno ([Giacomo](#) and [Aldo](#)), [Roberto Voerzio](#), [Bruno Giacosa](#), [Pio Cesare](#), [Paolo Scavino](#) and others, we would say 2014 is another top year. Generally speaking though, the Barolos we tasted from 2014 are between two to three points less than the same wines might be in a more revered year.

We tasted the great Roberto Conterno's [Barolo Monfortino 2014 at the beginning of the year from cask](#) and it was mind-blowing. It could very well be another 100-point wine. It's no wonder that he might produce 100% of his Barolo as Monfortino. Here's the tasting note although our official note and score won't be published until later: "This is an extraordinary wine with violets, lilacs, peaches and exotic fruit. Dark berries, too. Full-bodied yet compacted. Racy and linear. Great tannins that are polished and muscular at the back of the palate. A triumphant red. Like the 2002 but with a twin-turbo engine. Really exciting."

Even so, it's better to move on and look forward to the 2015 and 2016 vintages — two dry, sunny and hot vintages. "You would have to be a bad winemaker not to produce an excellent wine in these two years," jokes Luca Currado, the winemaker of [Vietti](#), who excels in Barolo and Barbaresco as well as Barbera d'Asti and Barbera d'Alba.



Wine producer Pio Cesare purchased 10 hectares of the Mosconi vineyard in 2014, and this is his first single-vineyard bottling. His [Vietti Barbera d'Alba Vigna Vecchia Scarrone 2016](#) certainly proves his point. It is absolutely packed with fruit yet complex, aromatic and flavorful. The balance and finesse to the richness is why we rated it 95 points. Of course, far from all the Barberas in this report are as unique as Currado's. An average lineup of 50 or 60 wines made from the variety can be enjoyable but rather monotonous. Dialed-up fruit in particular is quite indistinguishable when there's nothing else to back it up.

[Giacosa](#) and [Vietti](#) are unbeatable for now in the Barbera department with [Pio Cesare's](#) and [Cordero di Montezemolo's](#) offerings also good buys. These are producers who manage to turn the grape from something drinkable and fruity into a work of art with real structure and depth.

The 130 or so Barbarescos we rated were also compelling, especially the new crop of 2015s — particularly [Gaja's](#) single-vineyard wines and a few others such as [Albino Rocca](#) and [Giuseppe Cortese](#). Barbaresco's classic vineyard sites such as Asili and Rabajà made some stunning wines in 2015.

And don't forget checking out some of the whites. Chardonnay is king for the top whites of the region with [Gaja](#) and [Pio Cesare](#) leading the way. But we continue to be big fans of arneis as well and have some perennial favorites such as [Bruno Giacosa's](#). A couple of sauvignons also made an impression such as [Parusso's Sauvignon Langhe Rovella 2016](#) as well Gaja's better-known [Alteni di Brassica 2016](#). We were surprised how fresh the 2017 whites were considering the heat and dryness during the growing season and look forward to tasting more 2017s.



The cru of Cerequio is a consistently excellent vineyard site in Barolo, seen here with the hilltop town of La Morra in the background.

We are also looking forward to tasting more late-release Barolos and Barbarescos. We urge more producers to follow this exciting trend of aging wines in the cellar and releasing them later, as it encourages special bottlings of extremely high quality, and demand is certainly there in the market for aged wines.

Some of our favorites this year include the [Gianni Gagliardo Barolo Cannubi Riserva 2004](#), [Ceretto Barolo Cannubi San Lorenzo 2008](#), [Roberto Voerzio Barolo Fossati Case Nere Riserva 10 Anni 2008](#), [Damilano Barolo Cannubi Riserva 1752 2010](#), [Vietti Barolo Villero Riserva 2010](#) and [Paolo Conterno Barolo Ginestra Riserva 2010](#).

If you love wines from Piedmont, it is a good time to be buying and drinking even with the surprisingly good yet less-than-stellar wines from 2014. And it's only more good news next year. – *James Suckling, CEO and Editor and Jack Suckling, Executive Editor*



MAURO VEGLIO BAROLO 2014

Dried citrus and cherry aromas with hints of rose petals and herbs. Medium to full body and chewy tannins. Shows focus and strength for the vintage. Let it come together in a year or two. Serious. Try in 2020.



MAURO VEGLIO BAROLO ARBORINA 2014

A pretty serious Barolo for this difficult vintage. Shows great black fruit, a touch of citrus and some earthy complexity on the nose. Quite a powerful wine on the palate with dry tannins beautifully integrated. However, the finish gets a little bit dry. Drink or hold.



MAURO VEGLIO BAROLO
CASTELLETTO 2014

Attractive orange rind and light cherries, as well as herbal notes. The palate has a succulent feel with brisk acidity and bright flavors of dark cherries. Drink or hold.



MAURO VEGLIO BAROLO
ROCCHIE DELL'ANNUNZIATA
2014

Seriously tannic and rather powerful with plenty of candied citrus character. With a bit more fruit and charm this would have been rated higher. Drink or hold.



MAURO VEGLIO BARBERA
D'ALBA 2016

Attractive raspberry and cherry-cake character married to moderately dry tannins. Also shows nice freshness, making this a solid example of the category. Drink now or in 2019 and 2020.



MAURO VEGLIO BAROLO
GATTERA 2014

Dried strawberries and dried mushrooms with some straw. Medium body and firm, silky tannins. Some pleasant fruit, but the finish a little short. Drink now.
