

Having trouble viewing this email? [Click here](#)



**WINEPAIRINGS**  
*Wine Concierge Service*

Your Source of Wine for Every Occasion

**Notes From The Cellar "NFTC" Newsletter**  
*May 14, 2010*



### **New Piedmont pre arrivals: Barolo, Barbaresco, Dolcetto & Barbera - tasty wines at great prices**

Recently I attended a major Italian preview tasting which concentrated on Piedmont & Tuscany. Today I will cover the wines of Piedmont. (Since this is a longer than usual report I have eliminated the photos that are generally included. Tuscany will be covered separately).

I have written many times about the fact that more and more of the better (and more pricey) wines are being offered through pre- arrival, Direct Import deals. Simply put the Distributors are trying to avoid stocking up on inventories that may not move. This way they only commit to purchase (from the importers) wines they know they will sell. Unfortunately some distributors are not even bothering to conduct tastings figuring that buyers will just stock up based on brand names and ratings. Long time readers of NFTC know that I advocate trying to taste wines when ever you can -that is the only way to assure that you will end up with wines that you like. I also understand that the opportunities to do so for most folks are rather limited. I believe that most of you who purchase wine from me appreciate the fact that I try many wines before recommending very few; those that in my opinion offer the best wines and finest values. Many of the buyers attending trade tastings are buyers for restaurants, Clubs, Hotels and other licensed establishments. Many times they send their wait staff so that they can get familiar with the wines. Buyers and employees of retailers also attend. What surprised me on this particular afternoon was that the number of buyers from retail wine stores could be counted on less than the fingers of one hand. And half of those folks were only there for a short time, which only makes it possible to taste very few wines.

The wines from Piedmont being released now are the Barberas and Dolcettos from mainly 2008 and the Barbarescos and Barolos from 2006. After several years where conditions during the growing season, as well as harvest time were great, these vintages were a little more challenging with periods of variable weather. Some great wines were made, but not across the board.

As such, these are even more critical vintages to taste in order to get a better idea of which wines can really make the cut to greatness. That made the absence of store buyers at the pre arrival sample tasting even more conspicuous. Is it a wonder that in most stores in town they don't have a clue? While I don't want to come across too harsh on the competition, this is exactly where I feel WINEPAIRINGS makes a great difference in your wine purchase experience. Actually it made me feel pretty good

about the fact that we do things differently here - please excuse me if I am being a little self indulgent.

Ok lets get back to brass tacks: So this go around there are only a handful of wines that make the cut for me - That's OK, buy just the few good ones, and save some money for the future. The 2007 vintage was a very good one for Barolos and Barbaresco -I am hopeful that we will have a better selection next year. That said the wines here are very worthy of your hard earned purchasing \$. One good thing about the current environment is that prices do seem more reasonable. In the future, when the economy picks up, prices are bound to go up. Of course I am always keeping a keen eye for any discounting we can find on some of the great wines that are in stock from recent vintages. (not just from Piedmont; pretty much from anywhere where good wine was made) That's where a lot of the smart money is going. This past 16 months I have seen some of the best deals since I started this company over 7 years ago. If you are actively seeking such opportunities you are wise - be sure to stay in touch so I can let you know when he deals come as they do tend to move fast.

So here are my favorite picks from the recent tasting: The "jewels" not to be missed. Please order in the next few days to take advantage of these pre arrival prices - I will contact you for payment and delivery once the wines arrive later this summer.

**\$\$\$ Today's Wine Deal \$\$\$**

## **CONTERNO FANTINO Dolcetto D'alba Bricco Bastia 2008**

**\$21- /bottle, or \$20- / bottle- with our cash discount (checks are ok)**

Continuing a streak of great vintages for this refreshing wine that started with the 2006 , this has been a best buy for the last 3 years. Fresh fragrant fruit notes of dark cherry and deep red berry & pit fruit. Plush and round flavors and nice acidity on the finish to keep it all mouth watering and such a good match to dishes with tomato sauces such as Pasta or Pizza. The pre arrival special price make this an easy call for a house red.

## **MARCARINI Barbera D'Alba Ciabot Camerano 2008**

**\$18- /bottle, or \$17- / bottle- with our cash discount (checks are ok)**

While Barberas also make for great food wines I find that in structure and mouth feel they are a little more firm than the Dolcettos. The problem is that while there is a ton of cheap Barbera produced in Piedmont (it's the everyday village wine to be quaffed ) most of it is not worthy of consumption. There are some amazing Barberas produced , aged on wood and worthy of aging but those are not cheap. So to find and inexpensive yet tasty one is a challenge. Enter Marcarini's Ciabot and here is a great example of a tasty Barbera to enjoy over a year or 2 from it's release that is good, satisfying and at a tariff that will keep you smiling. The 2008 has gorgeous fruit aromas and the wine has even a hint of Smokey nuances that is generally only

found in wines at twice the price. The quality for the price here is hard to beat.

## **BONGIOVANNI Barbera D'Alba 2007**

**\$34-/bottle, or \$32-/ bottle- with our cash discount (checks are ok)**

This is a "big boy" Barbera made as a serious wine from select grapes and released late due to extended aging on wood -so due to the late release we have a great opportunity at one of the finest examples produced from this great vintage and still benefit from pre - release pricing!

The fruit source is Serralunga and Monforte - these are some of the most famous areas of the region so most growers prefer to grow Nebiolo for Barolo production as that fruit brings in much more cash. This 2007 is so easy to like and drink -soft rich and complex it covers the mouth with waves of fruit spice and a little orange peel zest. While this is easily a wine that will continue to improve for years to come, you will find it hard to resist drinking now and at this price it's easy to stock up -make sure you get enough to cover you as the Barolos age - as this is a wine that over delivers.

## **CA' ROME' Barbaresco Maria Di Brun 2006**

**\$87-/bottle, or \$83-/ bottle- with our cash discount (checks are ok)**

Ca Rome run by Romano Marengo has been on my radar for a while. Their sources of grapes especially in Barbaresco come from the finest vineyards the famous Rabaja and Rio Sardo. There has always been great potential here, and in the last decade the family has invested heavily in improvements to their cellars. Over the last few vintages there has been a noticeable jump in the quality. The 2006 Maria di Brun (their top wine) named in Honor of Romano's mother (her picture is on the label) is made from some of the oldest vines. The 2006 is a classic; an elegant refined wine that seduces you with it's finess and structure. As you swirl it in the glass you get the classic aromatics of violets, tar & spring flowers -of course it is very young and has the material to age for many years. If you are a Giacossa fan this is something that you wouldn't want to miss. Older inferior vintages of this wine routinely sell for over \$100. At today's pre arrival price here is your chance to get in on something special before it gets "discovered " The 2006 is the finest MdB I have ever tasted.

## **MARCARINI Barolo Brunate 2006**

**\$52-/bottle, or \$49-/ bottle- with our cash discount (checks are ok)**

Kudos to Mani Marchetti a great wine maker, shrewd business man and one of the nicest guys you can meet anywhere. Year in and year out he makes some great wines in his beautiful old family Winery in La Morra. I have been promoting his wines for years. We generally recommend both his La Serra and the top dog Brunate selection. In 2006 the few \$ premium for the Brunate is well worth the upgrade as you get a wine that is already softer on the palate with more lush flavors and intensity. Hard to beat for the price once again this is a beautifully crafted wine that reminds me a lot of the excellent 2004 from here. Maerchetti believes that although this is tasting very well right now it will continue to improve with age. Realizing the global economic

challenges these days he has decided to keep prices for his wines at very reasonable levels. As a result this is some of the best value you will find from a top notch single cru Barolo priced below most enetery blends from other producers. Bravo. In case you wonder this has received 93 & 93+ point ratings from WA & IWC which pretty much assures it will not be one to languish on the shelves once it arrives.

## **PODERI COLLA Barolo Bussia 2006**

**\$65-/bottle, or \$62-/ bottle- with our cash discount** (checks are ok)

One of the finest efforts of this vintage from their famous holding in Dardi le Rose. This historic producer is unquestionably elevating it's game. This is their most famous wine and in 2006 they produced something special. Delicate aromatics full of violets roses and garden herbs don't prepare you for the sheer power once you taste this wine. There is a great tension here that keep it all in balance and the long complex finish lets you know even at this young age that this is a very age worthy wine. This will be particularly interesting for those of you who prefer their Baroli with a leaning towards the traditional style. If you are looking for a classic Barolo to age you can't go wrong here. This wine is starting to get some serious recognition amongst Barolo aficionados. With a recent rating of 94 + from Galloni in Parkers Wine advocate (the best ever in a string of ever increasing vintages) the word is getting out -and the prices are unfortunately sure to follow. An opportunity to get in while the going is good.

## **CONTERNO FANTINO Barolo Sori Ginestra 2006**

**\$92-/bottle, or \$88-/ bottle- with our cash discount** (checks are ok)

I am a sucker for this wine. Always this estates finest. Since the late 90's this has become one of my favorite Barolos in almost every vintage. On my last visit to Piedmont I just had to make a special visit to take a walk in this beautiful vineyard just so I can see for myself where the magic comes from.

When I tasted the Conterno Fantino line the Sori once again was captivating. September rains refreshed the vineyard from the end of the summer heat. by delaying harvest and with strict selection they once again had perfect material. This wine is made in a modern polished style which has tremendous appeal to drinkers who like classy structured wines such as Brunellos and Bordeaux. Since it is aged on 100% new French Oak it is often criticized by those who love traditional Barolos. Sure the wood was once again prominent, but give this bottle a few years in the cellar and the red fruit gets a chance to integrate. I have taken older bottles to blind tastings

and even the most die hard traditionalist admit that this is a beauty. If you looking for one of the finest Barolos of this vintage you really can't go wrong here. Note this wine has already received 95 point score in Tanzer's IWC and 96 in Parker's Waon the level of other classic vintages of this wine (2000, 2001 & 2004)

**Thanks for all your support and referrals.**

**Tell your friends, share the wine, & spread the good vibe. Cheers!**

*Paul David*, Chief Fermented Grape Taster.

***WINEPAIRINGS***

- Your wine concierge service. Contact us for all your Wine needs. [Our full range of Services](#)

**To Purchase, or Contact Us: Send us a reply**

**Email : [paul@winepairings.biz](mailto:paul@winepairings.biz) or Tel: 303-331-8008**