

A BAROLO THAT CAN TAKE THE CHILL AWAY

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Barolo is one of Italy's, and the world's, greatest wines. Made exclusively from the nebbiolo grape grown in the Barolo zone in Piedmont, it has a unique flavor and character, accounting for significant demand. But total annual production is limited to about 600,000 cases. As a point of comparison, Kendall-Jackson produces more than 2 million cases annually of its Vintner's Reserve chardonnay. Hence, Barolo is expensive. Five major villages Barolo, Serralunga d'Alba, La Morra, Monforte d'Alba, and Castiglione Falletto comprise the Barolo zone; even within this small area, different wines result because of variations in soil and exposure to the sun. Traditionally, winemakers made Barolo by blending wines made from grapes grown in the different villages. Today the trend is to let each locale "speak," so consumers now see Barolo labeled with individual vineyard names.

Although the Cavallotto estate, located in Castiglione Falletto, has been in the family for five generations, family members started in the wine trade only in 1948. They were ahead of their time because they did not blend their Barolo; they produced wines exclusively from their 58 acres of vineyards within Castiglione Falletto. Their prized vineyard, Bricco Boschis, one of the finest in the village, has ideal exposure on a sloping hillside surrounding the winery. Cavallotto remains a traditional firm by using large Slovenian wooden casks for aging, instead of new small oak barrels.

The 2000 vintage produced gorgeous but atypical Barolo, wines that are usually aggressive when young and take years to shed their tannins and allow their flavors to emerge. The wines are lush and enjoyable now. It is a good vintage to be introduced to Barolo.

Cavallotto consistently makes wonderful wines and sells them at reasonable prices. A big robust wine, their 2000 Barolo, made from grapes grown in Bricco Boschis, is succulent with supple tannins surrounding an engaging combination of deep black fruit flavors and a hearty earthiness. It's a great wintertime wine.

Cavallotto, Barolo, Bricco Boschis, 2000. About \$40. Classic Wine Imports.