

Roero and Barbaresco 2004:

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This spring I was invited to Alba Wines, the annual vintage presentation of Southern Piemonte's great Nebbiolo-based red wines, Barolo, Barbaresco, and Roero. Barolo was frankly difficult -- the 2003 vintage was not good -- but 2004 is a different story, and there are some very fine wines from Roero and Barbaresco coming out. Here is what impressed me the most, the Roero first and then the Barbaresco.

[Buganza Renato Gerbole Roero DOC 2004](#)

Almandine with black reflections. Fairly rich bouquet, with greenish red berry fruit supported by underbrush and some green leather; it gives an impression of youthful vitality. On the palate it's medium bodied, with fairly bright red berry fruit supported by moderate greenish acidity and tightly woven tannins that have a youthful burr; it's pleasant in a direct sort of way, though very young, and will drink well with succulent grilled meats, including fattier fare such as lightly spiced spare ribs (Italians use rosemary and sage). It will also age nicely, becoming lacy with time.

Score: 88

[Correggia Matteo Roche d'Ampsej Roero DOC 2004](#)

Garnet with black reflections. Fairly intense bouquet, with greenish accents mingled with deft red berry fruit and some acidity; it's pleasant in a slightly greener cast than some of the Nebbiolo from southern Piemonte -- a little wilder. On the palate it's medium bodied, with rich slightly greenish cherry fruit supported by clean sour cherry acidity and smooth sweet tannins that flow into a clean sour berry fruit finish with vegetal accents. It will drink quite well with grilled meats or light stews; worth seeking out if you like this style.

Score: 86-8

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[Cascina Chicco Valmaggione Roero DOC 2004](#)

Deep black almandine with black reflections. Fairly intense bouquet, with green leather and hints of Sichuan preserved vegetable mingled with spice and some savory accents. On the palate it's medium bodied, with fairly rich red berry fruit that gains direction from deft acidity, and is supported by smooth sweet tannins that flow into a clean berry fruit finish that gains depth from bitter accents. Pleasant, and will drink very well with succulent grilled meats or light stews, contributing considerably to the meal. Worth seeking out if you like this style.

Score: 86-8

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[Marsaglia Emilio Brich D'America Roero Superiore DOC 2004](#)

Deep almandine with black reflections. Fairly intense bouquet, with rosa canina and red berry fruit supported by some leather and underlying spice. On the palate it's medium bodied, with bright red berry fruit that gains direction from sour cherry acidity, and is supported by smooth sweet tannins that have a warm burr, and need a little time to settle. Graceful, in a rather slender traditional key, and will drink well with red meats off the grill or stewed; if you like this style you will enjoy it, but if you prefer more polished wines it might not be for you. It grew on me.

Score: 87

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[Negro Angelo e Figli Prachiosso Roero DOC 2004](#)

Black almandine with black reflections. Fairly rich bouquet, in a greenish key, with spice and herbal notes mingling with leaf tobacco and menthol; there isn't much fruit. On the palate it's medium bodied, with fairly rich cherry fruit that has greenish accents, and is supported by brisk sour cherry acidity, while the tannins are lacy and lead into a fairly long sour slightly greenish finish. Pleasant in a traditional key; it has an airy grace to it, and will drink nicely with grilled meats or light stews, and will also age nicely for 5-8 years. If you like this style, you will enjoy it.

Score: 86

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[Molino Ausario Barbaresco DOCG 2004](#)

Fairly deep black almandine ruby with black reflections. Intense bouquet, with greenish vegetal notes mingled with red berry fruit and some spice; the overall impression is harmonious. On the palate it's full, with bright red berry fruit supported by clean slightly greenish acidity and by ample sweet tannins that flow into a clean berry fruit finish. Elegant,

and bracingly youthful; it exhibits considerable vitality of the sort one associates with the teen years, and will drink very well with succulent grilled red meats or roasts now; expect it to age nicely for a decade or more too.

Score: 88-90

Molino Teorema Barbaresco DOCG 2004

Black almandine ruby with black reflections. Fairly rich bouquet, with red berry fruit supported by spice, alcohol, greenish accents and hints of underbrush. On the palate it's full, with bright cherry fruit that gains direction from delicate cherry acidity, and is supported by smooth sweet tannins that are fairly light -- not much smoothness from oak here -- and flow into a clean berry fruit finish. Quite traditional, and will drink well now with red meats, though it will also reward those with the patience to give it time, because it will become lacy with age, and have a great deal to say. Impressive.

Score: 90

[Nada Ada Valeirano Barbaresco DOCG 2004](#)

Black almandine with black reflections and lam rim. Fairly rich bouquet, with green leather and spice mingling with rosa canina and some red berry fruit; it's in a state of flux. On the palate it's ample, and full, with bright red berry fruit that gains direction from clean tart berry fruit acidity, and is supported by smooth sweet tannins that flow into a clean deft sour berry fruit finish. It's quite young, and will age very well, though one could enjoy it now with succulent red meats -- a porterhouse would be nice, as would leg of lamb, or venison. Expect it to age well for a decade or more.

Score: 88-90

[Winemaker's Site](#)

[La Spinetta Vigneto Valeirano Barbaresco DOCG 2004](#)

Deep black almandine with black reflections. Fairly rich bouquet, with greenish accents that bring watermelon rind to mind mingled with plum fruit, spice, and some cedar. A lot going on, in a very young key, and it's still developing. On the palate it's bright, with fairly rich cherry fruit supported by moderate cherry acidity and by smooth sweet tannins that flow into a clean deft berry fruit finish with cedar-laced tannic underpinning. Pleasant, but it needs a couple of years to really come together; it will drink quite well with red meats, in particular roasts or stews, and will age quite well.

Score: 87-9

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Fattoria San Giuliano Barbaresco DOCG 2004

Deep black almandine with black reflections. Fairly rich bouquet, with yellow peaches and some herbal accents laced with alcohol and hints of red berry fruit. Nice balance. On the palate it's full, with rich red berry fruit that gains direction from clean sour cherry acidity, and is supported by smooth sweet tannins that flow into a clean tart finish. It's quick to write but quite nice in a youthful key; it will develop quite nicely with time, and age well for a decade or more. If you must now, a porterhouse steak would be nice.

Score: 87-9

[Vietti Masseria Barbaresco DOCG 2004](#)

Deep black almandine ruby with black reflections. Fairly rich bouquet, with greenish spice and vegetal notes mingled with berry fruit and some sea salt. On the palate it's fairly full, with bright berry fruit supported by clean sour cherry spice, and by tannins that have clean slightly brambly notes and flow into a clean sour berry fruit finish. It's quick to write, but pleasant, and will drink very well with succulent red meats now, and also age well. In short, something to drink now or set aside. All the more impressive because it was the last wine of the day, when one wants to stop.

Score: 87-9

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[Abrigo Orlando Vigna Montersino Barbaresco DOCG 2004](#)

Deep garnet with black reflections. Fairly rich bouquet, with sour berry fruit supported by greenish accents, spice, and some cedar. On the palate it's full, with rich red berry fruit supported by clean slightly citric acidity, and by ample sweet tannins that flow into a clean smooth finish. Elegant, and will drink very well with succulent red meats -- a porterhouse cut comes to mind, even if it's not Piemontese -- though I might be tempted to set it aside for a few years. Expect it to do very nice things.

Score: 88

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Pertinace Vigneto Nervo Barbaresco DOCG 2004

Almandine with black reflections. The bouquet is a bit wild, with barnyard tang mingled with savory accents, deft acidity, and greenish overtones; if you like this style it is pleasant, but if you prefer more fruit driven wines it won't work for you. On the palate it's full, with bright slightly sour cherry fruit supported by sour plum acidity, and by clean sweet tannins that flow into a clean slightly greenish sour finish. Very traditional, and will drink well with succulent red meats or light stews I would give it a couple of years to get its bearings, and expect it to age well for a decade or more.

Score: 87

Cascina Bruciata Barbaresco DOCG 2004

Deep black almandine ruby with black reflections and almandine rim. Fairly rich bouquet, with smoky red berry fruit supported by greenish spice and warmth. On the palate it's full, with fairly rich red berry fruit that has slight sweet overtones, and gains direction from warm acidity, while the tannic structure is ample and has distinct bitter overtones that flow into a clean slightly bitter tannic finish. Pleasant, though very young, and it still has some baby fat to it; the sweetness is a bit unusual, but works quite well, and if you like the style you will enjoy it.

Score: 86-7