

# Kyle Phillips's Italian Wine Review

The authoritative consumer newsletter about the wines of Italy

MONDAY, JUNE 04, 2007

## Alba Wines 2007: Roero

Roero is one of the Langhe's three Nebbiolo-based wines; the production area is downriver from Alba, on the left bank of the Tanaro River, across the river from Barbaresco. The terrains in the Roero area are sandy, and as a result tend to yield wines that have richer, more delicate bouquets, but are not as powerful as those from Barolo or Barbaresco. Within this framework there is of course considerable variation, and with respect to the other appellations there is perhaps more: Roero's farmers have been making wine for just as long as anyone else in the region, but the appellation is much more recent than either Barolo or Barbaresco, and there is perhaps less consensus among the producers about what Roero should be: A wine that displays grace and finesse in a lighter key, or a more muscular wine?

Some are going one way and others the other; I found some of the wines in the grace-and-finesse group to be among the best expressions of Nebbiolo poured in the four days of Alba Wines, but have reservations about the more powerful group: Unless they are made with considerable care, they come across as bulked up. This said, 2004 was a fine vintage, which yielded a pleasing balance of finesse, grace, and power that the various winemakers worked with as they chose. Though they are almost all drinkable now, they are Nebbiolos, and will benefit from at least another year or two in bottle; I expect most of them to age well for up to a decade.

**The wines, tasted May 7 2007:**

**Cascina Cà Rossa**

Località Cascina Cà Rossa 56

Canale (CN)

Tel 0173 983 48

<http://www.langhe.net/cascinacarossa/>

#### **Cascina Cà Rossa Mompissano Roero DOC 2004**

Garnet with black reflections and almandine rim. The bouquet is fairly rich, with delicate red berry fruit laced with rosa canina, green leather and spice. Pleasant. On the palate it's medium bodied, with moderate fairly tart berry fruit that has some slightly disquieting green leather overtones, and is supported by tannins that are distinctly angular, and flow into a bitter angular finish. It's a touch rustic, but will drink well with grilled meats or light stews.

1 star

#### **Cascina Cà Rossa Audinaggio Roero DOC 2004**

Almandine with black reflections and lam rim. The bouquet is fairly rich, with herbal notes and some spice mingling with red berry fruit and spice. On the palate it's medium bodied, with graceful slightly sour cherry fruit supported by clean cherry acidity and smooth sweet tannins that have a slightly greenish burr and flow into a clean rather languid berry fruit finish. Pleasant in a traditional key; it somehow brings to mind a 20s siren dressed in silk, and will drink well with succulent grilled meats or hearty roasts now, becoming lacy with time. Traditional in feel; there's not the roundness that comes with small oak.

2 stars

#### **Azienda Agricola Cornarea**

Via Valentino 105

Canale (CN)

<http://www.cornarea.com/>

#### **Cornarea Roero DOC 2004**

Almandine with black reflections and garnet rim. The bouquet is moderately rich, with smoky red berry fruit supported by some green leather and slight eucalyptus-laced vegetal accents. On the palate it's medium bodied, with fairly rich cherry fruit supported by clean sour acidity and tannins that have a slight youthful burr, and flow into a clean berry fruit finish with bitter accents. It's quite young, but pleasant in a slightly traditional key, and will drink well with succulent red meats or hearty stews.

2 stars

#### **Azienda Agricola Matteo Correggia**

Via Case Sparse Garbinetto 124

Canale (CN)

<http://www.matteocorreggia.com/>

#### **Correggia Matteo Roche d'Ampsej Roero DOC 2004**

Garnet with black reflections and almandine rim. The bouquet is fairly intense, 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. Pleasant, in a traditional key, and will drink quite well with grilled meats or light stews; it will age nicely for 3-5 years, and is worth seeking out if you like this style.

2 stars

#### **Azienda Agricola Malabaila**

Piazza Castello 1

Canale (CN)

<http://www.malabaila.com/>

#### **Malabaila Castelletto Roero Superiore DOC 2004**

Deep black cherry ruby with black reflections and cherry rim. The bouquet is fairly rich, with red berry fruit that's overshadowed by spice from oak, and also by cedar accents with a vanilla underpinning. On the palate it's full, with moderate red berry fruit supported by decidedly bitter notes and smooth sweet tannins that again reveal a degree of oak in their makeup. It's international, and very young, and I found the wood overshadowing the fruit, which comes across as a little too polished.

1 star

#### **Malvirà Azienda Agricola dei F.lli Damonte**

Case Sparse Canova 144

Canale (CN)

<http://www.malvira.com/>

#### **Malvirà Trinità Roero Superiore DOC 2004**

Deep garnet with black reflections and almandine rim. The bouquet is fairly rich, with slightly greenish red berry fruit supported by spice and some vegetal accents; the overall effect is pleasing and well balanced. On the palate it's medium bodied, with moderately rich fairly tart red berry fruit supported by clean slightly brambly tannins that flow into a clean bitter finish. Pleasant, in a fairly traditional key -- if you like the smoothness of a rich Merlot it won't work for you, but if you prefer more aggressive

wines it will contribute considerably to a meal built around a porterhouse steak, or, say, grilled lamb chops.

2 stars

#### **Malvirà Mombeltramo Roero Superiore DOC 2004**

Deep garnet with black reflections and almandine rim. The bouquet is moderately rich, with floral accents and rosa canina mingling with berry fruit and spice, and some underlying cedar. On the palate it's medium bodied, with moderate red berry fruit supported by clean tannins that have a warm cedar-laced burr, and flow into a clean tannic finish. I'd have liked a little more richness to the fruit, which is a bit thin, but it will drink well with fattier foods because of its tannic bite.

1 star

#### **Monchiero Carbone**

Via S. Stefano Roero 2

Canale (CN)

<http://www.monchierocarbone.com>

#### **Monchiero Carbone Printi per Lucia Roero DOC 2004**

Deep garnet ruby with black reflections and cherry rim. The bouquet is smoky, with considerable cedar underlying the smoke, and not much fruit, though if one concentrates some berry fruit does emerge. Woody, however. On the palate it's medium bodied with moderate rather generic berry fruit supported by moderate acidity and by tannins that lay a warm burr over the tongue and flow into a clean bitter tannic finish with some oaky accents. It's a bit dry, and this is the oak's effect on the fruit, but because of its tannins will drink well now with richer meats. Gives an impression of trying too hard.

1 star

#### **Monchiero Carbone Sru Roero DOC 2004**

Black almandine with black reflections. The bouquet is a bit wild, with wet stable straw mingled with spice and, well, cow shit. Decidedly organic. On the palate it's medium bodied, with moderate berry fruit supported by greenish acidity and fairly smooth spicy tannins, while there are some organic overtones mingled with greenish accents that emerge in the finish. Rustic, and if you like the style you will like it, but you have to like the style.

1 star

### **Pace Di Negro Pietro E Bernardino**

Fraz. Madonna di Loreto

Cascina Pace 52

12043 Canale

Tel 017 3979544

### **Pace di Negro F.Ili Roero DOC 2004**

Deep garnet with black reflections and almandine rim. The bouquet is a bit unusual, with an initial rush of candied fruit that gives way to fairly rich red berry fruit with slightly mentholated accents and greenish overtones; this may be wood-fruit interaction. On the palate it's medium bodied, with moderate fruit supported by decidedly bitter accents and moderate acidity that flow into a clean mineral finish. There's not as much fruit as I'd have liked, and it's tongue drying; because of this it will drink well with richer foods.

1 star

### **Pace di Negro F.Ili Roero Superiore DOC 2004**

Deep black almandine ruby with black reflections. The bouquet is fairly intense, with cedar opening and some greenish accents following, but not much fruit. On the palate it's full, with moderate fruit supported by acidity and some bitter accents, while the tannins are ample and cedar laced; the overall effect is cavernous, and one can almost hear the wine echo, because the structure is much larger than the fruit that it's meant to contain.

1 star

### **Massucco F.Ili Azienda Agricola**

Via Serra 15

Castagnito

<http://www.cosebuonedicampagna.it/>

### **Massucco F.Ili Vigna Costa Roero DOC 2004**

Black almandine with black reflections and almandine rim. The bouquet is moderately rich, with fairly bright youthful red berry fruit supported by some acidity, and by clean slightly vegetal accents. On the palate it's medium bodied, with moderately rich berry fruit supported by some acidity, and by ample smooth tannins; it brings to mind a kid with quite a bit of baby fat; it stumbles some and there isn't the definition I would have liked. This said, it will drink well with simple grilled meats or light stews.

1 star

### **Azienda Agricola Cascina Chicco**

Via Valentino, 144

12043 Canale (CN)

<http://www.cascinachicco.com/>

#### **Cascina Chicco Montespinato Roero DOC 2004**

Deep black cherry ruby with black reflections and almandine rim. The bouquet is fairly rich, with green leather and hints of stewed mushrooms mingling with spice and some acidity; there's also some red berry fruit and cocoa too. On the palate it's medium bodied, with fairly rich cherry fruit that lays a dusty trail over the tongue, and flows into a clean fairly bitter finish; direction comes from moderate acidity, while the support is from smooth sweet tannins, and the overall impression is rather lax. It's a bit settled.

1 star

#### **Cascina Chicco Valmaggione Roero DOC 2004**

Deep black almandine with black reflections. The bouquet is fairly intense, 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.

2 stars

### **Azienda Agricola Marsaglia**

Via Mussone, 2

Castellinaldo (CN) 12050

<http://www.cantinamarsaglia.it/>

#### **Marsaglia Emilio Brich D'America Roero Superiore DOC 2004**

Deep almandine with black reflections and almandine rim. The bouquet is fairly intense, 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. It's 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 considerably, but if you prefer wines that are more polished it might not be for you. I found it growing upon me.

2 stars

### **Morra Stefanino**

Via Castagnito, 50

12050 Castellinaldo (CN)

Tel 0173 213489

### **Morra Stefanino Roero DOC 2004**

Deep black almandine with black reflections and almandine rim. The bouquet is fairly rich, with rosa canina and red berry fruit mingled with some chalk and greenish accents, with an underlying sweetness that brings crushed almonds to mind. Harmonious. On the palate it's medium bodied, with fairly rich sour berry fruit supported by clean brambly tannins that flow into a brambly tannic finish; it's deft, in a fairly light key, and will drink well with succulent meats. More richness to the fruit would have been nice, but as it stands it is harmonious, and will become lacy with time.

2 stars

### **Bel Colle**

Frazione Castagni 56

Verduno (CN)

<http://www.belcolle.it>

### **Bel Colle Monvije Roero DOC 2004**

Deep almandine with black reflections and lam rim. The bouquet is fairly rich, with strong savory accents and sea salt mingling with spice and some green leather; there's also hardwood ash. On the palate it's medium bodied, with moderately intense fruit supported by clean sour acidity that has savory accents, and by ample sweet tannins that flow into a clean slightly bitter tannic finish. I'd have liked a little more fruit to fill out the structure; if you like brambly wines you will enjoy it, but there isn't as much fruit as many expect. It will drink well with red meats.

1 star

### **Azienda Agricola Ponchione Maurizio**

Via R. Sacco 9/A

Govone (CN)

Tel 0173 58149

### **Ponchione Maurizio Monfrini Roero DOC 2004**

Deep black almandine ruby with black reflections and almandine rim. The bouquet is fairly intense, with green leather and some leaf tobacco mingling with underbrush and

some cedar; there's not much fruit, though some berry fruit does emerge when sought. On the palate it's medium bodied, and rather lax, with moderate sour berry fruit supported by bitter acidity and ample sweet tannins that flow into a clean sour finish with underlying dusky bitterness. As I said, lax; it brings to mind a person who has settled into a deep recliner.

1 star

### **Azienda Agricola Buganza Renato**

Cascina Garbianotto 4

Piobesi D'Alba

<http://www.renatobuganza.it/>

### **Buganza Renato Gerbole Roero DOC 2004**

Almandine with black reflections and almandine rim. The bouquet is fairly rich, 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), and will also age nicely, becoming lacy with time. If you like the style, you will enjoy it very much.

2 stars

### **Buganza Renato Bric Paradis Roero DOC 2004**

Black almandine with black reflections. The bouquet is fairly rich, with bright red berry fruit supported by greenish medicinal accents and some cedar. On the palate it's medium bodied, with moderate fruit supported by some mineral acidity, and by clean tannins that lay an oaky veneer over the tongue; the fruit is overshadowed by the wood, at present, and as a result it feels a bit flat.

1 star

### **Azienda Agricola Almondo**

Via San Rocco 26

Montà (CN)

<http://www.giovannialmondo.com/>

### **Almondo Giovanni Bric Valdiana Roero DOC 2004**

Deep garnet with black reflections and almandine rim. The bouquet is fairly rich, with spice and vegetal notes mingled with green leather and sea salt; there's not much fruit

but the overall impression is quite harmonious. On the palate it's medium bodied, with moderate berry fruit supported by mineral acidity and by tannins that have a warm almost savory burr, and flow into a clean slightly bitter finish. I'd have liked more richness overtones the fruit on the palate, though the overall impression remains graceful; it will age nicely becoming lacy with time, and if you don't require that your wine be fruit driven, you will enjoy it because it has a story to tell.

2 stars

### **Taliano Michele**

C.so Manzoni 24

12046 Montà d'Alba (CN)

Tel. 0173 976512

### **Taliano Michele Roche Dra Bòssòra Roero DOC 2004**

Almandine with black reflections and pale rim. The bouquet is bitter, with some wet stable straw mingled with menthol, underbrush, and savory accents, but not much fruit. On the palate it's medium bodied, with moderate fruit supported by savory accents and mineral acidity, while the tannins are bitter, with a fairly long burr. I'd have liked more fruit; the overall impression is settled.

1 star

### **Viglione Gian Paolo - Generaj**

Borgata Tucci, 4 3

12064 Montà (Cuneo)

Tel. 0173 976142

### **Viglione Gian Paolo - Generaj Bric Aùt Roero DOC 2004**

Black almandine with black reflections and almandine rim. The bouquet is medicinal, with iodine and eucalyptus supported by bitter accents, but not much fruit. On the palate it's medium bodied, with surprisingly rich sour berry fruit supported by sour berry fruit acidity, and by smooth sweet tannins that flow into a sour slightly bitter finish. The nose may be in a phase, or this may be what it is; it will, because of its sourness, work well with succulent grilled meats, though you have to like the style, which is rather austere. It will become lacy with time, and may do unexpected things as it ages.

1 star

### **Azienda Agricola Negro Angelo e Figli**

Frazione Sant'Anna

Monteu Roero (CN)

<http://www.negroangelo.it/>

#### **Negro Angelo e Figli Sudisfà Roero DOC 2004**

Deep black almandine ruby with black reflections and almandine rim. The bouquet is fairly rich, with floral accents and rosa canina mingled with red berry fruit and some mentholated spice. On the palate it's medium bodied, with moderately intense red berry fruit supported by sour cherry acidity, and by tannins that have a warm glancing feel to them, and flow into a clean slightly greenish finish. I'd have liked more definition to the wine, and more fruit; the bitter accents carry the show throughout. Because of them it will drink well with fattier foods.

1 star

#### **Negro Angelo e Figli Prachiosso Roero DOC 2004**

Black almandine with black reflections and almandine rim. The bouquet is fairly rich, 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.

2 stars

#### **Cascina Val Del Prete di Roagna Mario**

Via Santuario, 2

12040 Priocca (Cuneo)

Tel. 0173 616534

#### **Cascina Val del Prete Roero DOC 2004**

Deep almandine with black reflections. The bouquet is frankly oaky, with considerable cedar and greenish notes mingling with some red berry fruit. On the palate it's flatter than I might have expected, with moderate fruit strongly overshadowed by oak, which interacts with marked acidity (that keeps the wine from flagging), and flows into a greenish oaky finish. Oaky, and though the underlying acidity is interesting, I found the wood excessive. In the wine's defense it is very young, and the wood will fold in with time. But it needs a couple of years, and the score reflects the present.

1 star

#### **Deltetto Azienda Agricola**

Corso Alba 43

Canale (CN)

<http://www.deltetto.com>

**Deltetto Braja Roero DOC 2004**

Almandine ruby with black reflections and almandine rim. The bouquet is bitter, with hardwood ash and cedar mingled with spice; there's not much fruit. On the palate it's medium bodied, with less fruit than I might have liked, and considerable wood, which is quite evident in the cedar notes of the tannins and the smoky bitterness of the finish. I'd have liked more fruit, because the structure containing it is nice.

1 star

**Cantina del Nebbiolo Soc. Coop A.R.L.**

Via Torino 17

Veza D'Alba (CN)

Tel 0173 65040

<http://www.cantinadelnebbiolo.com>

**Cantina del Nebbiolo Roero DOC 2004**

Almandine with black reflections and soft almandine rim. The bouquet is fairly intense, with rosa canina mingled with red berry fruit and some greenish accents with underbrush as well. On the palate it's lighter than I might have expected, with tart, brambly red berry fruit supported by brambly acidity and by tannins that are fairly light; it's thin, but has a brambly grace to it, and if you like the style you will enjoy it because it does display considerable harmony. If you prefer more fruit, it won't work for you. Expect it to become lacy and mineral with time.

1 star

**Giacomo Vico**

Via Torino 80

Canale (CN)

Tel 0173 979 126

<http://www.giacomovico.it>

**Vico Giacomo Roero Superiore DOC 2004**

Garnet with black reflections and almandine rim. The bouquet is cedar laced, with greenish accents and hints of chalk. Not much fruit, but rather minerality. On the palate it's full, with fairly rich slightly sour red berry fruit that gains direction from moderate sour cherry acidity, and is supported by smooth sweet tannins that flow into a clean fairly bitter finish. It's pleasant, but not as rich (in terms of fruit) as some wines; it is

quite clean in a frankly aggressive old style and as such is a wine that you will either like or not. In short, takes no quarter. Because of the tart tannic accents, it will drink well with rich meats, including sausages and such, off the grill, and it will age nicely too. But you have to like the style.

2 stars

Kyle Phillips