Piedmont

HISTORY

Native vines have long been abundant in Italy, named "land of vines" by the Ancient Greeks. The Romans had a turn cultivating those vines in Piedmont, setting the stage for a long winemaking tradition. France, especially Burgundy, influenced the style of viticulture and winemaking over time, introducing new varietals and trellising. Even so, the region remains most famous for its native grape, Nebbiolo, and its most widely planted grape, Barbera.

GEOGRAPHY

Piedmont's rolling green hills are backed by the majestic, snowy Alps reaching towards the heavens. The ancient town with its stone tower looks like something straight out of a Disney movie. You really couldn't ask for a more picturesque location for a wine tour, if that's on your to-do list! The region sits at the top of Italy, in the flared upper edge of the "boot", geographically defined by those same mountains and the populous Po Valley. The Valley takes up quite a bit of land, leaving only 30% of the entire region truly suitable for vineyard planting. Most of that land is in the southern Apennines, a set of lumpy hills that play host to the highest quality wine production in Piedmont.

CLIMATE

It's the tug-of-war between the snowy Alps and the warmth of the nearby Mediterranean that creates Piedmont's unique climate. The two forces conspire to trap the area's notable fog, or nebia, which aides in the ripening of the very special Nebbiolo grape. Piedmont's colder, continental winter climate and famous fog are also why most grapes are planted on hillsides above 490ft, to find the sun above the fog.

GRAPES

Native Nebbiolo holds the crown among collectors in such sought after wines as Barolo and Barbaresco, called the king and queen of Italian wine. Nebbiolo is a small, thick-skinned grape with a very long growing season. Barbera is the most widely planted grape in the region and accounts for the vast majority of red wines produced. Among whites, Moscato is the most prominent and recognizable variety.

WINE CHARACTER

Barolo and Barbaresco are both made from the Nebbiolo grape, only about 10 miles apart, with different soils, microclimates and regulations. Barolo is a beautiful beast with grippy tannins requiring a decade of bottle aging to hit its peak. Barbaresco is more elegant and approachable young, appealing to impatient oenophiles. Barbera is the varietal most likely to find a glass, while others sit in cellars. With soft tannins and bright cherry flavors, it's the charmer in the group.

2015 Costa di Bussia Barolo
'Bussia' Barolo

APPELLATION:
Barolo

VARIETAL:
100% Nebbiolo

VINEYARD:
Bussia, Arnulfo Estate

WINEMAKERS:
Marco Marsili and Sergio Elia

AGING:
36 months in large, Slovenian oak barrels

PRODUCTION:
N/A

BEST FROM:
2023-2037

ULTIMATE FOOD PAIRING:
Parmigiano Reggiano Cheese sprinkled with cracked black pepper

ORDERING INFO:
1048810 | $59.95

DESCRIPTION:
For 150 years plus, this Estate has been located between Barolo and Monforte d'Alba on the famed Bussia Hill. The winery was founded in 1874 by Luigi Arnulfo, who is considered by many to be a pioneer of Barolo for his innovative ideas and dedication to spreading the good word. The winery sports a museum on site telling the story of their founder and his "avant-garde" ideas in the Langhe of his time. Arnulfo gave up pharmacy for winemaking and put his scientific background to work as he sought to perfect and introduce Barolo to new markets, including California. After his death in 1928, the winery fell into disrepair until 1980's, when Paolo and Guido Sartirano invested in restoring both the property and the name to their previous and well-deserved glory.

Inviting and spicy, this is a classic Barolo with an elegant, harmonious approach. The tannins are silky and persistent, with the recognizable grip of Nebbiolo softened only slightly by time. Aromas are of truffle and dark berry, with an unusual hint of hay setting it apart right away. The linear palate delivers sour cherry flavors with some clove and toasted hazelnut.

2016 Carlo Giacosa 'Narin' Barbaresco DOCG

APPELLATION:
Barbaresco

VARIETAL:
100% Nebbiolo

VINEYARD:
N/A

WINEMAKER:
Maria Grazia Giacosa

AGING:
36 months in large oak casks

PRODUCTION:
400 cases

BEST FROM:
Now through 2032

ULTIMATE FOOD PAIRING:
Braised beef dishes

ORDERING INFO:
1048812 | $49.95

DESCRIPTION:
The Carlo Giacosa Winery has been run by the family for four generations, situated in Barbaresco with a lovely view over the village's medieval tower and the Tanaro Valley. Today, the founder's granddaughter Maria is running the show, still working with her father, Carlo, and mentoring her son, Luca. The winery has expanded and evolved over the years to embrace new technologies and methodologies, but the wine is as it's always been; a testament to the family's passion for excellence. Their estate vineyards are planted entirely to native varieties, Nebbiolo, Barbera and Dolcetto. They take great care to capture the characteristics that have elevated those varietals on the world stage, from the exalted perfume to the concentrated flavors.

Garnet-red, with an expansive, intense nose of roses, crushed herbs, forest berry and tilled soil aromas over buckets of ripe fruit and hints of licorice. Focused and full-bodied with both tension and loads of flavor, the elegant palate doles out crunchy red cherry, pomegranate and sage alongside taut tannins and vibrant acidity. This is bold enough to pair with some seriously flavorful feasts!

2017 Brandini Rocche del Santo Barbera d'Alba

APPELLATION:
La Morra

VARIETAL:
100% Barbera

VINEYARD:
N/A

WINEMAKER:
Giovanna Bagnasco

AGING:
12 months in barrels

PRODUCTION:
N/A

BEST FROM:
Now through 2025

ULTIMATE FOOD PAIRING:
Beef Tartar

ORDERING INFO:
1048811 | $39.95

DESCRIPTION:
More than a winery, Brandini is an experience through and through from the vines to the organic vegetable garden at their 'agriturismo' on site. Wine is only one pillar of a well lived life, and they strive to address the whole structure! In the fields, they chose the path of most resistance out of respect for the land and their loyal customers. Their goal is to produce wines that are an expression of the territory with respect for the long Langa tradition. "At the center of all of our choices is the search for the highest quality from the vineyard to the bottle." Their 18 hectares extend between La Morra, Serralunga d'Alba, and Monforte d'Alba, comprised of 4 different clones across 4 Barolo Crus.

This wine embraces the inherent concentration of the Estate's Barbera with an impenetrable violet color and enveloping mouthfeel. The characteristic acidity is balanced by 12 months in very large barrels, always with an eye toward maintaining a sense of terroir. The nose is vinous with notes of spice and licorice. The palate is intense, laced with cocoa and more licorice, and boasts exceptional structure and elegance.