

## WINES MADE USING THE NEBBIOLO GRAPE

The Nebbiolo grape is grown almost nowhere outside of the Italian province of Piedmont and its neighboring provinces. The grape makes wines that are high in tannin and high in acid. The Nebbiolo yields two of the greatest red wines that exist: **BAROLO** and **BARBARESCO**. Each is the name of a village; both are close to the town of Alba which is a bit southeast of Turin (Torino).

Naming a great wine for the town or village near the vineyards which grow the greatest grapes for the best wine of a larger region is used in Italy dominantly and in France almost exclusively. Barolo requires 3 years of aging with at least 2 in cask. Barbaresco requires a minimum of 2 years of aging, with at least 1 in cask. The wines must be made exclusively from the Nebbiolo grape. Even when aged exactly the same way, the reputation is that Barbaresco is softer, more elegant, more “feminine” than Barolo. The difference is in the *terroir*, especially the soil. In France’s Bordeaux, there are over 8,000 “estates” (called “Chateau”) which are wine producers; of these, perhaps 100 – 200 are of such quality that their wines are really first class. That is not true in Barolo and Barbaresco; almost all of the wine with these two village names is really first class. The wines’ current year release sell for about \$35-\$350, with by far the largest proportion in the \$55-125 range. The entire production of both areas combined is about equivalent to that of a single mid-volume California winery. The producers are almost exclusively estates in which a single family on its 4<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> generation will grow the grapes, make and bottle the wine, and sell the bottled wine to importers and Italian distributors. That is, there are not large wineries and there is little negotiant wine. **BAROLO** producers include **Bruno Giacosa, Domenico Clerico, Angelo Gaja, Giacomo Conterno, Bartolo Mascarello, Luciano Sandrone, Vietti, Paolo Scavino, Ceretto, Giacomo Borgogno**, while the great **BARBARESCO** producers include **Bruno Giacosa, Paitin, Albino Rocca, La Spinetta, Angelo Gaja, Marchesi di Gresy, Prunotto**.



Another Italian DOCG level wine made of Nebbiolo is **GATTNIARRA**. It does not require but 90% Nebbiolo, but does require three years of aging, at least one of which must be in cask. According to wine writer Tom Stevenson the area achieved DOCG status “through the almost single-handed efforts of **Mario Antoniolo**.” This area is in far Northeast Piedmont. A similar wine is made next door, at **GHEMME**.

Fratelli **Brovia Barolo** Garblèt Sué 2004 WA95 (Houston Wine Merchant \$80, a Best Buy); **Pio Cesare Barbaresco** 2004 WA92 (Spec’s \$66); Renato **Ratti Barolo** Marcenasco 2005 WA91 (Spec’s \$55); **Travaglini Gattinarra** 2003 WS91 (Spec’s \$31, a Best Buy); **Pelissero Nebbiolo** 2007 WA91 (Spec’s \$28).

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