



# 2011 BAROLO THE PERFECT VINTAGE FOR ITS TIMES

Andrew Jefford introduces a thought-provoking village-by-village tour through the accessible, smiling, and welcoming 2011 Barolo vintage. His companions and fellow note-takers were Nicolas Belfrage MW and Bruno Besa

Nature treated the Langhe kindly in 2011. Though not the vines: The growing season was almost uncomfortably dry, and the vintage was marked by two spells of intense heat. The first came in late spring; the second, still hotter spell came in late August. Between these two pulses, though, the summer temporized agreeably, slowing and extending the ripening cycle in exactly the way that Nebbiolo loves. The wines proved precocious during cellar maturation, and a number of producers bottled a little earlier than usual. (Only 18 months' wood aging is now required, rather than 24 months; the rest of the three-year aging cycle can be in bottle.)

What of the personality of the wines? Nick Belfrage's succinct verdict, in the first paragraph of his conclusions, could hardly be bettered, and his nuancing of 2011 in comparison to other recent Barolo and Barbaresco vintages is admirably and accurately concise. It may not be a "great vintage," but in its attractive modesty, it may well be a perfect vintage for its times. Let me explain.

## A region coming of age

These are golden days for Barolo and Barbaresco. It's hard not to see the region as coming of age; the childhood innocence and insouciance of artisanal production has long been surmounted by reputable producers, while the stormy adolescent exaggeration of the "modernist" movement in the Langhe has calmed over the past decade. The lessons have been learned, absorbed, refined, and then refracted into a

multiplicity of working practices and expressive styles that, crucially, serve terroir, neither seeking to dominate it nor taking it for granted. As elsewhere in the wine world, the seasonal pattern is warming here, but (thus far at least) the Langhe looks like a climate-change winner rather than a loser. The difficult seasons of the past resulted in craggy, gaunt, fruitless wines that may have had a certain noble refinement to them but omitted to give simple pleasure. This is much less true today; the flesh has ripened and filled, while the always prolific tannins have been softened and chamfered. Barolo and Barbaresco producers, in sum, have never brought more attractive wine to the market than they are bringing now.

Then along comes 2011—not merely an unforbidding vintage but a smiling, welcoming one. These often delicious wines are accessible early and eminently scrutable, with a huge amount to relish and enjoy. They come to the market at a time when many fine-wine buyers are looking to discover new regions and expand the breadth of their cellars, thanks in part to a disenchantment with the extravagance of Bordeaux pricing and the paucity of Burgundy supply. Those experimenting with Barolo and Barbaresco will find much that they recognize and crave, whatever their drinking background. Acid-seeking Burgundy palates will relish the tension inherent in great Nebbiolo and admire the pale grace, refinement, and subtlety of traditionally aged examples. Structure-loving Bordeaux palates will find much to

enjoy in the wines' polyphenolic grandeur and like the way in which enlightened modernists have sought to bring that structure to bottle for aging, rather than crafting the "pre-aged" young wines of the classic tradition. No fine-wine lover can fail to recognize the concentration and authority that this grape grown in this place on earth seems to have inscribed within it; these things are there in every sip. Those, finally, who love the intellectual chase of pursuing a set of aromas and flavors back to their hillsides of origin, and investigating the way in which sensual profiles are prefigured by soil and slope, will find this increasingly easy to do in Barolo and Barbaresco. Single-village and single-vineyard wines are increasingly common, and the distinguished cartographic work of Alessandro Masnaghetti lends these nuances accessibility.<sup>1</sup>

## Villages and vineyards

That, in fact, was a secondary aim of our tasting: to see if village or single-site characters emerged clearly from the wines. (The villages of origin were known to the tasters.) Nick Belfrage felt that these differences were muted compared to the strong distinctions between individual producer styles, but Bruno Besa disagreed, citing clear village differences. I tend to agree with Nick Belfrage in this debate, with the exception of wines from the "transitional" village of Verduno, on the cusp between Barbaresco and Barolo, whose lightness, elegance, and finesse genuinely seemed distinctive.

Did our tasting come up with a winning set of sites? There were three different categories of wine in the tasting: multisite blends from vineyards in different villages; multisite blends from a single village; and recognized single-vineyard wines. The vineyard recognition is that of the MGA (*menzioni geografiche aggiuntive*) system—though several qualifications should be made here. The first is that MGA sites vary enormously in size: Bussia, for example, is almost 300ha (740 acres) in size, whereas Arione is a mere 5.72ha (14 acres), and the wine we had in our tasting from that site came from a sliver of vines under 1ha (2.47 acres) in extent owned by Enzo Boglietti. (Arione is now almost entirely owned by Roberto Conterno of Giacomo Conterno.) Another qualification is that some of the names on labels that might appear to be vineyard names are in fact fantasy names. And a third is that there are many confusing similarities between names in different villages. Alessandro Masnaghetti's reference guide is an essential adjunct to decoding MGAs.

We surveyed wines from too many different single sites to reach any firm conclusions about those, but by compounding scores for wines from different villages we were able to arrive at the following table (*bottom right*).<sup>2</sup>

It should be noted that sample size varied, but the largest samples were from Barolo, La Morra, and Serralunga (11, 11, and nine wines respectively), while the smallest sample was from Verduno (three samples), so it was not

ANDREW JEFFORD'S TOP WINES	
Manzone Barolo Castelletto (Monforte d'Alba)	96
Giovanni Rosso Barolo Serra (Serralunga d'Alba)	96
Vietti Barolo Lazzarito (Serralunga d'Alba)	96
Roberto Voerzio Barolo Rocche dell'Annunziata (La Morra)	96
Fratelli Alessandria Barolo Monvigliero (Verduno)	94
Giacomo Conterno Barolo Francia (Monforte d'Alba)	94
Paolo Conterno Barolo Ginestra (Monforte d'Alba)	94
Elio Grasso Barolo Ginestra Casa Mate (Monforte d'Alba)	94
Marcarini Barolo La Serra (La Morra)	94
Paolo Scavino Barolo Bric del Fiasco (Castiglione Falletto)	94
GD Vajra Barolo Ravera (Barolo)	94

AVERAGE AND RANGE OF SCORES		
	Average	Range
Tasting	89	78-98
NB	89	85-98
BB	90	83-96
AJ	88	78-96

SCORES BY VILLAGE	
Wine	Points per wine per taster
Verduno	91.5
Serralunga	91
Monforte and Castiglione Falletto	90
Barolo	89
La Morra	88

evident that sample size predisposed wines of a particular origin to a high or a low average score. Few will be surprised to see Serralunga toward the top of the table, but Verduno's result is impressive.

It's worth noting, finally, that the scores for this tasting in general were very high, with no taster's group of top wines including any with a score lower than 92, and with ten individual scores of 96 to 98. This may surprise readers, given that the 2011 vintage is generally considered to be several notches below "great." The vintage is not particularly consistent, though (there were other scores as low as 78). It's worth following recommendations for 2011, and while no taster claimed that these would be the longest-lived Barolos in the cellar, at best it is a vintage offering enormous pleasure. The top wines of the year are unquestionably outstanding efforts in the global fine-wine context.

## Notes

- Masnaghetti's publications are available via his website [www.enogea.it](http://www.enogea.it). Particularly recommended for those interested in discovering more about Barolo terroirs and MGAs is his bilingual *Barolo MGA: The Barolo Great Vineyard Encyclopedia*.
- The two wines from Brunate, an MGA shared by La Morra and Barolo, were awarded to La Morra, since that village claims 73 percent of the cru's plantings; and the wine from Bussia, shared by Monforte and Barolo, was awarded to Monforte, since that village claims 98 percent of the cru's plantings.

**Castello di Verduno Barolo Massara (Verduno)** (14.5% ABV) | 94  
 Single vineyard: Massara MGA

**NB** | Attractive mid-depth color with beginnings of turn. Classic rose-petal-and-tar nose. Beautifully expressive yet balanced, powerful yet restrained palate, with firm acid, ripe velvety tannin, and concentrated fruit-flower flavor. Drink from 2018 for many years. | 96

**BB** | Garnet to tawny. Closed yet complex, dark nose with smoke and black fruits. Restrained with road tar and dried roses. Full body yet elegant and fragrant, with big yet refined tannins. It certainly needs a few years to show its best, but it should age for many years to come. | 92

**AJ** | The deepest Verduno on the color code. Warm, zesty plummy fruit with plenty of aerial lift behind the fruit-skin pulse. Smooth, soft, more secondary than the aromas led me to think, and less masterful, too. Yes, we are in the subtly inflected place between balletic Barbaresco and leonine Barolo. Another outstanding wine: plenty of fruit, but it's fruited grace; there are secondary delights to discover sewn up in those graceful, dancing tannins. Barolo lovers, ignore this village to your cost! | 92

**Guido Porro V Lazzairasco (Serralunga d'Alba)** (14.5% ABV) | 94  
 Single vineyard: Lazzarito MGA  
 (Lazzairasco is in lower Lazzarito)

**NB** | Bright, attractive color with slight rim. Poetic, floral nose. Has the mythical Serralunga structure but also plenty of herb, flower, and fruit components. Strong and firm, mouth-filling and complex, an outstanding wine that goes on and on. Needs to be sipped to be appreciated. Drink from 2020. | 98

**BB** | Transparent garnet to tawny. A touch closed and spirity yet complex and mineral, with small red fruits, cedarwood, smoked meat, road tar, and violets. A balanced palate with sweet red fruit and great tannic grip yet elegant and long. Another classic Serralunga Barolo. What a joy. | 92

**AJ** | Very clear and translucent. Graceful chiffon scents, all fine cherry and blossom on the breeze; shut your eyes, and you could almost be in Chambolle. Very delicious on the palate, and disconcertingly easy of access; it slides on to the tongue like mist, and before you know it you've swallowed. Very graceful traditional cellar work here. The fruit qualities are outstanding: no question. So, is there a question? Might we have wished for just a little more extractive force? I'm sure such a stylistically assured wine has legions of followers who would shout, "No!" But... well, I'm only asking. Wonderful fruit, poise, restraint, grace, and finesse. | 90

**Giovanni Rosso Barolo Serra (Serralunga d'Alba)** (14% ABV) | 94  
 Single vineyard: Serra MGA

**NB** | Deep, almost opaque. Intense morello cherry and small black fruits on nose. Rich and sweet ripe fruit on the palate against a backdrop of ripe tannins and refreshing acidity. Long and

tasty now, and it will improve. | 92

**BB** | Deep garnet to tawny rim. A touch closed on the nose yet mineral and layered with Bing cherries, crushed stones, tobacco leaf, violets, and rosewater. Balanced, refined palate, with layered fruit, aristocratic tannins, and a long, mineral finish. This is what Serralunga is all about. Complexity and refinement. | 92

**AJ** | Light and clear. Wonderfully exciting aromatic profile of perfumed grasses (vetiver), sweet and moist unlit tobacco, dark berries, a little char, the hay barn, woodland leaf litter. Great amplitude and charm. One sip, and you realize you are in the presence of a mouth-filling and compelling wine: deep, long, arresting, complete, and orchestral. The acids and tannins are both wonderfully ripe and in perfect synthesis; the autumn berry fruits are subtly drawn; there is a wealth of secondary complexities. And at the same time, it has the easy irresistibility of 2011 to it; it's obviously a fine Barolo, yet we could all drink this one tonight. There is nothing craggy or forbidding there. Warm congratulations to whoever crafted this utterly delicious fine wine. | 96

**Fratelli Alessandria Barolo Monvigliero (Verduno)** (15% ABV) | 92  
 Single vineyard: Monvigliero MGA

**NB** | Medium-deep color, turning. Surprisingly appley, fresh fruit-salady nose. Subtle wine of modest attack, which then opens out in the mouth and finishes on a fresh, floral note of elegance rather than power. Drinking soon for a number of years. | 89

**BB** | Transparent garnet to tawny. Restrained and refined Nebbiolo nose with small red fruits, menthol, Bing cherries, and hints of minerals. Sweet fruit and fragrant acidity. Long, complex, mineral finish. A classic Barolo of considerable pedigree. | 94

**AJ** | Clear garnet with some bricking. Typically gentle, stealthy, cat-like Verduno aromas, creeping up on you as if you had hardly realized you were sniffing a wine, and then suddenly you sense that you are somewhere else on earth, aromatically speaking, from the place where you thought you were. Creamy, refined, your neighbor's coffee: lovely. Soft, grasping, mouth-filling, super-secondary but utterly commanding. Difficult and none at all of the easy sensual charm of some of the plusher wines in this tasting, but this refined and secondary wine has a huge amount to offer the drinker who is prepared to stop, listen, be Zen. Entrancing Verduno; very *villageois*. 2011 a good vintage to take the time to taste-visit Verduno, since the overall vintage comfort makes these wines a little less difficult than usual. | 94

**Battaglio Barolo (Monforte d'Alba)** (15% ABV) | 92  
 Single village: Monforte d'Alba

**NB** | Deep, almost opaque, with turn on the rim. Hints of small red fruits and perfume on the nose; woodsmoke. Fat, dense palate of great concentration but not, at the moment, of great balance. Very impressive but needs four years; drink from 2019. | 92

**BB** | Deep garnet to orange rim. Broad, complex, leather-and-tobacco nose, with small black fruits and hints of petrol. Full-bodied palate, with dusty tannins and complex black-fruit character. Tobacco and leather and a long, fragrant finish. A muscular Barolo for rich Piemontese food that should age well for the next decade or more. | 92

**AJ** | Deep, to browning at the edge. Very secondary and developed, with lots of tangy ripeness, too; neither pristine nor poised, yet gratifying and attractive nonetheless. Fat and fungally delicious: Whack your nose into this soft cèpe. Wow: spectacular concentration here. Someone has left their fruit out very late, but can I say it was a mistake? I can't. It's low acid, it's massively tannic, it's not exactly classic, but it is one of the most compelling and fascinating and furrowed-brow wines in this very fascinating tasting. Exotic, almost kinky in the Barolo context, but all about the vineyard nonetheless, with little cellar influence and huge allusion potential. Take a look! | 90

**Enzo Boglietti Barolo Arione (Serralunga d'Alba)** (14.5% ABV) | 92  
 Single vineyard: Arione MGA

**NB** | Deep color with some turn. Rich and full, with firm tannins and good acidity. Abundant and concentrated, this should make a fine bottle from about 2018 but is a bit tight at present. | 89

**BB** | Garnet to tawny. Clean, mineral, intense, complex, fragrant small red-fruit nose, with roses, violets, mint, and tobacco. Full-bodied yet balanced and elegant, with a long, clean, sweet, mineral finish. Another superb, salty Serralunga Barolo. | 96

**AJ** | Deep garnet red. Juicy, sweet-toned, and richly constituted aromas, without the refinement of some of its peers, but with plenty to relish. A big plummy core here. On the palate, this is a broad-chested Serralunga, a little less sweetly beguiling than the aromatic spectrum suggested, with plenty of dry, refined, and secondary nuance to take you beyond the pleasure of the fruit. At the same time, it is texturally open, welcoming, not forbidding; bottled at the perfect moment. Very satisfying, yet plenty of intrigue for the seasoned drinker. | 90

**Paolo Conterno Barolo Ginestra (Monforte d'Alba)** (14.5% ABV) | 92  
 Single vineyard: Ginestra MGA

**NB** | Medium-deep going on deep. Pronounced woodsmoke on the nose, together with plenty of quality fruit; likewise on the palate, finishes medium-long, sweet morello cherry playing its part. Drink from 2016. | 89

**BB** | Garnet to orange rim. Mature nose, with black and red fruits, leather, mint, rosewater, and road tar. Rich, mature palate, with layered, refined tannins and a long, complex finish. Hefty Barolo with great aging potential. | 92

**AJ** | Deep dark red-black. Warm, complex, secondary, elegant, and refined: a very rounded and very satisfying aromatic profile. Big, bugle-work: juicy, vigorous, masculine, muscular, and powerful. Actually it is more primary than the

aromas suggested, but this absolutely to the credit of the wine concerned, which is terrifically vital and youthful and cellar-seeking. Once the flavors catch up with the maturity the aromas are already sketching out, this will be a sensational bottle of Monforte. A wine of magnificent constitution. | 94


**Poderi Luigi Einaudi Barolo Cannubi (Barolo)** (14.5% ABV) | 92  
 Single vineyard: Cannubi MGA

**NB** | Attractive mid-depth color with the beginnings of turn. Fresh but a bit backward on the nose. Vivid attack and stately progress through the mouth, reaching out to the sides and finishing on a structured note; very good length and quite a bit of class. | 90

**BB** | Garnet to tawny rim. A touch closed, youthful Nebbiolo nose, with refined, complex small black and red fruits and hints of crushed stones and rosewater. Refined palate with great fruit complexity, tight and long, with a clean, soft finish. Very refined and a joy to taste. | 94

**AJ** | Deep black-red. Warmly and gently fruited: redcurrants and blackberries in harmonious synthesis. Just a hint of farm gate behind; not quite as pristine as the best of its peers when first poured, but this slight reduction soon clears with air. Enticing and engaging scents; warm log and violet finally. Earthy, full, balanced, and long, with searching but ripe acidity; the ample but soft grip of the vintage; plus lots of earthy, humus, and autumn-leaf overtones. Restrained, graceful, and secondary summary of its appellation in a smiling and welcoming vintage. Lingering structure brings a sense of gravity and tenacity at the end. | 90

**M Marengo Barolo Bricco delle Viole (Barolo)** (14.5% ABV) | 92  
 Single vineyard: Bricco delle Viole MGA

**NB** | Deep, almost opaque, with early turn on the rim. An elegant nose of developing power, some woodsmoke, some mushroom/*sottobosco*. Big, ripe, unashamedly rich and concentrated wine, packed with spicy/fruity flavor and having impressive length. In some ways it could be drunk now, but better to leave it till 2019. | 96

**BB** | Deep garnet to orange rim. Closed black-fruit nose, with smoke, prunes, and leather. Tight, full-bodied palate with great complexity. Long and clean on the finish. This definitely needs some time to show what it's made of. | 90

**AJ** | Deep, almost opaque black-red. Lots of warm, almost roasted red fruits in here, bubbling in their copper pot as the October moon rises outside. Not the most polished aroma on the table, but it can't but bring a smile to the drinker's face. Very much as the aromas suggested, this is a hugely enjoyable wine of uncomplicated generosity and ample texture, depth, and structure. Much wider in scope than many, and actually given time in the glass (and the mouth) you begin to see a complexity that wasn't initially apparent, or at least that was hidden by the warmth and charm: iris, violet, roasted meat, licorice, bay leaf, cèpe. A super wine. | 90

**Vietti Barolo Lazzarito (Serralunga d'Alba)** (14.5% ABV) | 92  
 Single vineyard: Lazzarito MGA

**NB** | Attractive ruby with a tawny edge. Nose a little unforthcoming, but the quality and freshness are good. Plenty of fruit, flavor, ripe tannin, and lip-smacking acidity in the mouth but still needs to come together. Fine wine. Drink from 2018. | 89

**BB** | Garnet to tawny. A touch closed, yet a complex nose of small red fruit, mineral, tobacco, and cedarwood. Full body, with layered, refined tannins and a long, only slightly rustic finish. | 90

**AJ** | Deep black-red. Sweet, full, and appealing, yet holding itself a little in reserve for the time being. Fine aromatic lineaments here, yet you feel they will be more articulate after a half-decade in bottle (in contrast to many other 2011s). On the palate, though, I don't find the same levels of reserve: This is, in fact, quite an open wine, correctly constituted, a little dryly fruited, yet grave and graceful, with a secondary, reduced meat jus quality to lend density and succulence to those pianissimo fruits. Good vineyards and beautifully aged. It's one of those wines that risks being a little underwhelming when you first encounter it, yet there is so much detail and nuance here that by the end of the bottle you are begging for more. Masterly work. A great bottle, yet this score could rise even further. | 96

**Luigi Baudana Barolo Cerretta (Serralunga d'Alba)** (14.5% ABV) | 90  
 Single vineyard: Cerretta MGA

**NB** | Medium-deep, quite evolved. Loads of dark cherry fruit on the nose, portending well. Very full, fruit-driven palate, good length, and Porty sweetness up against a firm structure. | 92

**BB** | Garnet to tawny. Open nose, with menthol and Bing cherries and hints of crushed stones, violets, and road tar. Full body, with massive tannins, yet balanced by the layered fruit. A bit too muscular for now, but this is a Barolo that should refine in years to come. | 90

**AJ** | Deep, clear garnet red. Sweet, warm, plummy fruits, with what Michael Broadbent used to call a fish-skin note, for complexity. Fair. Generous and

soundly constituted, though without the poise and focus of the very best wines from this village. Nonetheless, a delicious and deeply satisfying glass of wine. Long-finishing: plenty of depth and power here. | 88


**Brovia Barolo Brea Vigna Ca'Mia (Castiglione Falletto)** (14% ABV) | 90  
 Single vineyard: Brea MGA

**NB** | Quite deep with the beginnings of turn. Damson and floral aromas, the nose drawing you into a sweet, concentrated, quite powerful, but fruit-driven palate that lasts in the mouth. Slightly drying finish but will last longer than most. | 89

**BB** | Deep garnet to tawny. Open, mature, nose, with prunes and morello cherries and hints of cedarwood and forest floor. Full-bodied and mature, with a decadent black-fruit palate. Another well-made Barolo for mid-term aging. | 92

**AJ** | Deep black-red. Earthy, warm, truffley, lots of rummaged earth. Later some sandalwood and frankincense. Vivid, deep, vital, yet broad and expressive, too. This has the light Castiglione fruit to it, yet it is also one of the wines in this tasting that has drawn most nourishment and depth from the skins, so drinkers should be ready for a stealthy opening palate and then a very firm, masterful, almost biting conclusion. Aromatically nuanced and pristine, this is hugely impressive wine. It's not Serralunga, but when Castiglione is this good... | 92

**Cascina Fontana Barolo (Perno)** (14% ABV) Multisite blend | 90

**NB** | Medium depth of color with an orange rim. Lightly perfumed nose. Good concentration and plenty of sweet fruit. The structure suggests it can age for several years, though it will be good to drink from 2016. | 89

**BB** | Deep garnet to tawny rim. A touch closed, yet complex forest undergrowth on the nose, with prunes and smoke, raw meat and road tar. Full-bodied palate, with big tannins well supported by the sweet, layered fruit. Certainly a Barolo to age for the next decade. | 92

**AJ** | Dark, dense, black-red. Spicy, floral (peony and citrus blossom), and intriguing. A many-hued aroma, round and comforting. Just a teeny bit heavy-curtained and dank after a while. Vivid, full,

dense, round, supple, generous, and long. So much to enjoy here; so classical in style; and yet so accessible and welcoming—that's the great appeal of this vintage. Get your tape measure all around this wine, and you won't find it wanting in any way, yet it's also a wonderfully easy drink to sink into and relish. Truly excellent, and with finer aromas it would have merited a still higher score. | **90**

**Elio Grasso Barolo Ginestra Casa Mate (Monforte d'Alba)** (14.5% ABV) | **90**  
Single vineyard: Ginestra MGA

**NB** | Quite deep, verging on opaque. Woodsmoke and vanilla. Rich but austere palate, with muscular tannins and lively acidity. This wine is trying very hard to be great and certainly it has amazing concentration and the structure to carry it through many years, but will it develop charm? It is certainly tight-knit and long. Drink from 2019, but should last a lot longer. | **92**  
**BB** | Deep garnet to tawny. Closed nose of pine resin and small red fruits. Clean and fairly complex. Full body, with big tannins and mature fruit. Slightly simple on the finish. | **88**  
**AJ** | Deep black-red. Warm, round, very orchestral and harmonious. Perhaps a little difficult to pick out the individual notes, but the general sense of ripeness and warmth is very gratifying. Better than the rather uneventful nose suggested: This is a dense and powerful wine with lots of incipient complexity sewn up in it. It's very secondary, very ripe, very dense, very searching, very thick-textured, very satisfying—a wine I would love to have in my cellar. Splendidly constituted, thick, powerful, long; not overinflated by any kind of cellar work, and most definitely a wine where the vineyard is on the front foot. The question really is whether this has been harvested a little bit too late for full aromatic refinement. My answer is "Perhaps," but, gosh, this is stupendously rich and gratifying Barolo nonetheless. If it had better aromatic detail, it might well sweep the board. | **94**

**Manzone Barolo Castelletto (Monforte d'Alba)** (14.5% ABV) | **90**  
Single vineyard: Castelletto MGA

**NB** | Medium depth. Hints at floral character on the nose. Has the regulation sweet Porty finish but some drying tannins. Acidity gives it balance, finishes medium long, slightly tough. Drink from 2018. | **88**  
**BB** | Deep garnet to tawny. Open, mature black-fruit nose, with leather and tobacco and hints of smoked red meat. Full body with rich, mature prune-juice fruit and a long clean finish. Rich and complex Monforte Nebbiolo. | **90**  
**AJ** | Deep black-red. A lovely and very balanced nose, with some sweet floral charm, some beautifully ripened fruit notes, some soft tobaccoey secondary complexities: wonderful engagement and poise (some oak, but works very well). Rich, mouth-filling, commanding, and detailed: splendidly polyphenolic, but all of that matière is bonded to top-quality fruit materials.

Long, almost craggy (for 2011), allusive, poised, and energetic: another sensationally good 2011. The poised perfumed quality persists to the very end of the palate. Bravo! Whoever has made this has taken the vintage truly as far as it can go in this vineyard, and not in any sense been content with the easy ride the vintage seemed to offer. Totally arresting, demanding, commanding wine. | **96**

**Azelia di Luigi Scavino Barolo Bricco Fiasco (Castiglione Falletto)** (14.5% ABV) | **90**  
Single vineyard: Fiasco MGA

**NB** | Deepish with the start of turn on the rim. Classic nose of morello cherry and flower. Classic palate, too, firm acid and ripe tannin embracing expressive fruit with the signature Porty hit at the back. Good length. Drink from 2017. | **90**  
**BB** | Deep garnet to tawny. Closed, complex, forest-floor nose, with prunes, smoke, mushrooms, and figs. Balanced palate, with sweet fruit well balanced by the tannic grip. Long and enjoyable. A smoky Barolo that should age well over the next decade. | **92**  
**AJ** | Clear and translucent. Sweet, warm, swimmy and mushroomy: attractive, very secondary aromas, though some might miss the primary throb. Elegant, lively, and very secondary; no evident fresh fruit left now, but it's been spun in the cellar into a tapestry of nutty, wild-mushroom poise. Stealthy, unique, gratifying, and the antithesis (one might note in passing) of "New World appeal." Despite all the secondary notes, it is actually a very easy wine to drink and to enjoy thanks to the fact that the 2011 tannins are so unforbearing. Splendid stuff. For tannin lovers (like me). | **90**

**Paolo Scavino Barolo Bric del Fiasco (Castiglione Falletto)** (14.5% ABV) | **90**  
Single vineyard: Fiasco MGA

**NB** | Medium deep with the beginnings of turn. Cherry and herb on the nose. Creamy and fruity on the palate, with good tannic/acid structure, which will keep it going for a few years, though you could drink it soon. Good typicity. | **89**  
**BB** | Deep garnet to tawny. Open nose, with smoke, black fruits, cedarwood, road tar, and raw meat. Full-bodied, with balanced sweet fruit and refined tannins. A touch overripe but complex, classic Barolo. | **88**  
**AJ** | Deep black-red. Wonderful aromatic complexity here: smoke, prune, cèpe, twig. Another of those "autumnal celebration" 2011 Barolos. Smooth, with relatively light tannins, yet wonderful concentration, depth, and drive to it; highly energetic Castiglione Falletto. Very busy in flavor terms; grasping and seizing, yet hugely enjoyable, too. Grand wine. | **94**

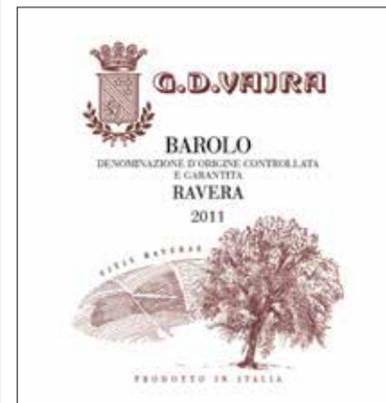
**GD Vajra Barolo Ravera (Barolo)** (14.5% ABV) | **90**  
Single vineyard: Ravera MGA

**NB** | Some depth of color, not opaque at heart but going there. Floral, almost rose on the nose—

mineral rather than fruity. Quite grippy and chewy on the palate, with good concentration but at present a certain center-tongue presence rather than reaching out to the sides. Needs more time. Drink from 2017. | **88**

**BB** | Deep garnet to tawny. Mature and deep black-fruit nose, with smoke, prunes, and Bing cherries, closed yet complex. Mature, full-bodied palate, with layered tannins and a long, clean finish. Rich and open Barolo. | **89**

**AJ** | Deep clear black-red. Limpid red fruits. Very clean and accessible. Behind the glowing plum, there is some dark chocolate, licorice, and orris root. Deftly drawn, yet nourishing, too: embers in the night. Soft, rich, textured, and elemental, with that same glowing, ember-like quality that the nose suggested. All of the aromatic and flavor elements are pristine, here: fine old-wood aging. A box of resonances. Lingers on the tongue. An outstanding wine, combining grace, amplitude, and profundity. All it needs is a winter's night... | **94**



**Gianluca Viberti Barolo Casina Bric 460 (Barolo)** (14% ABV) | **90**  
Single vineyard: Bricco delle Viole MGA

**NB** | Medium-deep with slight turn on the rim. Woodsmoke and cherry on the nose, not pronounced, rather hinted at. Juicy but structured on the palate. Ripe, fruit, and side-to-side acid lead to a finish of good length, where structure promises improvement over a period of years. Drink from 2018. | **90**

**BB** | Garnet to orange rim. Intense, complex, Nebbiolo nose with rosewater, leather, smoke, dried prunes, Bing cherries and dried herbs. Clean and very complex. Balanced, medium to full-bodied palate, with refined fruit that stays right through the long, clean finish. A textbook, classy Barolo that is great to drink now but will definitely age gracefully for sometime. | **96**

**AJ** | Clear deep garnet, just shading to brick at the rim. A thick weave of mushroom and leaf mold, moss and lichen, dark plum and ripe blackberry. Open-pored, earthy, long, expressive, and qualified by the engaging warmth of the vintage. There is also a little casky note here, too; a taste of the cellar to qualify the taste of the vines. Exuberant and complete nonetheless, and finishes sweetly in the mouth. Very secondary and allusive, but very scrutable, too. | **87**

#### NICOLAS BELFRAGE MW'S VERDICT

It is difficult to follow an act like 2010 Barolo. 2010 is all structure, complexity, restraint, and finesse—a cool-weather classic if ever there were one, a vintage to lay down and savor over the years. 2011, on the other hand, is a true child of a warm vintage—up front, ripe, and forward. Yet the wines are rarely cooked, raisined, or stewed like the 2003s or like some of the 2007s and 2009s. The 2011s, it turns out, are wines at once of character and charm. The tannins are soft and rarely green, acid levels are reasonable, and there are perfumes in abundance. They have the virtue of being immediately approachable, though I suspect that they will last longer than their early drinkability suggests.

So, the tasting was useful in that it allowed us to set aside our prejudices and to appreciate the wines of a delicious vintage, if not a classic one.

I am not so convinced that we learned a great deal more about the specific communes. What was revealed was not so much that Monforte is noticeably different from, say, Serralunga or Castiglione Falletto, as that there are good to excellent wines in all the communes, with varying versions of what constitutes good Barolo according to the producer more than the site. Perhaps La Morra has slightly less archetypal "Barolo" typicity than the other communes, but it is still a lot nearer to its neighbors than to other Nebbiolo-growing zones in Piemonte and beyond.

All in all, 2011 can be recommended as a year for enjoying fine Barolo without waiting too long (in general, they will be drinking earlier than the 2010s) or paying too "premium" a price for hyperbole and scarcity in a market characterized by increasing demand and static supply.

#### TOP WINES

Guido Porro V Lazzairasco (Serralunga d'Alba) **98**

M Marengo Barolo Bricco delle Viole (Barolo) **96**

Castello di Verduno Barolo Massara (Verduno) **96**

Giuseppe e Figlio Mascarello Barolo Monprivato (Castiglione Falletto) **94**

Elio Altare Barolo (La Morra) **92**

Battaglio Barolo (Monforte d'Alba) **92**

Luigi Baudana Barolo Cerretta (Serralunga d'Alba) **92**

Cavallotto Barolo Bricco Boschis (Castiglione Falletto) **92**

Elio Grasso Barolo Ginestra Casa Mate (Monforte d'Alba) **92**

Giovanni Rosso Barolo Serra (Serralunga d'Alba) **92**

Gianluca Viberti Barolo Casina Bric 460 Bricco delle Viole (Barolo) **92**

**Roberto Voerzio Barolo Rocche dell'Annunziata (La Morra)** (15% ABV) Single vineyard: Rocche dell'Annunziata MGA | **90**

**NB** | Medium-deep with turn. Attractive truffle and red-fruit aromas. Lightweight but typical fruit on the palate, the tannins a touch grippy and acid, a touch sharp, but perfumes predominate in a wine more for drinking than for putting on a pedestal. Drink now and for several years. | **86**  
**BB** | Garnet to tawny rim. A touch closed, yet a complex cedarwood nose, with mature black fruit and hints of tobacco, mint, and violets. Medium to full body, balanced tannins, and sweet, restrained, prune-juice-like fruit. Complex, classic Nebbiolo to enjoy over the next 5-10 years. | **90**

**AJ** | Deep red-black; translucent. Very complex and satisfying aromas: mellow, lush, rich, tobacco, undergrowth—all the things one loves about Piemonte are here. Gorgeous ripeness, too. Soft, ripe, trembling, and yielding: lovely, rich, mellow La Morra, sundering to the tongue but then picking itself up and ending almost severe, almost authoritarian, as the tannins wake. This is a magnificent 2011, absolutely spot-on and down-the-line with the vintage, rewarding and open, yet finishing structured and firm and disciplined. Bravo to its creator. | **96**

**Elio Altare Barolo Cannubi (Barolo)** | **89**  
Single vineyard: Cannubi MGA

**NB** | Fairly deep but authentic color, with hints of turn. Fruit-driven aromas (plum, cranberry) on the nose. Mouth-filling and sumptuous, with plenty of tannic grip and signs that it will mature well. A bit tough now, though, with a tannic finish that suggests it needs plenty of time. Drink from 2019. | **89**

**BB** | Deep garnet to tawny rim. Open, smoky, mature nose of dried fruits, cedarwood, and refined, complex minerality. Elegant, restrained palate with tobacco-leaf, dried herbs, and a long black-fruit finish. Classy Barolo with long aging potential. | **92**

**AJ** | Dark, dense black-red. Dutch pipe-tobacco and polished mahogany: very secondary aromas, without any evident fresh fruit lift, but balanced and attractive nonetheless. After time in the glass, there is some menthol and pine apparent. Plenty of wood. Close-textured, dense, concentrated, and ambitious wine, with more fruit apparent on the palate than made itself known on the nose. Ample tannins, though with the diagnostic softness of texture of the vintage. Good raw materials, sagely picked to retain vivacity, and given ample wood cossetting. Lacks a little charm by comparison with some, and the wood is emphatic, but this is splendid wine nonetheless. | **87**

**Burlotto Barolo Acclivi (Verduno)** (15% ABV) Single village: Verduno (from three MGAs: Monvigliero, Neirane, and Rocche dell'Olmo) | **89**

**NB** | Medium depth with slight turn. Cherry and flower on the nose, hints of truffle. Ripe, luscious

but balanced fruit, with plenty of refreshing acidity mixed with sweet voluptuous fruit. Finishes almost exaggeratedly perfumed and has very good length. Drinking from 2016 for a number of years. | **90**  
**BB** | Garnet to tawny. Open, fruit-driven nose of small red fruits and violets. A touch simple for a Barolo? Medium body, fragrant and clean, and with salty tannins. The palate is better than the nose at this stage, yet restrained and salty. | **87**  
**AJ** | Deep black-red, but clear. Quite a primary wine, but the fruits are well judged: the sustained trumpet note from the battlements. Vivid, firm, light but rich, lots of transgender appeal: what a wonderful and underrated village this is. It is light, but it is firmly and optimistically drawn. Less difficult than some of its village peers, thanks to that lovely confident piece of fruit calligraphy. A delicious modest bottle. | **90**

**Ciabot Berton Barolo Roggeri (La Morra)** (14.5% ABV) | **89**  
Single vineyard: Roggeri MGA

**NB** | Deep, quasi-opaque. Cherry and thyme/oregano on the nose. Quite a wealth of sweet Porty fruit balanced by firm acid/tannin structure. Good drinking now but will repay keeping. | **89**  
**BB** | Deep garnet to tawny. Mature, dark nose of raw red meat, morello cherries, menthol, and road tar. Medium to full body, with clean cherry fruit and a balanced, clean finish. Classic La Morra, with good depth and complexity. | **92**  
**AJ** | Very deep black-red. Sweet, warm, fragrant, and enticing; plus an exciting freshness and lift, too. Wonderful aromatic complexity here. Elegant, poised, fresh and lively, with plenty of polyphenolic shaping; the fruit core lacks richness compared with some, though, and relies a little too heavily on its acid structure. But a very attractive yet serious wine nonetheless. If the palate wealth had matched the aromatic complexity, this would have merited a top score. | **86**

**Giacomo Conterno Barolo Francia (Monforte d'Alba)** (15% ABV) | **89**  
Single vineyard: Francia MGA

**NB** | Medium-deep with turn. Cherry and vanilla on the nose. Ripe, concentrated fruit, at present untogether, slightly tough, slightly bitter. Plenty to it, but it needs time. Drink from 2019. | **89**  
**BB** | Deep garnet to brick red. Slightly reduced on the nose, with black fruits and dried herbs. Full body and layered fruit, yet a touch green on the finish. | **85**  
**AJ** | Very, very dark wine in this context. Stand back: very regal. Sumptuous and full, lots of ermine and plush fruit. A little bit new wave for classicists, perhaps, but how can you not like this? Sweet yet dark and provocative. Dense, deep, dark, plush, and, well, regal again; a wine with lots of force and authority to it. Some might object that the authority is too much based on force, but it works splendidly well for me. Great thunderous fruit; fiery tannins; just something terrifically exciting in the glass, and it (thanks to those tannins, which cannot lie) does not betray its place in any way. Very low yields, surely. Certainly one of the "biggest" 2011s, for better or worse. | **94**

**Marcarini Barolo La Serra (La Morra)** (14% ABV) **89**  
Single vineyard: La Serra MGA

**NB** | Medium deep with a tawny rim. Slightly overripe fruit notes on the nose, but floral aromas compensate. In the mouth the tannins are a bit green, and this detracts from otherwise good fruit, but it should come around in time. **| 87**  
**BB** | Transparent garnet to tawny. Clean, intense, classically restrained nose of rosewater, violets, small red fruits, and hints of figs and mint with good minerality. Medium body, with clean fruit and a long mineral finish. A very well-made classic Barolo. **| 89**  
**AJ** | Deep but clear and resonant garnet red. Complex, subtle, and very satisfying: grand refinement of warm fruit scents. Glowing, earthy, humus-informed: a super nose. Rich, full, mouth-filling, and commanding: evidently a grand wine. Perhaps La Morra in fact has the lightest fruit structure of any of the great villages, but what it hangs under that fruit is so rich, so full, so polyphenolically detaining that you can't but be enchanted. There's also a richness and a creaminess to it that are totally engaging. This is a truly wonderful 2011. It isn't the most opulent, the most densely fruited, the *basso profondo*, but in terms of detail, energy, life, grip, and mid-weight magic, it is up there with the best. **| 94**



**Massolino Barolo Margheria (Serralunga d'Alba)** (14.5% ABV) **89**  
Single vineyard: Margheria MGA

**NB** | Medium-deep. Hay and *sottobosco* on the nose; hesitant to come through. Tsipras wouldn't like the palate: austerity (in the tannic sense). Plenty of good quality fruit but not a lot of charm. But Giovanni Conterno used to say that when his wine was first bottled it should be "undrinkable." This is undrinkable now, but try it again in 2020. **| 89**  
**BB** | Ruby to garnet. Open, salty nose with small red fruits and crushed stones. Mint and violets, with great complexity and refinement. Sweet red fruit is what you get first, followed by noble tannins and small red fruits. Long and mineral. A wine that demands at least another five years of aging. **| 94**  
**AJ** | Deep black-red. A slightly muddled aromatic

profile compared to the best-organized of its peers, but with many good things hidden inside: warm red fruits, the autumn leaf pile, the plowed field, and some sweet floral notes, too. Soft, full, firmly structured, mellow withal (very 2011, that). Lots to enjoy inside this well-made, firmly stated, and classical Serralunga. **| 86**

**Rivetto Barolo del comune di Serralunga d'Alba (Serralunga d'Alba)** (14.5% ABV) **89**  
Single village: Serralunga d'Alba

**NB** | Medium-deep. Morello cherry and cedar on the nose. Lots of plummy fruit on the palate, with reasonable acid but a certain flabbiness on the finish. Plenty there, but not all in harmony. **| 87**  
**BB** | Garnet to tawny. A touch closed, forest-floor nose, with mushrooms, prunes, and smoke. Full body and huge tannins. Clean and mineral finish. Too young to be approached now, but it should develop gracefully for a few years yet. **| 90**  
**AJ** | Deep black-red. Some fresh oak is evident on the nose, partnering sweet, dense plum fruits to charming effect. With time in the glass, the complexity builds. Vivid and exciting flavors. Plenty of Virginia tobacco charm on the opening palate, followed by a growing sobriety of flavor as the structure of the wine begins to make itself felt; the acidity is very soft and ripe. Serralunga in sensual mood, but indubitably fine nonetheless—a wine based on outstanding fruit quality, ready to take all the scrutiny you are able to give it. Commanding tannins dominate the finish. **| 90**

**Paolo Scavino Barolo Cannubi (Barolo)** (14.5% ABV) **89**  
Single vineyard: Cannubi MGA

**NB** | Medium depth going orange on rim. Slightly shy nose, hints of honeysuckle, very attractive. Creamy, intense mid-palate giving way to a firm finish where acidity is firm and tannins are still a bit tight. The length is good but acidity prevails over flavor. A touch bitter, a touch green, but sweet fruit behind; this will be a fine bottle from 2018. **| 89**  
**BB** | Deep garnet to brick-red rim. Open, complex nose of prunes, leather, smoke, and road tar. Full body, layered palate, with big yet refined tannins and a long, astringent, complex, mineral finish. A classy Barolo with great aging potential. **| 90**  
**AJ** | Deep black-red. Complex and sweetly enticing: the scent of the copse and the hedgerow, but a sweet warmth to it as well, as if the berries were somehow dreaming of caramel. Full, rich, ripe, and gratifying, with the very ripe acids and tannins providing the sweet fruits with shape and sense. The plums are very slightly baked, which some might like and others not—I would certainly relish drinking this. Exuberant and generous, like the year itself. **| 88**

**GD Vajra Barolo Bricco delle Viole (Barolo)** (14.5% ABV) **89**  
Single vineyard: Bricco delle Viole MGA

**NB** | Medium-deep and youthful; attractive. Woodsmoke and truffle hinted at on the nose;

also scent. Rich, ripe morello cherry and spice on the palate; medium acid and correct tannic hit on the finish, which suggests it will get better through the years, though you could happily drink it now. Impressive length. Very much a wine of the vintage. **| 90**  
**BB** | Deep garnet to tawny rim. Open, mature, fruit-driven nose. Clean with small red fruits and hints of road tar. Soft full-bodied palate, well balanced by the refined tannins. Long and clean. This should gain complexity with age. Wait and see? **| 90**  
**AJ** | Very deep black-red. Quite a sweetly oaky scent, with rich plums beneath. Sweetly plummy, with plenty of contemporary appeal. Well made, and the dignity of the fruit swings into control on the mid-palate, and the structure continues to add seriousness and refinement on to the finish. Not one for the traditionalists, but an exuberant, satisfying, and concentrated glass of Barolo from good vineyards. A soft licorice darkness descends at the end. I would enjoy drinking this very much. **| 86**

**Gianluca Viberti Barolo Casina Bric 460 Bricco delle Viole (Barolo)** (14.5% ABV) **89**  
Single vineyard: Bricco delle Viole MGA

**NB** | Quite deep color, though not opaque, with the beginnings of turn on the rim. Ripe tomato and cherry on nose. Traditional in style, with firm, grippy tannins and juicy acidity alongside the sweet fruit of Barolo; nothing obvious but nicely balanced, full of vigor and character. Drink from 2018. **| 92**  
**BB** | Deep garnet to orange. Open, mature nose, with prunes and smoke and hints of leather and cedarwood. Rich, soft, full-bodied palate with large-scale tannins, yet balanced by the layered black fruit. Warm and big Barolo that should give its best over the next 10 years. **| 92**  
**AJ** | Deep black-red. Sweet fruits; autumnal repose. A touch oxidized, however. Concentrated, secondary, again lots of autumnal triggers, with an almost saline edge: super raw materials in here, which makes this handling issue a pity. It's a very ripe wine, too, and now very open-pored. Difficult to score, because I can't ignore the slight flatness that its exposure to air has brought, yet I also have to admit that I like the wine a lot and would certainly enjoy drinking it; those tannins and savory allusions are very engaging, and the ripe, gentle acidity makes it an easy Barolo to rip into and relax with. **| 84**

**Gianfranco Alessandria Barolo San Giovanni (Monforte d'Alba)** (15% ABV) Single vineyard: San Giovanni MGA **88**

**NB** | Deep, verging on opaque. Quite intense morello cherry and floral notes on the nose. Rich, plummy, and Porty in the mouth, with bags of ripe cherry and mushroom held in place by good acid and subdued tannins. Great drinking now; not sure about the future—possibly brilliant. **| 90**  
**BB** | Garnet to tawny rim. Closed nose with clean small red fruit, some vanilla/oak, yet complex

and mineral, with Bing cherries, mint, and violets. Complex palate, with great tannins and super-layered fruit. The finish is very long and compact, with great minerality and fragrance. Superb Barolo that needs a few years to show its best. **| 96**  
**AJ** | Deep black-red. This wine lacks a little aromatic subtlety and grace. Perhaps a little too much oxygen? Well constituted and robust, as the village should be, but in handling terms this has not had the care and refinement the raw materials merited. **| 82**



**Elio Altare Barolo (La Morra)** (14.5% ABV) Multisite blend **88**

**NB** | Deep, opaque. Super-concentrated cherry and plum fruit on both nose and palate. One can imagine a very conscientious *viticoltore* making sure that every berry that goes into the fermenter is absolutely perfect and that the barriques are the finest that money can buy. Excellent of the La Morra style of Barolo, but lacking the finesse and nuance of wines from other communes. Drink from 2020. **| 92**  
**BB** | Black core to garnet rim. Broad black-fruit nose, a touch closed, with cherry jam and hints of mint and tobacco-leaf. Medium to full body, with mature fruit and soft tannins. Well made but a touch simple on the finish. **| 87**  
**AJ** | Very deep black-red. Warm, smooth, sweet, and gratifying. Lush, smooth, soft... but then the tannins curl in and do their seizing, commanding James Bond job, and suddenly you realize you have a real wine on your hands. A wine of gratifying but perhaps not aromatically intricate fruit, suddenly lent dignity and seriousness by some very impressive tannins indeed. We need to turn the fruit qualities up for a top score, but this is still serious stuff. **| 87**

**Cavallotto Barolo Bricco Boschis (Castiglione Falletto)** (14.5% ABV) **88**  
Single vineyard: Bricco Boschis MGA

**NB** | Deep, attractive royal hue, almost opaque. Plums and small flowers hinted at. Ripe, rich, and velvety palate, a very good example of the modern style, which should last for years, though drinking from 2016. **| 92**  
**BB** | Deep garnet to tawny. Open, mature, cedarwood nose, with prunes and smoked meat, mushrooms and truffles. Balanced, prune-juice palate, with great tannins and a long, clean finish. Another very open, mature Castiglione Barolo. **| 90**  
**AJ** | Deep black-red. A few notes of woody greenness here—yet for some it will seem fresh and engaging. Cologne-like. Soft and open; does

the job, but for me there is a mixed ripeness issue and a lack of concentration that put this wine among the merely good rather than exciting contenders. **| 83**

**Bartolo Mascarello Barolo (Barolo)** (14.5% ABV) **88**  
Multisite blend

**NB** | Light and bright, with a tawny edge. Vinous, slightly smoky aroma of good persistence; herby, attractive. Warm, inviting palate of some tannic grip but overridden by juicy acid and penetrating flavor. Medium expansion in the mouth, good length. Almost ready for drinking, but reasonable structure. **| 89**  
**BB** | Transparent garnet to brick, orange. Open, complex, mineral nose, with rosewater, small black fruits, and dried herbs—restrained and inviting. Medium to full body, a touch bitter, and a slightly simple palate. Classic Barolo, a touch green on the finish. **| 87**  
**AJ** | Light, clear garnet, gently earthy, mushroomy nose; humus in a dry autumn. Lots of perfumed lift and grace, yet at the same time gravely expressive, somehow—a seriousness behind the charm. Becomes just slightly candied and grassy after a little while in the glass, but these are still impressive aromatics. Deep, accessible, graceful, open, strawberry, and red plum fruit lent complexity by tobacco and plant essences. A beguiling and unimposing Barolo, beautifully tapered and resolved; ready to drink now, though it will certainly hold well, too. **| 88**

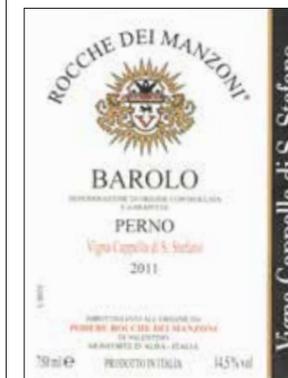
**Giuseppe e Figlio Mascarello Barolo Monprivato (Castiglione Falletto)** (14% ABV) **88**  
Single vineyard: Monprivato MGA

**NB** | Relatively light color, one of the lightest in the tasting. Alluring rose-red fruit nose. Delicate, elegant palate, making up in elegance what it lacks in power. Sweet and floral, with fully ripe tannins and lovely fruit-acid balance. Can be drunk now, or kept. **| 94**  
**BB** | Transparent garnet to tawny. Open, nutty nose, a touch animal and decadent, yet inviting and complex. Medium- to full-bodied palate, with mature soft fruit and refined tannins. Again, a touch overripe yet balanced and inviting. **| 89**  
**AJ** | Deep, clear red. Plenty of fruited power here, yet slightly clumsy in style. Smooth, soft, open. Modest concentration by the standards of this tasting, and no great stylistic refinement. Nonetheless, this is still a very true Barolo and something unique and hugely enjoyable in the world context. **| 84**

**Rocche dei Manzoni Barolo Perno Vigna Cappella de S Stefano (Monforte d'Alba)** (14.5% ABV) **88**  
Single vineyard: Perno MGA

**NB** | Quite deep, definite turn. Meaty, herbal, quite concentrated aromas. Chunky, grippy tannins on the palate, quite firm acidity, which tends at the moment to predominate. Needs time. Drink from

2019. **| 89**  
**BB** | Deep garnet to tawny rim. Mature, open, black-fruits nose, with mint and raspberry jam. Almost meaty, with violets and roses. Full body and layered fruit, with huge tannins well supported by the mature, complex fruit. This is a deep, long-lived Barolo that expresses the true character of the Monforte village. **| 94**  
**AJ** | Another very dark wine. Hmm: pure blackcurrant, but also a grassiness here, which I associate more clearly with Chile than Barolo. Canopy? As nose. Good vineyards, good winemaking, but odd viticulture. This is a very grand and very sweetly herbaceous wine, but it is herbaceous nonetheless. Is this somebody's decision? **| 83**



**Sandrone Luciano Barolo Le Vigne (Barolo)** (14.5% ABV) **88**  
Multisite blend

**NB** | Medium deep, unusually youthful color. Mushrooms and truffles on nose, also small red-berry fruit. Fresh, juicy and inviting on palate, with a good hit of Porty sweetness on finish, moderated by fresh acidity. A pleasure to drink now, but it will keep. **| 90**  
**BB** | Deep garnet to pink, orange rim. Restrained, mineral nose with small red fruits, rosewater, hints of mint and tobacco leaf. Refined palate, with clean cranberry fruit. Long and clean, with a refined finish. Barolo that is drinking nicely now and should develop more complexity in the next 5-10 years. **| 90**  
**AJ** | Deep, glowing red. Rather brusque aromas after the stealthy charm of many of its peers: fruit and cask, cross-hatched. Here, though, you can't really complain: It's generous and classic, full of 2011's soft wealth, and with a long and satisfying finish. Plenty of rough and tumble in its approach, but nothing wrong with the delivery. **| 85**

**Roberto Voerzio Barolo Brunate (La Morra)** (14.5% ABV) **88**  
Single vineyard: Brunate MGA (shared by the villages of Barolo and La Morra)

**NB** | Medium deep. Fresh fruit and floral character to the nose. Nice balance of fruit and acid on the finish; firm palate in tannin terms, which allows for a long if quite grippy finish. Needs time to assimilate: Drink from 2017. **| 88**  
**BB** | Deep garnet to tawny rim. Mature nose,

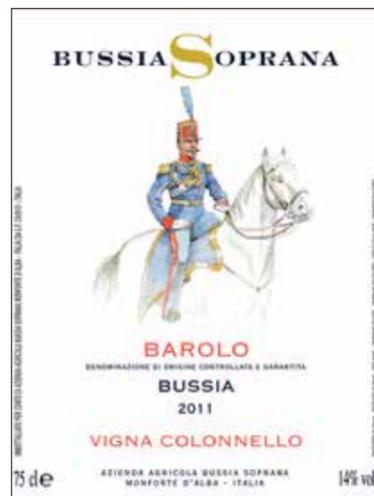
touch spirited yet clean with morello cherries and hints of fresh herbs. Full body palate with some oak, clean and long, with a deceptively complex finish. | 89

**AJ** | Deep black-red. More wood here, with some incense and spice: complex and enticing. Soft, lush, full, mellow, mouth-filling; marked by its wood, but statuesque nonetheless. Dense, drenching tannins add dignity and sobriety. Somehow La Morra seems less marked and “more classically Barolo” than the other villages in 2011. A chunky, dramatic, lavishly fleshed wine that will provide much pleasure. | 88

**Bussia Soprana Barolo Bussia Vigna Colonnello (Monforte d’Alba)** (14% ABV) Single vineyard: Bussia MGA (shared by the villages of Monforte d’Alba and Barolo) Colonnello is a subzone beneath Bussia Soprana

**NB** | Medium deep and bright. Pronounced floral character on nose. Somewhat austere yet aromatic character on palate. A good wine that needs to come together: Drink from 2019. | 88  
**BB** | Transparent garnet to tawny rim. Classic, open, mushrooms and forest undergrowth nose with rosewater and Bing cherries. Clean with hints of mint. Medium body; balanced palate that is complex and yet restrained. A classic Barolo to enjoy now, but it should age well for the next few years. | 92

**AJ** | Relatively light in the Monforte context. Pleasant enough and rather secondary, but a little bit sketchy, with some kerosene. All of the complexity is derived from the site, but I get the feeling that the viticulture is more rudimentary than it should be. And the palate confirms this. Drink this wine for the Barolo tannins but not really for any other reason. | 82



**Corino Barolo Arborina (La Morra)** (15.5% ABV) Single vineyard: Arborina MGA

**NB** | Deepest color of tasting—opaque. Plum, vanilla, woodsmoke, and blackcurrant on the nose. Laudable for its abundance of fruit, fresh acidity,

and firm tannin base, but not very typical of Barolo—perhaps more of La Morra. Impressive as a wine but not very typed. | 89

**BB** | Black core to thin garnet rim. Mature, black-fruit nose with violets. A touch overripe and jammy. Broad, full-bodied palate and a clean but not very complex finish. | 87

**AJ** | Saturated dense black—very dark for this tasting. A voluminous and rather composty nose, with some lack of aromatic refinement, but gosh, it comes out to meet you! As the nose suggested, this is a very forceful, busy, and extrovert wine, but with some lack of fashioning craft and subtlety. Big, drenching tannins. Adequate ripeness. Unignorable, savory, thundering—and hence good in its own way, and certainly showy. But if you are looking for Burgundian grace and subtlety, look elsewhere. | 86



**M Marengo Barolo Brunate (La Morra)** (14.5% ABV) Single vineyard: Brunate MGA (shared by the villages of Barolo and La Morra)

**NB** | Quite deep, verging on opaque. Neutral nose and disjointed palate. Tannins are slightly harsh, and there's not enough fruit to compensate. | 85  
**BB** | Deep garnet to tawny. Complex, meaty nose of black fruits and forest undergrowth. Balanced, rich, full-bodied palate. Well made but fairly simple. | 87

**AJ** | Saturated deep black-red. Complex, mixed-ripeness aromas, but lots of wealth and charm to them. Vivid, lively, and thrusting. Lively, dense, chewy, rich, earthy, and generous. This is a big-shouldered, broad-chested wine, with a huge amount to enjoy in here: fiery and invigorating. | 88

**Pira Barolo Margheria (Serralunga d’Alba)** (14.5% ABV) Single vineyard: Cannubi MGA

**BB** | Deep garnet to tawny rim. A touch rustic on the nose, with some development. Huge tannins with insufficient fruit. | 83

**AJ** | Deep black-red. Sweet, soft, and refined. The floral notes here are figured with great precision and grace when first poured; one is drawn into the wine with courtly rather than coarsely sensual charm. After a little time in the glass, the focus slips a little, and you sense that this might be a wine that is aromatically divisive; much to intrigue

#### BRUNO BESA'S VERDICT

Given the intense heat prior to the 2011 harvest, I had expected to find the wines here more overripe and jammy, so I was delighted when this proved not to be the case. While there is clearly less finesse and complexity than in 2010, nearly all the 2011s showed restraint, and despite their youth they would be a real pleasure to drink.

It should be remembered that from 2011, Barolo need only be aged for at least 18 months in wood, rather than for at least 24 months, as in the previous regulations, and I suspect that many producers will have taken advantage of this shorter aging restriction in order to retain fruit and heighten drinkability.

Finally, I wish to endorse wholeheartedly the organization of this tasting on a village-by-village basis. Salty Serralunga, smoky Castiglione, spicy Monforte, velvety Barolo, and fruit-dominated La Morra. Each village boasts a common characteristic, and I came to the conclusion that this village format is now a must when it comes to comparative tastings of Barolo.

#### TOP WINES

Gianfranco Alessandria Barolo San Giovanni (Monforte d’Alba) 96

Enzo Boglietti Barolo Arione (Serralunga d’Alba) 96

Gianluca Viberti Barolo Casina Bric 460 (Barolo) 96

Fratelli Alessandria Barolo Monvigliero (Verduno) 94

Ascheri Barolo Sorano (Serralunga d’Alba) 94

Poderi Luigi Einaudi Barolo Cannubi (Barolo) 94

Massolino Barolo Margheria (Serralunga d’Alba) 94

Rocche dei Manzoni Barolo Perno Vigna Cappella de S Stefano (Monforte d’Alba) 94

nonetheless. Elegant, fresh, poised, precise; lots of tension and structural symmetry; refined fruit notes, qualified by the same floral grace the aromas offered. Outstanding refinement and finesse; there just aren’t many wines that can do this, though this is not an easy or beguiling wine in any sense. Magisterial handling of very fine raw materials. Oxbridge or Harvard Barolo. | 92

**Trediberri Barolo (La Morra)** (14% ABV) Single village: La Morra

**NB** | Deep color. Lots of morello cherry and tar on the nose. Rich and ripe, not “hot” but verging on soupy, with lowish acidity, stewy fruit, and muscular tannins on the finish. Fairly long, somewhat lacking in elegance. | 84

**BB** | Deep garnet to tawny. Open, clean nose, with prunes, cherries, violets, and mint. Balanced palate, with soft tannins and a fairly long, clean finish. Well made but a touch simplistic. | 89

**AJ** | Saturated dark black. Quite a lot of sweet oak here. Agreeable, but I’m finding it hard to locate the vineyard beneath. True on the flavors, too—but not true, too, since you suddenly (and this is Barolo!) find a vertical dimension, a wealth and power of flavor, a polyphenolic grandeur that the aromas had no means of expressing. I think there probably should be a little more linkage between the two, and this is thus not a wholly successful wine. But the raw materials are sensorially good, and with some refocusing of the handling this could be a magnificent wine. | 89

**Silvio Grasso Barolo Bricco Luciani (La Morra)** (14.5% ABV)

**NB** | Deep, virtually opaque. Blackberry and dark cherry on both nose and palate. A hefty wine of power rather than grace, striking on finish but somewhat narrow in earlier stages. But it opens out and should drink well from 2016. | 87  
**BB** | Deep core to garnet rim. Lively, youthful palate, with primary red fruit and hints of strawberry jam. Soft fruit and balanced palate—long, and a pleasure to drink now. Classic La Morra soft Nebbiolo. | 89

**AJ** | Deep black-red. This is rather a stewy, soupy nose; lacks a little precision and lift. Lush, full, soft, extravagant... but also rather soupy and lacking in focus and poise. Enjoyable, and as always the tannins of Barolo (and Nebbiolo in Barolo) ennoble the flavors, but it’s not a high-flyer. | 82

**Aurelio Settimo Barolo Rocche dell’Annunziata (La Morra)** (14.5% ABV) Single vineyard: Rocche dell’Annunziata MGA

**NB** | Medium-deep with turn. Complex herb and floral perfumes. Mid-bodied wine of no great concentration but good type and eminent drinkability. Should be good for ten years from vintage. | 88

**BB** | Garnet to tawny. A touch closed on the nose, yet complex and restrained, with prunes, leather, and forest undergrowth. Medium to full body with mature fruit and soft tannins. Well made yet a touch overripe. | 89

**AJ** | Deep red-black. Slightly tanky; lacks precision and grace. Hard, harsh, bitter-ending; Barolo on autopilot, I’m afraid. | 78



**E Pira e Figli Barolo Cannubi Chiara Boschis (Barolo)** (14.5% ABV) Single vineyard: Cannubi MGA

**NB** | The nose seems to suffer a bit from reduction, the palate is tough and vegetal. With a breather, however, it starts to redeem itself, with floral aromas coming through. Not much fun now, but with time it could develop more positively. | 83  
**BB** | Deep garnet to tawny. Slightly reduced on the nose, with pronounced SO<sub>2</sub>, getting better in the glass yet quite aggressive. Green palate, and quite bitter on the finish. | 83

**AJ** | Deep black-red. This bottle shows a little sulfidey deviation; not agreeable to smell. Will try a second bottle if there is one. Bottle 2: Clear and accessible, if lacking in intricacy compared to some. Soft, fleshy, and full; perfectly satisfying Barolo with aftertones of blood and stone and ample structure. Good raw materials and well handled, assuming the second bottle is the typical one. All it lacks is the top levels of aromatic resonance. Plenty to enjoy nonetheless. | 85

*Note: The following two wines were deemed faulty by one taster but not by the other two; the average score has been calculated on the basis of their two scores.*

**Ascheri Barolo Sorano (Serralunga d’Alba)** (14% ABV) Single vineyard: Sorano MGA

**NB** | Not convinced by the nose of this wine, but the second bottle is like the first. Decline to score. | NS

**BB** | Deep garnet to tawny. Open, mineral, salty, intense nose of small red fruits, violets, and rosewater. Full-bodied yet fragrant, with salt, minerals, small red fruits, and a lively finish. Another great Serralunga Barolo. | 94

**AJ** | Dark-hued garnet. Mellow and refined scents: elegant, relatively fresh plum and sloe compared to the richness of many of its peers, but lovely pressed-wildflower and moist-sand complexities behind that fruit. Even a touch of green? Relatively understated and unforceful, but it’s all there for those who search. Soft, full, vivid, complex,

and long, and just as aromatically complex on the palate as on the nose. Close-textured, refined, subtle, and secondary Serralunga—a wine in which the grain and tension of the site is beautifully figured. Difficult but rewarding. | 90



**Luigi Oddero Barolo (La Morra)** (14.5% ABV) Multisite blend

**NB** | Defective bottle. Decline to report. | NS  
**BB** | Garnet to tawny rim. Developed, decadent nose, with rosewater and prune juice. Medium body, with mature yet restrained and fairly complex palate. Classic Barolo, if a touch developed for a 2011. | 87

**AJ** | Clear and glowing garnet. Mellow and autumnally fruited, with just a little bit of natural rotty deviance among all the perfect fruits—hurrah! That’s what we like. It’s real. A very complete, autumnal, and nature-reflecting aromatic profile, in other words, and very distant from the tedious impeccable sweet ripeness of cloudless vineyards. Very secondary, very complex, very challenging here—the perfect flavor and textural echo of those disturbingly good aromas. This is an extraordinarily good and interesting wine, if not the most classically perfect wine on the board. Ripe acidity, ripe tannin, but it’s above all the complexity of the fruit flavors and all the secondary resonances they trigger that make this such a compelling wine. | 92

*The following wine arrived after the main tasting and was tasted, not blind, by Andrew Jefford.*

**Ca’ Romè Barolo Rapet (Serralunga d’Alba)** (14.5% ABV) Single vineyard: Cerretta MGA

**AJ** | Relatively deeply colored: a clear deep red. Distracting, intriguing scents: blood, meat, tangerine peel, moist tobacco, sweet compost. Mouth-filling and richly constituted, with ample soft tannins. The flavors are ripe, chunky, chewy: big slices of soft, dripping Nebbiolo fruit. Even some melting dark chocolate in the aftertaste. A totally delicious drink: How often can you say that about Barolo? ■