The Ultimate Wine Kick

Sunday, 2 February 2014

Piedmont Trip 2013: A hands-off traditionalist on the rise in the very heart of Barolo

Our visit at Brezza on our week in Barolo and Barbaresco in November last year was split into two parts. First we had a very traditional Piedmontese lunch in their restaurant with Enzo Brezza and tasted some of the 2003 and 2010 barolos that Antonio Galloni had been tasting for an article just prior to our visit. Later in the afternoon we continued the wine tasting with him in their cellar (below the restaurant) with vintages from 2006-2009. This really gave us a much deeper understanding of their wines and the expression different vintages.

The vinification at Brezza is very straigh-forward and their philosophy is to intervene as little as possible and make honest wines that are as transparent to the specific territorial characteristics of Barolo. However, even though Enzo is a traditionalist carrying on the heritage of his family estate (established in 1885), he points out that even traditionalists needs to evolve to render high quality wines, e.g. selection and care of the vineyards has improved through the years. He says that all he really wants to do is to convey the quality and expression of the nebbiolo grape from the vineyards into his wines, nothing else. Grapes undergoes different length of maceration with floating caps and daily pump-overs in open vats depending on the vintage and vineyard (minimum eight days but often about three weeks, four for the Sarmassa) at quite low 28 degrees Celsius, the malo is carried out in steel and cement and then the wine ages in large, neutral oak barrels (botte).

Enzo, Frederik and Andreas

The pride of the estate is the Bricco Sarmassa, a barolo that is made in the best vintages from a selection of the best grapes in highest part of Sarmassa vineyard with south south-west exposition at 300 m altitude. Enzo explains that this vineyard, which is located on the west side of the road to Alba that crosses the Barolo valley below the great Cerequio, stores water well in hot years and that it produces better quality grapes in warmer years without stressing the plants. He says that this partly has to do with the higher levels of clay in the soil compared to Cannubi. It is also in the Sarmassa where the snow melts first every year, since it is a quite closed and warm vineyard. The soil here is rich in calcareous clay and fossil marl that produces elegant and comparably approachable and expressive wines of which characteristics are typically aromatic with mint, anise, herbs and complex, earthy minerals from the soil. Moreover, Enzo points out that Sarmassa produces very soft tannins so they let maceration endure a little longer to extract more aromas and expression from the soil. In addition, with Sarmassa he can wait until tannins are really ripe at harvest too. All nebbiolo fans know how important this is for high quality barolos. Some of the vines here were replanted in 2000 and some are over 70 years old.

The much younger parcels in the classic barolo vineyard Cannubi (planted in 1994, 2003) was acquired in 1994 and is very different from Sarmassa. On the contrary, it produces best grapes in cool years when the plants are less stressed to dig for water that it doesn't store well here. The vineyard has east exposition in an open and colder valley, where there is a fusion of two different geological soil compositions; the Sant'Agata bluish-grey fossil marl with lots of calcareous clay from the Tortonian period from the west side of the valley meets the more sandy and grey Diano sandstone type of soil from the helvetian period having its epicenters around Castiglione-Falletto on the east side. The characteristics here is more typical flowery with roses, violets, tar and high levels of saline energetic acidity, but thinner vertically than the Sarmassa.

The vines in Castellero vineyard is more than 40 years old, but does not produce equally high quality fruit as the other two and even though powerful because of more sandstone and less calcareous clay, it is still not suitable for long aging, so Enzo will stop making this wine and let all the grapes from here go into the blend barolo. He says it makes more sense to add a little more structure and lifting power to the blend than to produce a single wine.

When asking Enzo about what is important in the expression of his wine and not surprisingly, he focuses on transparency of the terroir, but underlines that freshness is very important too and he says, with a smile, that after drinking a wine you should be ready to continue drinking more.

We talk a little about the contemporary change in the market from the international style of wines into the more traditional transparent wines that recently, finally has seen a renaissance. Actually, Enzo says that he is selling more and more to the U.S. than he used to do. He thinks that the market there has evolved now and more and more consumers are looking for personality and character in wines these days that are more expressive of its origins. It is becoming a big market for him, but his market is growing everywhere. He also points out that people discovers that barolos can be quite approachable in just seven-eight years, especially from La Morra and the Barolo communes.

Here is an interview with Enzo about his opinion on the new interest in traditional barolos.

All the barolos we tasted at our visit.

2010 Barolo Castellero
Andreas:

Fresh raspberries, balsamic, some hints of alcohol and floral notes.
Red fruit, very clear acidity but in total quite thin.

88p/100

2010 Barolo Cannubi
Andreas:

Red fruit, quite generous on the nose.
The tannins are clear and gives structure. Again quite clear acidity. A classical example of Cannubi. This wine has good potential to develop well.
Quite long finish. Very good structure and with nice energy but it needs a few years to settle and integrate more.

91-92p/100

Sir Galahad:

Nose: Typically fragrant roses, minerals.
Taste: Fine, fresh red fruit, orange-peel. Offers great balsamic, saline acidity and good concentration, but lacks some complexity and depth. Finish is a little austere.

91p/100

2010 Barolo Sarmassa
Andreas:

Floral, parfume, elegance, red fruit, minerals, wild strawberries, and a hint of sweetness.
Quite sharp acidity but very clear and fresh. Lots of red fruit and raspberries.
The tannins needs to soften, and are a bit dry now.
This wine should develop very nicely when the tannins and the acidity integrates better. The wine has both complexity and elegance.

93p/100

Sir Galahad:

Nose: Deep, elegant perfumes, red flowers, red fruit and minerals.
Taste: a mid palate of complex, quite deep and fresh wild strawberries, cherries, cherries. grape-peel, truffle, ginger bread and pastry. Fresh, energetic and balsamic acidity that is very promising. Great sweet, x-mas spice finish already. Texture is sandy and tannins are a little heavy now, but chewy and of very high quality. Concentration is great. Yes, this will be great and also confirms that this is a great vintage.

94-95p/100

2003 Barolo Cannubi
Andreas:

The nose is still very fresh and has red fruit, leather dried roses, cherries and tobacco.
Iron, leather, roses, cigar and some red quite ripe fruit. The tannins are quite dry. This is a powerful wine with a bit dry tannins.

91p/100

Sir Galahad:

Nose: Typically fragrant, fresh roses, violets, tobacco, some limestone minerals.
Taste: Fine, fresh red fruit, licorice, worn leather, tobacco and orange-peel. Offers great balsamic acidity and good concentration, but lacks complexity and depth. Texture is fine sandy and tannins are thick, chewy. Finish is a little austere and a little dry.

91p/100

2003 Barolo Sarmassa
Enzo and his father decided to harvest early this very hot year and his satisfied with the result.

Andreas:

Lots of red berries, cherries balsamic and floral notes. Very elegant but also generous nose.
In the mouth the wine is extremely fresh with a well integrated acidity. This is a generous wine with a bit of sweetness.
The finish is very long.

93p/100

Sir Galahad:

Nose: Very complex nose. Balsamic. Very delicate rose petals.
Taste: The mid palate offers very deep fruit; wild strawberries. Spices, pastry, mint, tar. Incredibly fresh acidity from such a warm year. Tannins are polished, quite elegant and it is very persistent.

93p/100

2003 Barolo Bricco Sarmassa
Enzo and his father decided to harvest early this very hot year when the tannins were ripe and he is satisfied with the result.

Andreas:

The nose is rich and generous but also floral and elegant. There is also a hint of solvent and some sweetness.
It has a fresh and clear acidity which gives energy to the wine and balances the ripe fruit. Good depth.
A long finish with clear but pleasant tannins.
This is a complex wine which balances power with elegance.

95p/100

Sir Galahad:

Nose: Very complex nose of delicate stylish perfumes, lilies, lots of rose petals. Balsamic acidity.
Taste: A mid palate of very deep fruit; wild strawberries. Tar, menthol, x-mas spices, cinnamon, pastry, dry meat and fine tuned minerals. Incredibly fresh, balsamic acidity from such a warm year. Texture is silky and tannins are polished, firm and the wine is rounder and more balanced than the normal sarmassa. Very persistent, elegant soft finish.

It is an impressive, balsamic-fresh wine and it is obvious that the vineyard is at its best in this type of hot vintages.

95p/100

2009 Barolo
Quite fruity, a bit acidic, and with some floral notes.
The acidity is quite fresh. There is fruit, but in general it is a quite light wine.
Quite short finish driven by acidity.

88-89p/100

Sir Galahad:

Nose: Delicately floral, dried rose petals, rosemary and red fruit.
Taste: Mint, spices, fresh fruit and loads of minerals. The finish is iron-sweet and traditional. Texture is polished already and tannins are of high quality. It is very approachable now too and very good for an entry level barolo.

89p/100

2009 Barolo Cannubi
Andreas:

Red fruit, earthy, raspberries and iron.
The taste delivers what the nose promised, with red fruit, but it is also a bit rustic.

90p/100

Sir Galahad:

Nose: Delicately floral, dried rose petals and red fruit.
Taste: A mid palate the offers some mint, dry herbs, pastry, fresh fruit and earthy minerals. The finish is iron-sweet and traditionally rustic. Texture is polished already and tannins are a little dry here. It is quite approachable, but lacks depth and complexity.

89p/100

2007 Barolo Cannubi
Andreas:

Quite rich fruit, raspberries, tobacco. The nose is quite generous.
It has a good tannic structure and lots of raspberries.

92p/100

Sir Galahad:

Nose: Delicately floral, dried rose petals, iron, menthol and red fruit.
Taste: A mid palate the offers some mint, ginger, dry herbs, fresh fruit and earthy minerals. The finish is iron-sweet, has a little metal sharp and traditionally rustic. Texture is polished already and tannins are a little dry. It is quite approachable and balanced, but lacks some concentration, depth and complexity.

91p/100

2009 Barolo Sarmassa
Andreas:

Now it is still quite sharp on the nose and has lots of red fruit and some alcohol.
It is quite sharp with very crispy acidity, rowan berries and some hints of jam.

91p/100

Sir Galahad:

Nose: Seductive, fragrant perfumes, rosemary and fresh fruit.
Taste: The mid palate offers mint, orange-peel, pastry, leather, sweet-fruit, some tobacco and tar.
The wine is a little volatile and the aromatics evolve all the time and keeps changing in the glass.
This has deep layers of sweet, jammy darker fruit and acidity is not yet fresh and a little gnarly, but very energetic. Less power, round and more about fresh, fruit. This is great already and confirms once again that hot vintages suites this vineyard best. Open 2014.

91-92p/100

2008 Barolo Sarmassa
Andreas:

Still quite closed but the nose shows both fruit and some minerals.
Pleasant tastes of raspberries, minerals and red current.
The finish delivers some silky tannins but also some acidity.

91p/100

Sir Galahad:

Nose: Vibrant minerals, fragrant perfumes and some fruit.
Taste: Mint, spices, layers of fresh fruit and loads of minerals. The finish is iron-sweet and full of minerals. Texture is polished already and tannins are quite soft and of high quality. This will take some time to integrate and come together and appears to be in closed phase now. Open 2017.

92-93p/100

2007 Barolo Sarmassa
Enzo says that the top hill in this vintage from which the bricco sarmassa is made was more approachable in this year and the tannins were exceptionally softer.

Andreas:

Generous with red fruit and raspberries, but also a very clear acidity.
Fruity, generous, red current and some hints of sweetness.

92p/100

Sir Galahad:

Nose: Seductive, fragrant perfumes and fruit.
Taste: Mint, spices, tar and layers of deep, fresh, opulent fruit. It is forward, rich and the finish is soft, persistent, very structured and quite powerful. Texture is polished already and tannins are of high quality. This is great already and confirms once again that hot vintages do this vineyard best. Open 2015.

92-93p/100

2006 Barolo Sarmassa
No bricco sarmassa was made this year, so all good fruit went in to this wine.

Andreas:

Quite deep nose with nice fruit and a hint of paint.
Earthy, deep with good levels of fruit, mainly raspberries.
Quite a lot of structure but the tannins are a bit sandy.

94p/100

Sir Galahad:

Nose: Fragrant red flowers, dried rose petals, spices and herbs.
Taste: Very dark, lovely fruit, menthol, orange-peel, pastry, sweet metals and minerals. A very rich, aromatic, generous and very structured wine that will have a very long life. Texture is quite polished and tannins are chewy, ripe.
The wine is very persistent and only suffers from a somewhat austere finish and is muscular with a firm grip. Open 2016 or better to wait in this case I think.

93-94p/100

2009 Barolo Bricco Sarmassa
Andreas:

Red fruit, strawberries, and hints of rowan berries.
Crispy acidity, very nice fruit and some nice depth.

94p/100

Sir Galahad:

Nose: Seductive, notes of tobacco, fragrant perfumes and fresh fruit.
Taste: Orange-peel, pastry, leather, sweet-iron, minerals and tar. This has deep layers of fresh, sweet fruit and acidity is balsamic-fresh and quite energetic. Texture is fine sandy and tannins are firm and of good quality. Structure is classic but not very powerful and approachable. The finish is a little austere, but not dry. This is great already and confirms once again that hot vintages do this vineyard best. Open 2014.

93p/100

Summary of the tasting
The wines we tried from Brezza overall impresses with their freshness and deep layers of fruit and aromatics, especially the Sarmassa. It is very clear to us that we are visiting a quality producer that is on the rise with a clear focus on delivering wines that are truly transparent to its territory and vintages. In addition, we had a chance to get an idea of the upcoming 2010's barolos that made us very exited.

Upplagd av Andreas kl. 00:51 Recommend this on Google
Etiketter: Barolo, nebbiolo, Piedmont, Piedmont trip 2013

No comments:

Post a Comment

Enter your comment...

Comment as: Google Account

Publish Preview

About this blog

We are passionate about wine. We seek the kicks from honest wines that reflect their origins. We taste a lot of different wines, make several visits to winemakers we like who work the soil. Obviously, we have a tendency to end up in Burgundy, Barolo and Montalcino.

Subscribe To

Posts
Comments

Follow by Email

Email address... Submit

Contributors

- Andreas
- The Ultimate Wine Kick
- Sir Galahad

Blog Archive

- ▼ 2014 (7)
  - ▼ February (3)
    - 2007 Domaine de la Romanée-Conti Richebourg Grand ...
    - A beautiful, Volnay-like and transparent Brunello
    - Piedmont Trip 2013: A hands-off traditionalist on ...
  - ► January (4)
- ► 2013 (33)

Labels

- nebbiolo (25)
- Piedmont (24)
- Barolo (15)
- Barbaresco (8)
- Brunello di Montalcino (6)
- sangiovese (6)
- Burgundy (5)
- Piedmont trip 2013 (5)
- pinot noir (4)
- Volnay (3)
- Cannubi (2)
- Vosne-Romanée (2)
- Asili (1)
- Aux Malconsorts (1)
- Barbera (1)
- Bordeaux (1)
- Brunate (1)
- Bussia (1)
- Chablis (1)
- Cornas (1)
- Côte de Nuits (1)
- Graves (1)
- La Serra di Serralunga d'Alba (1)
- Les Clos (1)
- Montalcino Trip 2013 (1)
- Pessac-Léognan (1)
- Rabajà (1)
- Rocche dell'Annunziata (1)
- Rocche di Castiglione-Falletto (1)
- Vigna Rionda (1)
- chardonnay (1)
- syrah (1)