

Focus

Piedmont Barbera & Dolcetto

Our blind panels tasted **113** new-release barbera and dolcetto wines from Piedmont for this issue. **Stephanie Johnson**, our critic for the wines of Italy, rated **25** as exceptional (90+) and **12** as Best Buys. Find a complete list of wines tasted and all reviews at wineandspiritsmagazine.com.

BARBERA

93 | Vietti \$47

2017 Barbera d'Alba Vigna Scarrone Selecting fruit from the Scarrone vineyard in Castiglione Falletto, Luca Currado ages this wine in a mix of large oak casks, barriques and stainless-steel tanks. It's bold and concentrated in the warm 2017 vintage, violet-scented and brimming with flavors of juicy raspberry and blackberry—deep, dense and vibrantly alive. For a wine that seems to push the limits on alcohol, acidity and fruit concentration, it's impressively balanced and elegant. *Dalla Terra, Napa, CA*

92 | Ca'Viola \$45

2016 Barbera d'Alba Bric du Luv Vines planted in 1950 yielded a densely concentrated, vibrant wine in the moderate 2016 growing season. This barbera's flavors of ripe raspberry and blackberry are layered with notes of licorice, bittersweet chocolate and warm spices. The wine aged for 18 months, mostly in large oak casks, developing supple tannins and hints of tobacco and underbrush that balance the rich fruit tones. *Banville Wine Merchants, NY*



92 | Massolino \$58

2017 Barbera d'Alba Gisep This powerful barbera comes from Massolino's 40-year-old vines in Serralunga d'Alba. Its concentrated flavors of blackberry and raspberry show a nice crisp edge for this warm vintage, those fruit tones layered with notes of licorice, dark chocolate and warm spice. The wine aged in barriques for 18 months, building firm, ferrous tannins that will benefit from a couple of years in the cellar. *Vineyard Brands, Birmingham, AL*

92 | Vietti \$47

2017 Barbera d'Asti La Crena This barbera offers flavors of warmed raspberry and blackberry layered with notes of anise and molten chocolate. Those decadent flavors meet La Crena's velvety tannins and dovetail with bright acidity to keep the wine vibrant and balanced on the long, smooth and fully dry finish. *Dalla Terra, Napa, CA*



91 | Fratelli Alessandria \$35

2017 Barbera d'Alba Priòra Vittore Alessandria selects fruit for this barbera from estate vineyards in Verduno and Monforte d'Alba. The vines, averaging 35 years of age, gave a concentrated wine in the warm 2017 vintage, packed with flavors of black cherry and blackberry, licorice and white pepper. He ages the wine in a mix of French *tonneaux* and large Slavonian casks, but the penetrating fruit tones show no obvious signs of wood, only hints of tobacco and smoke that linger on the finish. *North Berkeley Imports, Berkeley, CA*

91 | Cascina Ebreo \$56

2015 Vino Rosso Segreto Gianluca Colombo makes this barbera from an acre of organically farmed vines in Novello's Ravera cru. He ferments it spontaneously, then ages the wine for two years in large Austrian oak casks. It shows some initial funky aromas and will benefit from decanting, but its exuberant wild-berry flavors laced with notes of orange peel and peppery spice are worth the wait. *Artisanal Cellars, White River Junction, VT*

91 | Giovanni Rosso \$20

2016 Barbera d'Alba Donna Margherita (Best Buy) This wine offers exceptional value, hitting all the notes you'd want in a

young barbera. Suave tannins wrap around juicy black and red berry tones infused with notes of dark chocolate and subtle spice. Dynamic acidity propels the flavors, drawing them into a long, balanced and vibrant finish. *Vias Imports, NY*

91 | Massolino \$27

2019 Barbera d'Alba Franco Massolino vinifies this wine in stainless steel, giving full expression to the juicy raspberry and black-cherry flavors brightened by notes of orange zest. This barbera weighs in at a relatively lithe 14 percent, earning it a place at the dinner table beside plum-glazed roast pork. *Vineyard Brands, Birmingham, AL*

90 | Fratelli Alessandria \$24

2019 Barbera d'Alba This wine comes from two estate plots in Verduno, and it expresses the high-toned characteristics typical of this village in its flavors of juicy red plum, raspberry and orange peel. Its supple tannins and mouthwatering acidity make this a crushable wine, with or without food. *North Berkeley Imports, Berkeley, CA*

90 | Diego Conterno \$25

2019 Barbera d'Alba Ferrione Diego and Stefano Conterno make this barbera with fruit from a single, high-elevation plot of vines, some a half-century old. They age the wine in large oak casks and cement tanks, emphasizing the vivid raspberry and blackberry flavors. Brisk acidity surges through the fruit tones, trailing light spice notes as the wine moves toward a fresh, herb-inflected finish. *North Berkeley Imports, Berkeley, CA*

90 | Conterno Fantino \$43

2018 Barbera d'Alba Vignota This rich and layered barbera is a blend of grapes from five vineyard sites in Monforte d'Alba. It aged in second-passage French oak barriques for about ten months, gaining rich spice notes that enliven the mixed berry fruit tones. *Empson USA, NY*

90 | Giuseppe Cortese \$25

2016 Barbera d'Alba Morassina Made from the concentrated fruit of 45-year-old vines,

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