

Nick's WINE of the WEEK

Versatile Vietti

The Italian red wines that I enjoy often fall into two categories: they are either lively, fruity and unpretentious, wines to be enjoyed without being taken too seriously, or seriously at all, and the great Barolos and Brunellos that demand long aging and very serious contemplation indeed.



But this week's Five Star Nick's Wine of the Week, the **Vietti Barbera d'Alba, Tre Vigne 2008** (\$25) manages to fall into both categories at the same time, or almost the same time.

I'll explain. The other evening I opened a bottle and after letting it breath for an hour it was quite delightful with a steak. It showed lovely fruit – red and black cherries along with hints of strawberries – backed up by nice woody touches. A great wine for a BBQ, I thought, even if evil Uncle Albert has smothered the ribs in his way-to-pungent sauce.

I then pumped out the remaining half bottle and put it aside till the next evening at which point I received a wonderful surprise. In the intervening 24 hours the wine had undergone a transformation – it had grown up. It had developed an unexpected depth and complexity, and was now a really quite serious wine.

Thirty year old vines and exemplary winemaking have produced that rarest of creatures – a wine that really can be enjoyed today without any hint of compromise, and also kept for several years as it matures into a great wine.

The Barbera grape is known for its versatility, and if this is what's meant by versatility, I'm all for it.

NWOW Rating: ★★★★★

When to Drink: Now and for the next 5 years

Breathing/Decanting: Yes, let it breath for an hour

Food Pairing: Pasta, pizza, steak

Grapes: 100% Barbera

Appellation: Barbera d'Alba

Region: Piedmont

Country: Italy

Price: \$25

Availability: Moderate

Web Site: www.vietti.vom



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