

2007 Barolo, part 2

Barolo from La Morra

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While updating the wine notes I wrote during this year's **Nebbiolo Prima**, in this case for the **2007 Barolo** of the village of **La Morra**, I was struck again by the variability of this year's crop of wines.

La Morra is known as a region to produce a softer style of Barolo, one that plays into the hands of the many modernist producers there. The modernists strive to produce wines that are more accessible on release, and have generally adjusted their harvest schedules in an effort to bring in softer, riper fruit. In tasting the 2007 wines, that seems to have been a mistake in many cases, causing elevated levels of alcohol that yielded a theme of heat to most of the 2007 wines from La Morra.

One of the reasons that Barrique gained such popularity among the wines of La Morra is that their naturally soft character was reinforced by this tendency to harvest late for maximum fruit expression. This fruit, coupled with short macerations to limit the extraction of tannins, created the opportunity to use Barrique without resulting in overly tannic wines. This tendency is still quite evident with many of the wines from La Morra showing oak flavors and aromas, as I note.

Also included here are many wines from the commune of Monforte, which were included in the same

day's tasting session. These wines typically possess less fruit and an almost weedy note that sets them apart from the wines of the rest of the region. In contrast to those of la Morra, for example, the wines of Monforte, typically powerfully structured but leaner could stand to benefit from the added warmth of a vintage such as 2007.

The topographical character of the region, many smaller valleys for example, allows for better natural regulation of seasonal temperature variations, so the region has the added benefit of being able to shade more ground, and offer more relief from the heat of an inordinately warm vintage. These character traits worked to Monforte's advantage in 2007 as my notes show. Many producers did quite well here and the region was spared from the hail that had such an effect further to the north.

Vietti Brunate La Morra - bit toasty, some nice fresh fruit, a bit hot, a bit wide on the palate, flat, soft tannins, loose back end, short 5