

Booze News

I drink to make other people interesting. — George Jean Nathan

Fine Italian Wines, Vintage Cars & the Ghost of Biggie Smalls

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Sometimes when cursing the gods you forget they let you go to amazing events like today's Dalla Terra Winery Direct Annual Portfolio Tasting. Done on the roof-top of the Peterson Automotive Museum (yes, the one where Biggie was gunned down by the unknown assailant) -- it had 19 Italian Wineries for perusing.

I thought it would be fun to compare the two most expensive half-cases (front line price, so add on a bit more for retail). [Vietti's](#) Barbaresco "Masseria" 2007 comes in a six pack for \$440.00. It was pleasant, but the winemaker got me into their "oldest vines in Italy" — 2009 Barbera d'Alba "Scarrone Vigna Vecchia." This was about \$342.00, had a French whoosh to it, where the wine feels light, but not watery. Some sweetness, but deserved. Mind-blowing.



The Scarrone Vigna Vecchia had so many things going on, you had to stand your ground a second just to absorb it all.

I made my way down to the [Casanova di Neri](#). They had a Tuscan Cabernet that was going for \$452 a six-pack. The guy standing next to me bragged how he brought this bottle up to tastings with his Nappa snob friends and regularly bested them. I looked at him, and after a swallow said – "I concur." The Casanova di NERI Pietradonice got only a 92 from Parker, but if you believe

that nonsense you will be missing a wine that deserves it's place in the pantheon of great Cabs.

Too cool for the old guard of Tuscan – the Chianti? The poor grape has had to overcome as much backlash as Merlot, between being sandwiched with *fava beans* in a classic movie line, and stuck with the image of the college couple on their first cheap date with jug wine. [Badia A Coltibuono](#) was pouring their 1999 Chianti Classico Riserva. This goes for \$312 in a six-pack format. Not your grammaw's Chianti, nor your mass murderer either. Had bite, with a French flush to it. Is there anyway to insult an Italian winemaker more than to tell them you liked the French aspect of their wine? I shut my mouth and just drank.

D.R. Stewart

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