

ANNUAL VALUES ISSUE

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210 Wines From Around the World



92 Stefano Farina Barolo 1997 \$45 This is extremely raisiny and ripe, with black licorice character. Full-bodied and very Port-like, with intense, ripe fruit character and a long finish. A bit overdone, but impressive. A little more finesse would make it classic quality. Best after 2007. 4,000 cases made.—J.S.

MAY 31, 2002
\$4.95 US \$5.95 CAN



ble to find one for less than \$40 a bottle. (In fact, many Barolos have doubled in price since the 1995 vintage.)

Instead, look to **Barbaresco**. Producers such as Giuseppe Cortese, Beni di Batasiolo, Stefano Farina and Carlo Giacosa have kept their prices within reach and maintained high quality. Another example of a reasonably priced Nebbiolo-based red is Gattinara, where Travaglini dominates the wine scene.

Beni di Batasiolo

89 Beni di Batasiolo Barbaresco	1998	\$28
91 Beni di Batasiolo Barbaresco	1997	\$25
93 Beni di Batasiolo Barbaresco	1995	\$19

Beni di Batasiolo is one of the larger producers in Piedmont, making about 160,000 cases of wine a year, half from grapes harvested from its nine estates in the Langhe area, and the other half from unfinished wine purchased from sources throughout Piedmont. The company is led by Fiorenzo Dogliani, 57, who bought the winery with his brothers and sisters in 1978. The Barbaresco is made using grapes bought from producers in the region that have been linked with the Batasiolo winery for years. According to Dogliani, their suppliers' Nebbiolo crop has been so good in recent vintages that they have been able to select almost all the grapes. Consequently, production figures have risen by more than 30 percent while prices have remained reasonable.

Giuseppe Cortese

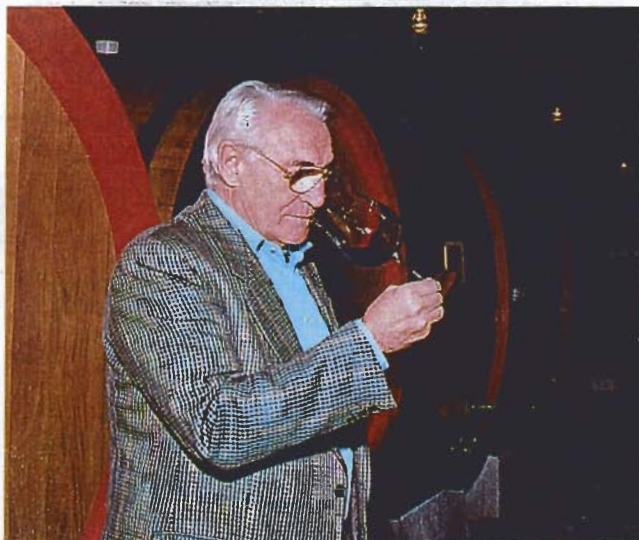
93 Giuseppe Cortese Barbaresco Rabajà	1997	\$35
87 Giuseppe Cortese Barbaresco Rabajà	1996	\$37

The Cortese family owns about 10 acres of Nebbiolo vineyards in Rabajà, one of the top growing areas of Barbaresco. Piercarlo Cortese, 31, aided by his father, Giuseppe, 61, spares nothing in the care of the estate's 15- to 20-year-old vines, and exercises rigorous fruit selection at harvest. The cellar looks more like a garage than a winery, and the winemaking methods might be regarded by some as rather old-fashioned. The family's only concession to modern trends is the use of stainless steel fermentation tanks. Also, they use traditional, large Slovenian and French-oak casks instead of small French *barriques* to age their wines.

Stefano Farina

89 Stefano Farina Barbaresco	1998	\$38
91 Stefano Farina Barbaresco	1997	\$28
88 Stefano Farina Barbaresco	1996	\$27

Stefano Farina was an industrialist in the 1930s who turned his hand to winemaking around the family's hometown of Como, near the Italian-Swiss border. His sons Giancarlo, 67, Bruno, 71, and Gino, 61, have inherited his love of winemaking, especially Giancarlo, who is a trained enologist. The company owns estates in both Piedmont and Tuscany (Fattoria Le Bocce in the Chianti Classico zone), but it is in Piedmont that they make their best wines. Their entire range is reasonably priced, especially their outstanding Barbarescos. Look for the 1997 and the 1998 Barbarescos. Both wines are vinified and



Winemaker Giancarlo Farina continues his father's winemaking tradition at Stefano Farina, which makes a range of high-quality wines from Piedmont.

aged for the family in Barbaresco by a handful of local producers with whom they've been working for years. The wines are bottled at the Farina winery.

Carlo Giacosa

89 Carlo Giacosa Barbaresco Narin	1998	\$33
91 Carlo Giacosa Barbaresco Narin	1997	\$33
93 Carlo Giacosa Barbaresco Narin	1996	\$35

Carlo Giacosa's 12 acres of vineyards are spread out over some of the top vineyard sites of Barbaresco. He's surrounded on all sides by the vineyards of Angelo Gaja, but his wine prices are far from Gaja's stratospheric levels. In winemaking, Giacosa, 61, inherited a traditionalist streak from his father, Donato Giacosa, who founded the estate in 1968. However, with the Barbaresco Narin, a blend of Nebbiolo grapes from three vineyard sites—Asili, Cole and Ovello—he decided to experiment, by aging the wine for one year in French-oak barrels. Try the Barbaresco Narin 1996 or the 1997. The 1998 is also very good.

Travaglini

91 Travaglini Gattinara	1997	\$30
90 Travaglini Gattinara Tre Vigne	1997	\$35
90 Travaglini Gattinara Riserva	1996	\$35

In northern Piedmont, against the background of snow-capped Alpine peaks, is the small town of Gattinara. Nebbiolo reigns there as well, and Gattinara's history of winemaking goes back at least as far as Barolo's and Barbaresco's. In great vintages such as 1997, Gattinara can produce full-bodied, rich and fruity reds that will age at least as well as their richer cousins in Barbaresco—and that sell for half the price. If anyone is in a position to put Gattinara back on the winemaking map, it's Giancarlo Travaglini, who owns more than half of the 260 acres of legally designated Gattinara vineyards. If you've never tried a Gattinara before, go for the 1997 vintage of one of Travaglini's two Nebbiolo reds: the classic Gattinara or the Gattinara Tre Vigne.

Jo Cooke contributed to this report.