

Decanter

May 2003

Brilliance in Barbaresco

Stephen Brook visits the Barbaresco producers who are busy rewriting the rule book.

Giorgio Rivetti of LA SPINETTA is a modernist par excellence. He produces three Barbaresco crus (Starderer, Gallina and Valeirano), aged in new barriques. All are highly concentrated, yet have an underlying elegance. I tasted the 2000s just before bottling and although I rate the wines very highly, they did, at this stage, taste very similar. They eventually develop individual characters, but need at least five years in bottle for their personalities to emerge.



Rivetti is a controversial figure. The rich, extracted styles of his wines have found favor with some influential journalist, so they are expensive. There is a certain sameness to them, but I find their quality hard to fault. But for Rivetti, ageing wine in small barrels has little to do with okay flavors: 'I want my wines to have the perfume you get from botti and the structure you get from barriques. This is something you can only achieve by practicing low yields and by picking at the right moment.'

RECOMMENDED BARBARESCO		
■ Gaja Barbaresco ★★★★★ £65/£110 (1998), £58/95 (1999); Arm, V&C	'Pora' £18.95 (1997); V&C	■ Luisin Barbaresco 'Rabaja' and 'Sori Paulin' ★★★ Both £20 (Rabaja 1996 & Sori Paulin 1997); Sec
■ Fontanafredda Barbaresco 'Coste Rubin' ★★★ £19.50 (1999); EnW	■ Giacosa Barbaresco 'Asili' and 'Gallina' ★★★★★ 'Asili' £56 (1998); Arm 'Gallina' £45 (1995); V&C	■ Bruno Rocca Barbaresco 'Rabaja' ★★★★★ £45.94 (1999); Lib
■ La Spinetta Barbaresco ★★★★★ £68.50 (2000, available from September); EnW	■ Pelissero Barbaresco 'Vanotu' ★★★ £40.41 (2000); Ali	■ Ceretto Barbaresco 'Asij' ★★★ N/A UK
■ Produttori di Barbaresco 'Paje' and 'Pora' ★★★ 'Paje' £18.95 (1996 & 1997),	■ Prunotto Barbaresco ★★★★★ £16.99 (1998); BWC	
	■ Cigluiti Barbaresco 'Serraboella' ★★★★★ £30 (1999); M&V	

For full list of UK stockists, see page 112