

FEATURES

PRIVATE ORDER TASTING: LA SPINETTA OF PIEDMONT

by David Lawrason



La Spinetta has jumped into the lime-light in Piedmont in the late 90s with a range of thoroughly modern yet classic single vineyard "Killer B's" - Barbaresco, Barolo and Barbera. The wines are models of finesse, ripeness and depth, thanks to very low yields, and yes they do show 'terroir' especially when you line up the three Barbaresco sites side by side. The top wines are over \$150, but

compared to the more famous Barbaresco producer named Angelo Gaja, whose 2004s are in the Classics Catalogue at \$290, these are a steal. There is one sangiovese from a new Tuscan property and of course there is the exemplary Moscato d'Asti, which has been a Vintages staple for years. The wines were presented to media and trade at Crush Wine Bar earlier this month by agent Peter Bodnar Rod of Tannin Fine Wines. They are available by private order at www.tanninfinewines.ca.

tannin emerging to tighten the finish. Very to excellent focus and length. Best 2011 to 2016. (DL)

90

LA SPINETTA **1/2
2006 BRICCO QUAGLIA
Moscato d'Asti, Piedmont
\$25

This has long been one of the best in the business. Very pale, pristine, silver green shade with effervescence showing in the glass. Lovely nose of white/green melon and limes is fragrant but avoids a soapy cosmetic note that can affect this variety. Light bodied, fresh, sweet and tender on the palate. Serve it frosty but don't freeze out the aromatics. (DL)

90

CASANOVA DELLE SPINETTA **1/2
2005 IL NERO DI CASANOVA
Sangiovese di Toscana
\$30

A fine young Chianti with ripeness, charm and tension. Deep purple-ruby colour. Lovely creamy, toasty, wild currant/blackberry nose typical of sangiovese; and quite floral. Medium weight, creamy, with firm, tartish acidity and firm tannin. Very good length. Best 2009 to 2012. (DL)

89

LA SPINETTA 2005 BIONZO *
Barbera d'Asti, Piedmont
\$62

Surprisingly deep, luminous purple-ruby colour. Lovely nose of ripe sweet blackberry, chocolate, with notes of parmesan, leather and cigar. Medium full bodied, quite dense, with wonderful, fine yet poised acidity. Some green tannin in there is well drops the rating a notch. Excellent length. Needs age 2010 to 2014 or longer, but may always be a touch green. (DL)

87

LA SPINETTA *1/2
2005 VIGNETO STARDERI
Langhe Nebbiolo, Piedmont
\$40.00

This is essentially de-classified Barbaresco from younger vines, and tasted against its older peers a certain raggedness of youth really shows. Reserved but fragrant nose of crushed red and blackcurrants, cherries, with a touch of grain cereal and damp earth. Mid-weight quite supple entry, tart acidity, fairly green tannin. Very good length. Best 2009 to 2011. (DL)

93

LA SPINETTA *
2003 VIGNETO CAMPÉ
Barolo, Piedmont
\$190

The only Barolo in the La Spinetta portfolio shows more heft than the Barbarescos, with more power and firmer tannin. Not an overtly generous nose but very even, and bit more evolved with mature, spice, cherry, tobacco, earth, smoky, nutty notes. Medium-full bodied, quite plush, warm and fairly tannic. Excellent to outstanding length. Best 2010 to 2020. (DL)

93

LA SPINETTA *1/2
2004 VIGNETO GALLINA
Barbaresco, Piedmont
\$165

Not quite as showy as the other single vineyard wines, but this is beautifully focused and balanced – not a hair out of place. Somewhat restrained, tighter, more focused nose of raspberry-cherry, spice, smoke and a certain flintiness. Mid-weight, slender, very richly flavoured. Great finesse. Excellent length. Best 2010 to 2020+ (DL)

92

LA SPINETTA *
2004 VIGNETO VALEIRANO
Barbaresco, Piedmont
\$165

The most tender and fine of the three single vineyard Barbaresco's. Colour is comparatively pale; the nose very nicely lifted with a more leathery aspect notes plus bit of cereal, woodsmoke and almond around the red cherry fruit. Mid-weight, open knit, and very fine. Drinkable now, certainly one to enjoy earlier than the others. Best 2009 to 2015. (DL)

91

CAMPE DELLA SPINETTA *1/2
2005 GALLINA
Barbera d'Alba, Piedmont,
\$62.00

Surprising colour saturation signals this is no simple Barbera, and it's among the most stylish that I've encountered. Soft, creamy complex aromas of berry jam, shoe leather, cream cheese and tobacco. Very much barbera. Medium-full, fleshy style with fine tannin. Richer palate; lower acidity. Excellent length. More approachable now, best 2008 to 2011. (DL)

91

LA SPINETTA *
2004 VIGNETO STARDERI
Barbaresco, Piedmont
\$165

Of the three single vineyard Barbaresco's this is the most supple, creamy and engaging, to a point. Lovely, soft, fragrant nose of strawberry, cherry, leather, tobacco and garrigue. Medium weight, almost voluptuous mid-palate, with some green