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**Food & Drink**

*I write about wine (and sometimes food) from around the world.*



### **The Langhe – Barolo and Barbaresco**

One of the world's great red wines, Barolo is also one of the most distinctive. This is due to several factors, with two being the most important. First, Barolo is made entirely from Nebbiolo, a variety that is best expressed in the Piedmont region, where it is indigenous.

Secondly, Barolo is one of the few wines which can be mentioned in a serious discussion of terroir, as with Grand Cru Burgundy. The examples of Barolo from Serralunga d'Alba and Monforte d'Alba, from older soils, are very different in character than those from Verduno or La Morra, where younger souls are present. In fact, even in La Morra, there are major variations among the wines from vineyards near the town to those in the Annunziata district, to the west (and this, considering only the soils and climate, without taking into effect, various winemaking practices among producers).

Having traveled to the Barolo production zone since 2001, and having walked through and photographed many of the most famous vineyards with the most renowned producers, Barolo has become a major passion for me, and is a focal point of my wine studies. I've tasted more than 3000 different examples of Barolo over the past ten years and have written more than a dozen articles on these wines, as well as a book on the wines and foods of the region.

Thus my list of the best Barolo producers. I could write about 100 different companies, but that would be better suited to a book on the subject. Thus I'll profile 25 and also include an honorable mention list of another 25. Even with that, I'll have to omit a few first-rate producers, evidence of the tremendous quality of this wine.

I'm not ranking these producers for one simple reason - it's pointless. How do you determine that my number 14 selection is better than my number 15? Why is Barolo number 3 better than 4, and so on. Thus I'll list them in alphabetical order. Any producer listed among the top 25 Barolo is an outstanding producer.

But I am writing about one winery separately to begin this article. That makes this producer, in my opinion, the single best of all the vintners that make Barolo. I rarely single out one producer as the best in a zone, but I feel that strongly in this instance. I know that a large percentage of Barolo lovers will agree with me regarding this selection.

### **Paolo Manzone (Serralunga d'Alba)**

A medium-sized estate that real Barolo fans appreciate, both for the consistency as well as the price/quality relationship. The Serralunga comune Barolo is a great value (the 2014 is particularly well done), while the Meriame, from 70 years old vines at the estate, is one of the zone's most underrated Barolos. The riserva Barolo, partly matured in amphorae, is nothing short of brilliant (especially the 2008, 2011 and 2012).