

The Serralunga Style Guide – Barolo Power (Part One)



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

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Vineyards at Serralunga d'Alba PHOTO ©TOM HYLAND

Recently, I wrote three articles about Barolo producers in the commune of La Morra, the largest commune of the Barolo production zone in terms of Nebbiolo acreage (part three, along with links to parts one and two can be found [here](#)). Besides being the largest commune, it is also a reference point for the Barolo production zone, as the typical La Morra Barolo has a signature that is quite recognizable, despite any one producer's winemaking technique. In general, a La Morra Barolo tends to have lovely floral aromas, along with tannins that are less aggressive than similar wines from other communes. This is a generalization of course, and examples vary as to the specific vineyards where the grapes are sourced, but typically, a La Morra Barolo is a bit more approachable and less powerful when it comes to ranking Barolo from the entire zone.

On the opposite end of the scale, we have Barolo from Serralunga d'Alba. This commune, situated at the eastern reaches of the Barolo zone, is the third most widely planted to Nebbiolo in the zone, after La Morra and Monforte d'Alba. The wines tend to be quite tannic and are structured for the long haul; this due to the presence of Serravalian soils, among the oldest in the territory. These soils force the roots of the plants to search deeper for water than the younger Tortonian soils found in La Morra and a few other area communes, resulting in firm, sometimes aggressive tannins that produce beautifully structured wines that demand time. A Serralunga Barolo is not typically approachable upon release (again, this is a generalization - there are exceptions); but rather displays its best characteristics after a decade or more; the best examples from the finest vintages are in great condition at 25-40 years of age.

Let's look at a few of the top Barolo producers in Serralunga d'Alba.



Luisella and Paolo Manzone in their vineyards in Serralunga d'Alba PHOTO COURTESY PAOLO MANZONE

Paolo Manzone - Luisella and Paolo Manzone - two extremely cordial and engaging individuals - manage this handsome property just outside the town of Serralunga. Manzone produces three separate examples of Barolo, all from Serralunga fruit. The communal Barolo, known as Barolo del Comune di Serralunga d'Alba, offers lovely harmony and very good acidity; this is the most drinkable of the firm's Barolos upon release.

The Meriame Barolo is from the eponymous vineyard at the estate; the oldest vines here are more than 70 years of age. This is the wine that Manzone has built his reputation on, and it is a classic Serralunga offering, with ripe black fruit, distinct spice and rich tannins. Yet, thanks to the winemaking style here of using large and mid-size casks, the wood notes are subtle, allowing for excellent Nebbiolo character to shine through.

Manzone has also recently added a Barolo *Riserva*, with the fruit coming from the finest lots of the Meriame vineyard. In addition to two years aging in large and mid-size casks, Manzone also matures the wine for one year in anforae. The 2012 is an outstanding wine with great harmony and elegance, while the 2013 is a more powerful wine that should keep well for another 15-20 years.

Besides the impressive lineup of Barolo from Paolo Manzone, this is a place you should keep in mind if you are ever in the area looking for a place to stay for one or two evenings. The winery is part of an agriturismo; the rooms are very comfortable, the breakfast is quaint and simple, and Paolo and Luisella have added a large outdoor swimming pool for their guests. This is centrally located, so a drive to anywhere in the Barolo zone, whether visiting another producer or enjoying a great meal, is no more