

The 25 Best Producers of Barbaresco

[Tom Hyland](#) Contributor

[Food & Drink](#) I write about wine (and sometimes food) from around the world.



Vineyards in the Rio Sordo sottozona of Barbaresco, looking toward the Roero district
©Tom Hyland

A few months ago, I wrote an [article](#) with my list of the 25 Best Barolo producers. Barolo is far and away the most famous wine of the Piedmont region of northwestern Italy, but there is another wine from this region that should be equally celebrated, yet is too often regarded as a lesser wine when compared to Barolo. The wine is Barbaresco, and while this has many similarities with Barolo - both are produced exclusively from the Nebbiolo variety, and both are made in zones near the city of Alba - Barbaresco rarely demands the same prominence given to its more renowned counterpart.

There are several reasons for this - there is only about one-third total production of Barbaresco as compared to Barolo, being one factor - but I believe that Barbaresco should be praised just as much as Barolo. Barolo tends to be more powerful and has a reputation of greater aging potential, but there are many splendid examples of Barbaresco that are just as rich on the palate and age just as long as the finest examples of Barolo.

Given that, here is my tribute to Barbaresco, with a list of the Top 25 producers. I could write a longer list, but I believe that 25 is an appropriate total for this online article. There is no numerical ranking - these are in alphabetical order - except for the top three producers, who are routinely outstanding, and deserve special mention (these top three are also listed in alphabetical order). *Forza Italia Barbaresco!*



Sorì San Lorenzo vineyard of Gaja, with the town of Barbaresco in the background Photo ©Tom Hyland

Produttori del Barbaresco - There are several factors that combine to make the finest producers of Barbaresco (and other iconic reds in Italy and throughout the world) so extraordinary. One of the most important is varietal purity, and along those lines, perhaps no one does this better than the Produttori del Barbaresco. Situated in the heart of the town of Barbaresco, this is one of the greatest cooperative producers in all of Italy. Managed by Aldo Vacca, former assistant to Angelo Gaja, the Produttori sources fruit from growers in the commune of Barbaresco. There is a classic Barbaresco, one that has superb varietal character and is arguably the finest value Barbaresco made today.

If that wine was all that this firm produced, it would be considered an important producer, but it is the collection of nine cru Barbaresco - again all from the Barbaresco commune - that have cemented the legacy of the Produttori. These *riserva* bottlings are produced only from the finest vintages; recent releases have been from 2013, 2011, 2009, 2008 and 2007 (the wines were not made from the 2010 vintage, as Vacca believed the firm had too many releases of these wines on the market at the same time). Vacca divides the nine cru wines into three groups of three; the most approachable (Pora, Rio Sordo, Asili), middleweight (Ovello, Pajé and Muncagota) and the most full-bodied and ageworthy (Rabajá, Montefico and Montestefano).

All of these wines are brilliantly realized Barbaresco, with rich delicious cherry fruit along with notes of cedar in the aromas (these wines are all aged in *grandi botti*) and subtle brown spice. These are beautifully harmonious with very good to lively acidity (depending on the vintage) and offer dazzling complexity and of course, superb sense of place; these are wines that express the soul of Barbaresco, what the Piemontese call *anima*. At minimum, these wines drink well for 10-12 years, with Montefico and Montestefano often showing well some 20-25 years after the vintage. A brilliant producer with wines that are not to be missed.

Cascina Roccalini - Here is a hidden gem you should know about. It's the creation of Paulo Veglio, who sold his Nebbiolo grapes to Dante Scaglione at Bruno Giacosa for ten years, and then with the help of Scaglione, decide to produce his own Barbaresco. The winery is named for the *sottozona* where his vineyards and winery are located. The wine is fermented in cement tanks, which improves its varietal purity, and then matured in *grandi botti*. This is an exceptional Barbaresco, one that makes no apologies for its intense fruit-dominated character. It's rich, complex and extremely subdued with its wood notes. I absolutely love this wine, which is admittedly hard to find as so little is produced (less than 1000 cases). But it's definitely worth the search (from time to time, there is also a *riserva* Barbaresco produced).

Text © Tom Hyland

https://www.forbes.com/sites/tomhyland/2019/01/10/the-25-best-producers-of-barbaresco/?fbclid=IwAR1W1_ChNo2M8dzKbUjFmfXF2kRN_hot6Sg2gSVxVOZr4FvFI94zH3nJIBs#2e85d56e3b9d