

# Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar

October/November 2011

## Vietti

By [Stephen Tanzer](#)

Luca Currado describes his 2008 Barolos as "leaner, delicate wines with long, minerally finishes, close to pinot noir and more like the Barolos of the 1980s." He finds the 2005, 2006s and 2007s to be richer and more opulent. In my tasting here in September, the young 2008s were overshadowed by Currado's magnificent 2007s, which clearly benefited from a harvest on the early side, with healthy levels of natural acidity (in the range of 6 grams per liter). "Some later pickers had falling acidity levels in very warm conditions," noted Currado. "It's a mistake to consider 2007 as a hot vintage: the summer featured much lower degree days than 2006, and there were many cool nights in September."

### [2010 Vietti Dolcetto d'Alba Tre Vigne](#)

(\$20) Bright, dark red. Sour cherry and flowers on the nose. Juicy and on the lean side, with good cut and thrust to its moderately ripe fruit flavors. Not at all a round style of dolcetto but really scrapes the palate clean. In a thirst-quenching style.

88

### [2009 Vietti Dolcetto d'Alba Tre Vigne](#)

(\$20) (aged in large casks: "stainless steel would accentuate the metallic quality of this high-extract, structured wine," notes Currado): Good dark red. Riper and spicier on the nose than the 2010 version, with a dominant aroma of cherry. Fuller and fatter too but quite dry and serious, with a graphite minerality contributing to the impression of chewiness. This serious, broad dolcetto finishes with mouthdusting tannins and good lift. As high in acidity as the 2010 (about 6 grams) but here there's more buffering material.

90

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### [2009 Vietti Barbera d'Alba Scarrone Vigna Vecchia](#)

(\$82) (from vines planted in 1918; this wine did its malolactic fermentation in *barrisques*, 20% new and the rest at least five years old, then was moved into large Slavonian casks in the spring for another year of aging): Bright, dark red. Fresh, floral aromas of cherry and wild herbs, with complementary oak tones. Dense, rich and deep, combining outstanding sweetness of fruit with harmonious acidity and serious power and structure. This will age well on its sheer density. Luca Currado picked these barbera vines early, "with very thick, ripe skins" and a crop level of under 25 hectoliters per hectare. (My sample of the Barbera Scarrone *classique* showed a very rich, almost syrupy fruit character, stronger oak influence and a roasted quality with air; I did not think this bottle was quite right but was unable to retaste it back in New York as it was not yet in the U.S. market.)

92

### **2007 Vietti Barbera d'Asti La Crena**

(\$40) (aged for five months in *barrisques*, than racked into larger casks): Very deep red with ruby tones. Wild aromas of currant, meat, graphite and oak. Layered and thick yet light on its feet, with good lift and minerality to the dark berry and cocoa powder flavors. Very youthful and sharply delineated. Can't match the 2006 version for sheer size and structure but this is a bit more refined on the back end.

90(+?)

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### **2008 Vietti Nebbiolo d'Alba Perbacco**

(\$25) Moderately deep medium red. Lovely earthy perfume of cherry, leather, smoke, rose petal and minerals, with an exotic whiff of peach. At once sweet and bright, with vibrant acidity giving shape and precision to the dense earth, saline and floral flavors. Finishes with firm tannins, lovely lift and verve, and noteworthy length. Perbacco means "wow" or "surprise" in the local dialect. This 100%-nebbiolo bottling includes fruit from numerous Barolo *crus*; in fact, much of this juice used to go into Vietti's entry-level Barolo Castiglione.

90

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### **2008 Vietti Barolo Castiglione**

Medium red with an amber rim. Musky plum, redcurrant, game and flowers on the nose. Tighter and more serious than the Perbacco, with its density leavened by strong acidity. In a distinctly sappy, dry style, showing less fruit today and finishing with oak-influenced tannins.

90(+?)

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### **2008 Vietti Barolo Rocche**

Bright red with a palish rim. Noble Rocche aromas and flavors of strawberry, dried rose, brown spices, mocha and menthol. Delicate and refined but a bit lean, with strong acidity giving the mid-palate terrific cut and juiciness. Finishes long and scented, with big, dusty, slightly drying tannins. Forget this wine for at least six or seven years.

92(+?)

### **2008 Vietti Barolo Lazzarito**

Amber-edged medium red. Strawberry, orange peel, cocoa powder and graphite on the nose. Sweeter and more seamless than the Rocche, showing strong acidity but a better early balance. Finishes long, brisk and perfumed, with a strong acid impression accentuated by a mineral firmness.

92(+?)

### **2008 Vietti Barolo Brunate**

Good full medium red. Reticent nose hints at musky currant and mint. Broad, dry and painfully closed, with toothdusting tannins currently cutting off the wine's finish. This is very hard to taste today. With their strong acidity, these 2008 Barolos may surprise with their longevity, but does this uncompromising wine have enough stuffing? (Incidentally, the Barbaresco Masseria was affected by hail in 2008, so this juice was declassified into the Perbacco bottling.)

91(+?)

### **2007 Vietti Barolo Castiglione**

(\$48) Palish bright red. Scented nose offers red cherry, mint and an ineffable floral perfume. Juicy, intense and delineated, with lovely orange peel lift to its sweet red fruit and floral flavors. The finish coats the mouth with dusty, fine tannins. Remarkably harmonious for a base-level Barolo made from 5 or 6 of the family's 15 Barolo crus.

92

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### **2007 Vietti Barolo Rocche**

(\$130) Good full, bright red. Knockout perfume of raspberry, dried rose, cocoa powder and brown spices. Like liquid velvet in the mouth, but with terrific floral lift and an almost weightless impression to the flavors of cherry, minerals, spices and wild herbs. Incredibly perfumed, palate-staining finish leaves the mouth vibrating. Really compelling subtle sweetness here, not to mention grand cru class.

96

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### **2007 Vietti Barolo Lazzarito**

(\$130) Good medium red. Spicy aromas and flavors of musky minerals, dried flowers and black pepper. Much more backward and austere than the Rocche, but with a classic dryness and superb precision. Not yet generous or pleasurable but this dry, powerfully tannic wine has the sheer intensity and underlying mineral spine to reward extended cellaring. A bit like a Rhone wine in nebbiolo clothing. Luca Currado noted that "the fruit must be brilliant for a Barolo to age a long time."

94(+?)

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### **2007 Vietti Barolo Brunate**

(\$130) Good full red. Brilliant aromas of red berries, cherry, wild herbs, mint, minerals and rose petal, all lifted by a pungent blood orange note. Wonderfully sweet and generous but with outstanding clarity of flavor too, not to mention a big structure for a Barolo from La Morra. The broad, layered finish features noble tannins and great resonating length and lift. Grand cru grain and class.

97

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### **2004 Vietti Barolo Villero Riserva**

(\$300) Good bright red. Crushed cherry, dried flowers, minerals and menthol on the nose, complicated by spicy oak scents. Extremely tight, dry and penetrating, showing almost painful intensity today in spite of its velvety texture. Classic austere Barolo with a great, slowly mounting, vibrant finish and strong tannins that reach the front teeth. This will need long aging. Luca Currado, who told me that the 1996 bottling of this wine was not yet ready to drink, bottles his Villero as *riserva* because he feels it needs longer aging in casks than his other three Barolo cru bottlings; if he decides to declassify it, the juice goes into the next vintage of the Castiglione bottling, as the 2005 did.

95(+?)

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### **2007 Vietti Barbaresco Masseria**

(\$105) (Luca Currado referred to this wine as his "Barbarolo" and actually served it after the 2004 Villero Riserva): Good full red. Slightly liqueur-like aromas of raspberry, minerals and menthol. Compellingly dense, sweet and deep, with a saline minerality contributing to the wine's chewy texture. The explosive, spicy, resonating finish features strong, horizontal tannins and compelling sappiness. More elegant than Vietti's Barolos but nonetheless hugely rich for Barbaresco.

95

(Dalla Terra, Napa, CA)