

2008 Luigi Einaudi Barolo Costa Grimaldi

The 2008 Barolo Costa Grimaldi reveals lovely freshness and vibrancy in its floral bouquet and delineated, nuanced fruit. Mint, licorice and sweet spices add lift and brightness throughout. The Costa Grimaldi is a bit on the delicate, feminine side in this vintage, but the balance remains compelling. In particular, the wine's focus and clarity on the finish show the qualities that make 2008 such a terrific vintage. Costa Grimaldi is made from the Via Nuova vineyard in Barolo, a cold site that does best in warmer years. In 2008, a cold year, the Costa Grimaldi comes across as compact and unyielding. If the wine fleshes out in bottle it could merit a higher score. Anticipated maturity: 2018-2028.

Einaudi has been one of the great recent success stories in Piemonte over the last few years. Under the leadership of energetic proprietor Matteo Sardagna, Einaudi-s Baroli have never been better.

Importer: Empson, USA, Alexandria, VA;
tel. (703) 684-0900

- Antonio Galloni (April, 2012)

2008 Luigi Einaudi Barolo Nei Cannubi

The 2008 Barolo Nei Cannubi is striking. Freshly cut flowers, mint, spices and sweet red cherries are woven together in a rich, luxurious tapestry of undeniable class. The balance of richness and finesse is fabulous. Silky, polished tannins are barely perceptible, such is the elegance of the fruit. In 2008 the Cannubi is sumptuous, elegant, and flat-out beautiful. Anticipated maturity: 2016-2028.

Einaudi has been one of the great recent success stories in Piemonte over the last few years. Under the leadership of energetic proprietor Matteo Sardagna, Einaudi-s Baroli have never been better.

Importer: Empson, USA, Alexandria, VA;
tel. (703) 684-0900

- Antonio Galloni (April, 2012)

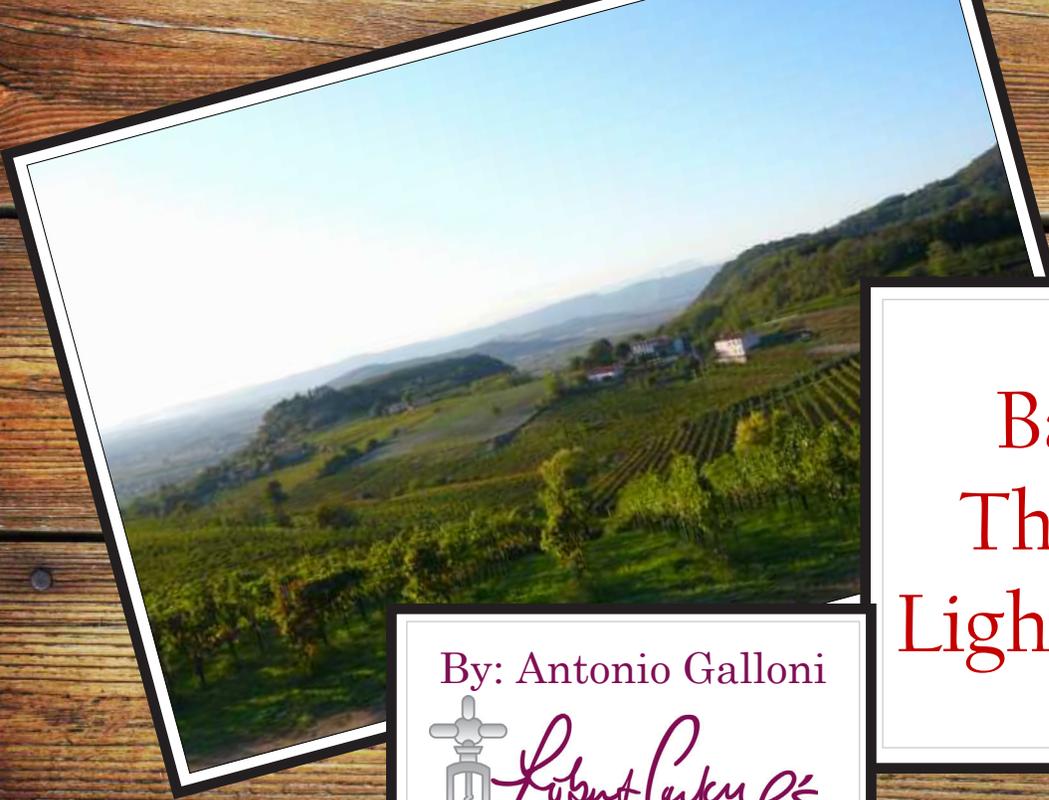
2008 Luigi Einaudi Barolo Terlo

The 2008 Barolo Terlo flows from the glass with freshly cut flowers, spices and sweet red cherries. The Terlo stands out for its juicy, Pinot-like fruit and fleshy, expressive personality. This is one of the more attractive, early appealing Baroli I tasted. The 2008 has enough richness to be delicious today, although there is little question it will be even better in a few years- time. It is sophisticated, sleek and impeccably refined from the very first taste. Anticipated maturity: 2013-2020.

Einaudi has been one of the great recent success stories in Piemonte over the last few years. Under the leadership of energetic proprietor Matteo Sardagna, Einaudi-s Baroli have never been better.

Importer: Empson, USA, Alexandria, VA;
tel. (703) 684-0900

- Antonio Galloni (April, 2012)



Barolo 2008: The Incredible Lightness of Being

By: Antonio Galloni



The 2008 Baroli have turned out far better than I originally expected. They are for the most part gracious, medium-bodied wines that are highly expressive of site and full of character. The best 2008s are thrilling. Quality is inconsistent, though, so consumers will have to choose with care.

The 2008 Harvest

The winter was quite wet, a trend that continued into the spring. Cool weather in April and May delayed the flowering by one to three weeks. Frequent rain from mid-May to mid-June caused an irregular flowering that gave growers fits. Producers reported quite a bit of variability of ripeness levels of single grapes within bunches. The larger problem was the onset of peronospera and mildew. These diseases required considerable attention from growers. Late June and July saw a return to more normal weather patterns. August was once again damp and cool, until the middle of the month, when conditions improved markedly. The 2008s were made during the last two months of the season, echoing a refrain that is common among producers. A number of

growers pointed to large diurnal swings at the end of September that saw hot days and very cold nights as a major factor that contributes to the personality of the vintage. The glorious fall allowed for a late harvest that started around the middle of October and lasted through the end of the month, very late by modern-day standards. It was a year where timing was everything. On average, vineyards were treated three times the normal amount. Hail was an issue in some spots. A handful of producers did not bottle their top selections, including Azelia, Vietti and Elvio Cogno.

The 2008s are gorgeous Baroli with expressive aromatics and tons of length. Overall, this is a vintage of medium-bodied wines with considerable minerality and healthy acidity. The vintage reminds me most of 2005, but the 2008s are much more complete. Readers may recall that the vast majority of 2005s were picked in late September, earlier than would have otherwise been optimal, as growers worked to avoid a ten-day storm that was approaching during harvest. The 2008 Nebbioli, on the other hand, were picked from the middle to late October, and therefore achieved much more phenolic ripeness and overall balance. There is

a Pinot-like sweetness to many 2008s that is highly unusual for Nebbiolo but immensely appealing in the young wines. At times, the 2008s remind me of the 1982s and 1989s because of their persistence, brightness and underlying structure. In other words, this is a super-classic vintage that will thrill readers who like vibrant, refined Baroli.

Unlike 2007, which was by contrast a relatively easy growing season, 2008 threw a lot of curveballs at producers. It was a very difficult and challenging year, as witnessed by a handful of top estates that struggled mightily. As a result, quality is not only inconsistent across the Barolo-producing villages, but also within producers' portfolios. The 2008s are highly transparent to site, something that is such an important part of Barolo and Nebbiolo-based wines more broadly.

At the top of the vineyard hierarchy, the great sites show why they are great in 2008 more so than in any recent vintage I can recall. Specifically I am thinking about Cerequio, Brunate, Rocche dell'Annunziata, Cannubi, Rocche di Castiglione Falletto and Ginestra, all shared by multiple growers, which allows an evaluation of site that is harder with vineyards such as Falletto, Cascina Francia and Monprivato, which are all essentially monopoles. It is also a great vintage for some due south-facing vineyards like Mosconi in Monforte that typically yield bruising, powerful wines, because the vineyard orientation allowed for better ripening than in other neighboring sites.

Looking Ahead: 2009-2010

As of this writing, 2010 is shaping up to be the next important vintage in Piemonte. Based on the wines I have tasted from cask, 2010 appears to be an outstanding vintage with the potential to be truly great. A spell of cold weather during the flowering resulted in loose bunches and naturally lower yields. It was a cold, rainy year overall, but with periods of intense heat that allowed for full phenolic maturation. The harvest was late by today's standards, though not quite as late as 2008. The wines have aromatic complexity, tons of depth and structure to burn. Today 2010 comes across as a modern day 1999, or a combination of 2008 and 2006. The best 2010s are viscerally thrilling examples of Nebbiolo.

I am less excited about the 2009s. There is nothing wrong with the 2009s, they just don't have the distinct

character or complexity of surrounding vintages like 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2010. Today the 2009 Baroli are open, gracious and inviting, which is perfectly fine for wines meant to be enjoyed upon release. I am curious to see how the 2009s show after bottling, which for the vast majority of wines will take place in July/August of 2012. So far, I have tasted little from 2009 that reaches the stellar heights Nebbiolo is capable of.

Visiting Piemonte

Piemonte is the greatest of the upper echelon red wine producing regions in the world for consumers who want to learn about wine. Why? For starters, even the most elite estates are open to the public and getting an appointment is relatively easy. The top properties in Burgundy are accessible only to those in the trade or to those with great connections. Many top wineries in California aren't open to the public at all. Both are understandable, as these estates are overwhelmed by the demand for visits and tastings. But that is not at all the case in Piemonte, where the average consumer with a passion for wine can still schedule a tasting just about anywhere. Because Barolo spends several years in the cellar, it is also possible to taste multiple vintages of the wines, something that is also virtually impossible to do elsewhere. By the time this article is published, a visitor in Barolo could potentially taste the 2011s and 2010s from barrel, the 2009s from barrel or tank and the 2008s in bottle. Four vintages. Do that across a producer's multiple single-vineyard wines and you have a fascinating tasting of the kind very few regions can offer. And those tastings aren't done just for critics, they are done for anyone with a true interest.

Bongiovanni

Cascina Bongiovanni is one of Piemonte's small, artisan estates that seems to fly under the radar. The wines seldom disappoint, however, and merit a wider audience. Proprietor Davide Mozzone makes Baroli built on expressive, radiant fruit that can be enjoyed young, but that also develop nicely in bottle.

Barolo 2008

91 Points

The 2008 Barolo is a beautiful, fragrant Barolo laced with dark red fruit, mint, violets and sweet spices. This mid-weight yet generous Barolo is an excellent choice for drinking over the next few years, while the forward fruit retains its freshness and vinosity. Proprietor Davide Mozzone made his 2008 from parcels in Serralunga, Monforte and Castiglione Falletto, and aged the wine in neutral oak barrels. Anticipated maturity: 2015-2020.

Barolo Pernanno 2008

93 Points

The 2008 Barolo Pernanno is terrific. It shows gorgeous depth and mid-palate pliancy in its dark red/black fruits, licorice, menthol, violets, sweet spices and subtle French oak. All of the elements flow gracefully from this sleek, harmonious Barolo. The Bongiovanni house style of forward fruit is quite present, but there is more than enough stuffing and underlying structure to balance the wine's more exuberant qualities. This is another strong showing from Davide Mozzone. The Pernanno was aged in French oak barrels, 30% new. Anticipated maturity: 2016-2026.

Ca' Rome'

Barolo "Vigna Cerretta" 2008

92 Points

The 2008 Barolo Vigna Cerretta emerges from the glass with freshly cut flowers, spices, plums and dark cherries. The Cerretta is quite a bit fresher and more vibrant than the Rapet in this vintage. There is gorgeous detail and clarity in the glass in this mid-weight, gracious Barolo. Layers of fruit build to the round, deep finish. This is a terrific showing for the Cerretta. Anticipated maturity: 2016-2026.

Barolo "Rapet" 2008

91 Points

Ca'Rome's 2008 Barolo Rapet is a very pretty wine laced with dried cherries, spices, rosemary, licorice and crushed flowers. Deceptively medium in body, the 2008 has a solid core of fruit backed up by firm yet well-integrated tannins that should allow it to develop nicely in bottle. The aromas and flavors are just a touch forward though, suggesting the 2008 won't be a very long-lived wine. This is a relatively forward style for the year with moderate structure and length, but considerable early and mid-term appeal. Anticipated maturity: 2015-2023.

Conterno Fantino

Conterno-Fantino is one of a handful of properties that deliver outstanding quality throughout their entire range. The 2008 Nebbioli were picked very late. The last of the Ginestra fruit did not come in until October 26. Fabio Conterno describes 2008 as a vintage marked with huge diurnal shifts towards the end of a very long growing season. Conterno-Fantino remains a leading exponent of the modern school of Barolo, but today macerations are longer than normal, casks have been added to the French oak barriques and the wines are more polished than they have ever been. The Conterno-Fantino Baroli used to be tannic beasts when young, but the 2008 Baroli are surprisingly accessible at this stage. I imagine the wines will close down at least somewhat over the coming months, but even if they do, these Baroli stand out for their finesse

Barolo "Mosconi" 2008

94+ Points

The 2008 Barolo Mosconi bursts from the glass with rich dark red fruit, smoke, licorice and tar. The Mosconi, from a south-facing site, is one of the juicier wines of the vintage. It boasts tons of inner sweetness and a layered expression of fruit. As always, the Mosconi is the most overt of the Conterno-Fantino Baroli. The southern exposure of the vineyard gives the fruit roundness and the voluptuousness of the tannin is quite attractive. This is a flat-out delicious Barolo from Conterno-Fantino. Anticipated maturity: 2015-2025.

Barolo "Sori Ginestra" 2008

95 Points

The 2008 Barolo Sori Ginestra is the most complete of these 2008s. An exotic melange of plums, black cherries, menthol, spices and licorice takes shape in the glass. The 2008 Ginestra impresses for its textural depth, richness and aromatic nuance. Layers of fruit build towards the sweeping finish in this multi-dimensional, textured Barolo. Ginestra is one of the great sites in Barolo. The 2008 captures all of the magic. *This is the most refined, polished young Sori Ginestra I have ever tasted.* Anticipated maturity: 2015-2028.

Barolo "Vigna del Gris" 2008

93 Points

The 2008 Barolo Vigna del Gris is gorgeous. Layers of dark red fruit, flowers, spices and minerals emerge as the wine opens up in the glass. The 2008 possesses lovely mid-palate pliancy and juiciness, along with beautifully integrated tannins and exceptional polish. Floral notes add lift and brightness. I particularly like its energy. This is an especially open vintage for the Vigna del Gris. I don't see the 2008 making old bones, but it will be delicious over the next 10-12 years, give or take. Anticipated maturity: 2015-2025.



Einaudi

Einaudi has been one of the great recent success stories in Piemonte over the last few years. Under the leadership of energetic proprietor Matteo Sardagna, Einaudi-s Baroli have never been better.

Barolo “Costa Grimaldi” 2008 **92 Points**

The 2008 Barolo Costa Grimaldi reveals lovely freshness and vibrancy in its floral bouquet and delineated, nuanced fruit. Mint, licorice and sweet spices add lift and brightness throughout. The Costa Grimaldi is a bit on the delicate, feminine side in this vintage, but the balance remains compelling. In particular, the wine-s focus and clarity on the finish show the qualities that make 2008 such a terrific vintage. Costa Grimaldi is made from the Via Nuova vineyard in Barolo, a cold site that does best in warmer years. In 2008, a cold year, the Costa Grimaldi comes across as compact and unyielding. If the wine fleshes out in bottle it could merit a higher score. Anticipated maturity: 2018-2028.

Barolo “Nei Cannubi” 2008 **94 Points**

The 2008 Barolo Nei Cannubi is striking. Freshly cut flowers, mint, spices and sweet red cherries are woven together in a rich, luxurious tapestry of undeniable class. The balance of richness and finesse is fabulous. Silky, polished tannins are barely perceptible, such is the elegance of the fruit. In 2008 the Cannubi is sumptuous, elegant, and flat-out beautiful. Anticipated maturity: 2016-2028.

Barolo “Terlo” 2008 **92+ Points**

The 2008 Barolo Terlo flows from the glass with freshly cut flowers, spices and sweet red cherries. The Terlo stands out for its juicy, Pinot-like fruit and fleshy, expressive personality. This is one of the more attractive, early appealing Baroli I tasted. The 2008 has enough richness to be delicious today, although there is little question it will be even better in a few years- time. It is sophisticated, sleek and impeccably refined from the very first taste. Anticipated maturity: 2013-2020.

Marcarini

Proprietor Manuel Marchetti brought in his fruit in mid-October. The Baroli were fermented in cement and steel, and were then aged in oak casks for two years. Marcarini remains one of the best values in traditionally made, cellar-worthy Barolo. Both of these wines are fabulous.

Barolo “Brunate” 2008 **94+ Points**

The 2008 Barolo Brunate is gorgeous. An open, beguiling bouquet redolent of Christmas cake, plums, menthol and licorice melds into an expressive core of dark fruit. The mystery and allure of Brunate is on full display. The 2008 was quite open just after bottling, but it has begun to shut down since then. Both times I have tasted it, the wine has been translucent, weightless and yet powerful at the same time; in other words, the embodiment of what makes Barolo such a fascinating and complex wine. **Simply put, this is textbook Barolo from one of La Morra’s top vineyards.** The 2008 Brunate is steeped in class, but readers will have to be patient. Anticipated maturity: 2018-2028.

Barolo “La Serra” 2008 **93 Points**

The 2008 Barolo La Serra comes across as soft, fragrant and feminine. Sweet red berries, mint, rosemary and licorice develop in the glass, adding further complexity and nuance. The La Serra is deceptively medium in body, yet it boasts fabulous length. The finish turns just a bit fleeting, but not enough to detract from the wine’s terrific overall balance. The La Serra will appeal most to readers who enjoy the delicate, feminine side of Barolo. It is a striking Barolo from Marcarini. Anticipated maturity: 2016-2028.

