

CORK'S CREW, THE HOME WINEMAKER'S CLUB

Piedmont Reds - September 13, 2008

The Piedmont (Italian: Piemonte) region of Northern Italy (in the foothills of the Alps) is home of two well-known Italian red wines: Barolo and Barbaresco. These red wines are made from the Nebbiolo grape variety. Nebbiolo, like Pinot Noir, is difficult to grow. Nebbiolo is named for the autumn fog in the Piemonte hills. Nebbiolo is a thin-skinned grape that produces powerful, highly tannic red wines, ruby in color crowned with an orange halo and uniquely perfumed.

Barolo Profile

Barolo is a full-bodied wine, known as the wine of kings, or king of Italian wines. Barolo wines come from the vineyards of Barolo, which sit in the Langhe Hills of the Piemonte region, just southwest of the town of Alba.

Aroma: ripe strawberries, tar, licorice, tobacco, chocolate, roses, and Asian spices. The initial nose of a barolo is often that of the pine tree.

When young, Barolo is highly tannic. Barolo is best served after at least 5 years of aging and may take on an unusual orange tinge with age.

Barbaresco Profile

Barbaresco is also made from the Nebbiolo grape. Barbaresco is produced in the Piemonte region immediately to the east of Alba. Barbaresco is commonly referred to as Barolo's younger sibling: Barolo is king, Barbaresco is queen.

Barbaresco is finer, less tannic, and may be consumed at a younger age than Barolo because Nebbiolo is grown in a cooler climate and Barbaresco has a lower alcohol level requirement (12.5% compared with Barolo's 13%). Barbaresco must age at least two years before release with a minimum of one year in barrel, while Barolo must be aged for three years with at least two in barrel.

Other Piedmont Reds: Barbera and Dolcetto

The Barbera grape is the most widely planted variety in all of the Piemonte and makes a red wine that is less tannic as Barolo and Barbaresco. The Dolcetto grape produces light, fruity wines similar to Beaujolais.

Next Meeting: Saturday, October 18, 2008 at 5: 30 p.m. Topic: Other Alsace Whites (Pinot Gris, Pinot Blanc and Muscat)