

*Decanting  
special*

The world's best wine magazine

November 2013 £4.40

# Decanter

## To decant or not?

**That age-old dilemma is resolved in our unique test**

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### St-Emilion 2010

**A great year revisited:  
we reveal the top performers**

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### Barolo 2009s tasted

**134 fantastic buys from  
'an outstanding vintage'**

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### Value Christmas fizz

**25 sparkling wines under  
£25 - some less than £10!**

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*Also  
this  
month*



**Figeac: the new team**  
**Latour's Californian buy**  
**Brunello 2008: top picks**  
**Hospices de Beaune**



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## Highly Recommended 17-18.25pts (90-94pts)



**Damilano, Cannubi, Barolo**  
 18.25 (94) PB 16.5 ID 18.5 MG 18  
 £29 (2008) Vinexus  
 Very expressive. Fine cherry, rose and  
 cinnamon. Rich, full-bodied with great  
 personality, persistent aromas. Decadent  
 finish, along with ripe and velvety tannins.  
 Drink 2010-2022. Alc 14.5%



**Luigi Pira, Maremma, Barolo**  
 18.25 (94) PB 16.5 ID 18.5 MG 18  
 £49 (2008) Vinexus  
 Striking aromas of plum, apple, cinnamon,  
 cardamom, clove, vanilla and rose. Rich, round  
 with an impressive body. Clean and fresh, with  
 pleasing tannins at the back, but finishes long  
 and pure. Drink 2010-2022. Alc 14.5%



**Sylla Sebastia, Bussia, Monforte  
 d'Alba** 18 (92) PB 16.5 ID 18.5 MG 18  
 15/16 UK www.syllawine.com  
 Clean and pure with subtle fruit notes of plum  
 and raspberries. Big, full, ripe and balanced with  
 fleshy, dark fruit flavours. Pleasant, open texture  
 and a long and lively finish. Drink 2010-2022.  
 Alc 14%



**Bussia Suprema, Vigna Colonnello,  
 Monforte d'Alba**  
 17.75 (92) PB 17.5 ID 18.5 MG 18  
 15/16 UK www.bussia.com  
 Fine, elegant, very fresh and with subtle,  
 delicate, rounded complexity. Round, ripe and  
 spreading flavours on the palate. Good  
 development of tannin and a good structure.  
 Long, aromatic finish. This will evolve.  
 Drink 2010-2022. Alc 14%



**Ciabot Berton, Rocchettevino,  
 La Morra** 17.75 (92) PB 16.5 ID 18.5 MG 18  
 £26 Vinexus  
 Beautifully perfumed and refined with an open  
 and expressive nose, showing aromas of ripe  
 cherry, ginger and toasted coffee. Big and  
 powerful but finishes long and pure with hints of  
 tar. Lovely, textbook Barolo. Drink 2014-2024  
 Alc 14.5%



**Ferdinando Principiano,  
 Serralunga d'Alba**  
 17.75 (92) PB 17.5 ID 18.5 MG 18  
 £32 Vinex  
 Rich, elegant, very fresh and with subtle,  
 delicate, rounded complexity. Round, ripe and  
 spreading flavours on the palate. Good  
 development of tannin and a good structure.  
 Long, aromatic finish. This will evolve.  
 Drink 2010-2022. Alc 14%



**Filippo Broccardo & Figli, Monforte  
 d'Alba** 17.75 (92) PB 16.5 ID 18.5 MG 18  
 15/16 UK www.broccardo.it  
 Very well evolved of vanilla and tobacco. Fresh  
 and rich on the palate at first, then smooth and  
 balanced. Very pure red fruit and polished  
 through well-chewed tannins. Needs time.  
 Drink 2010-2022. Alc 14.5%



**Francesco Rinaldi & Figli,  
 Cannubi, Barolo**  
 17.75 (92) PB 16.5 ID 18.5 MG 18  
 £44 50 Vinex  
 Rich, elegant, very fresh and with subtle,  
 delicate, rounded complexity. Round, ripe and  
 spreading flavours on the palate. Good  
 development of tannin and a good structure.  
 Long, aromatic finish. This will evolve.  
 Drink 2010-2022. Alc 14%



**Oddero, Rocche di Castiglione,  
 Castiglione Falletto**  
 17.75 (92) PB 17.5 ID 18.5 MG 18  
 15/16 UK www.oddero.com  
 Very well evolved of vanilla and tobacco. Fresh  
 and rich on the palate at first, then smooth and  
 balanced. Very pure red fruit and polished  
 through well-chewed tannins. Needs time.  
 Drink 2010-2022. Alc 14.5%



**Renato Cortina**  
 17.75 (92) PB 16.5 ID 18.5 MG 18  
 £32 Vinex  
 Sweet, ripe and expressive nose. Fresh, long,  
 juicy and lively with elegant structure and  
 flavours of red fruits and herbs. Impressive fine  
 concentration, balance and length.  
 Drink 2010-2022. Alc 14.5%



**Bionetto, Serralunga d'Alba**  
 17.75 (92) PB 16.5 ID 18.5 MG 18  
 £34 Vinex  
 Seductive notes of vanilla, dried rose, cinnamon  
 and cherries under the surface. Sweet, rich and  
 fleshy but with Serralunga tannins. Also succulent  
 where others fail to find a few larger amounts of  
 iron, ripe fruit as well. Drink 2010-2022.  
 Alc 14.5%



**Ca' Bianca** 17.5 (92) PB 16.5 ID 18.5 MG 18  
 £30 Vinex  
 Very persistent and open aromas of apple. Very  
 silky and pure with promising red and black  
 fruit aromas. Wonderfully rich and dense with  
 ripe red cherry, raspberry and cinnamon tannins.  
 Drink 2010-2022. Alc 14%

# DECANTER RECOMMENDED BAROLO 2009



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## My top three

Paolo Basso

### ■ Virna, Cannubi Boschis, Barolo

The seductive nose of wild strawberries is mixed with aromas of balsamic, eucalyptus and anise. The wood is well-integrated and gives notes of vanilla and sweet spices. A rich, complex mouthfeel, complemented by round, ripe tannins and a long, savoury aftertaste. **19 (96) Drink 2015-2025**

■ **Rocche dei Manzoni, Vigna Cappella di Santo Stefano, Monforte d'Alba** A refined wine from one of the lesser-known crus of Monforte d'Alba. Violet, roses, sweet spices and blackcurrant introduce a wine of great personality, deep taste, velvety tannins and very long finish. You can enjoy it young, but it will age well. **18.5 (95) Drink 2015-2035**

■ **Paolo Manzone, Meriame, Serralunga d'Alba** This lovely wine displays aromas of ripe plums, cloves, dried violets and black pepper. The gentle winemaking technique gives a round, soft and well-extracted, full-bodied wine. This is a very pleasant Barolo with a great price-to-quality ratio. **17.5 (91) Drink 2015-2025**

## My top three

Ian D'Agata

### ■ Luigi Pira, Marenca, Barolo

A Serralunga d'Alba Barolo that is slightly more approachable than most, given the tough-as-nails tannins this area is known for. This result is a fitting tribute to a family that has been making outstanding wines for decades. **18.25 (94) Drink 2015-2024**

■ **Oddero, Rocche di Castiglione, Castiglione Falletto** There might be better traditional Barolos than Oddero's, but not many. Mariacristina Oddero runs the estate with passion, grace and charm, and this wine, though less famous than her Vigna Rionda or Brunate, is an excellent introduction to the house style and to Barolo. **17.5 (91) Drink 2014-2025**

■ **Francesco Rinaldi & Figli, Cannubio, Barolo** You'd never guess this sat for 36 months in oak: it's an absolutely splendid rendition of the Cannubi vineyard. Like at Oddero, women run the show here, and run it well. **17.25 (90+) Drink 2014-2022**

## My top three

Michael Garner

■ **Fratelli Savigliano, La Morra** This is from a Dolcetto specialist at Diano d'Alba. I loved the unrestrained exuberance of the wine – its fleshy, ripe and scented character is so typical of La Morra. **19 (96) Drink 2013-2022**

■ **Virna, Cannubi Boschis, Barolo** Barolo's most famous vineyard doesn't always deliver, but this example was seductively aromatic and expressive, yet with decent structure too, highlighting the tendency for the wines from this commune to show a little more substance than those from La Morra. **19 (96) Drink 2015-2025**

■ **Sobrero, Ciabot Tanasio, Castiglione Falletto** Another winery I had not come across before: tasting this traditionally styled wine was a little like stepping back in time. Lovely aromas with good texture and a tight structure, which promises the ability to age well. Classic Nebbiolo. **19 (96) Drink 2014-2022**

NB: the tasters' top wines are not necessarily their top scoring, rather those which, on learning the wines' identity, they feel are the most notable given their provenance, price or other factors

## Expert summary: Ian D'Agata

This was a tasting that confirmed Barolo's general greatness. Encouragingly, we saw top performances from a mix of more established and younger producers



Ian D'Agata is a writer with specialist interest in Italian wine, and is a regular contributor to *Decanter*

AN ADMIRABLE PERFORMANCE, everyone agreed. I was surprised by just how luscious and downright enjoyable almost all the wines were – and, though they might not be the most ageworthy Barolos of the past few decades, the better wines will improve over the next 10 years and have enough acid and tannic spine to age for another 20.

A number of very interesting observations arise. First, that great Barolos were made across sub-zones in 2009, with splendid wines from both famous and less famous crus, such as the Monvigliero cru in Verduno (Fratelli Alessandria) and the Ravera and Bergera Pezzolle crus of Novello (respectively by Cogno and Le Strette). The Scuola Enologica d'Alba also turned in a very good effort from Grinzane Cavour.

However, there is no clear-cut winner among the communes: Barolo and Monforte each placed six wines in the top 20, La Morra four; and, at two each, Castiglione Falletto and Serralunga are perhaps somewhat less represented than current wisdom might have led one to imagine. The big five communes of Barolo, La Morra, Castiglione Falletto, Monforte and Serralunga remain the source of the vast majority of great Barolo, an observation further strengthened by the fact that those producers who own vineyards and make wines in other communes still chose to send in a wine from one of the big five (producers were allowed to send in only one wine each).

A very encouraging finding is the many up-and-coming producers confirming the many good things being said about them: Bric Cenciurio, Diego Conterno, Bruna Grimaldi, **Ciabot Berton**, Giacomo Grimaldi, Ferdinando Principiano, Rivetto, Serradenari, Sobrero and Virna are just some of the many rising stars of the region. Another plus is that some estates appear to have made one of their best wines in decade: I don't believe I have ever tasted a better wine from Stefano Farina or from Serio and Battista Borgogno. Last but not least, all the usual suspects have confirmed their star status, with outstanding wines made by the likes of Brezza, Ceretto, Conterno Fantino, Renato Corino, Mario Marengo, Paolo Scavino and many more.

There were some usually very great wines that performed poorly (Sandrone, Chiara Boschis, Castello di Verduno and Cavallotto); though on other recent occasions I had personally found them to be better – a slight tannic grittiness may have held less appeal on the day of this particular tasting. Time will tell. **D**

*'I don't believe I have ever tasted a better wine from Stefano Farina or Borgogno'*