

## TASTING HIGHLIGHTS

### 8 Impressive Piedmont Reds Up to 92 Points

New outstanding reviews of Barolo, Barbera and Gattinara from Italy



The village of Serralunga d'Alba is home to several top vineyards sourced for Barolo production. (Courtesy of Massolino)



**By Bruce Sanderson**

Jan 30, 2020

Piedmont is the ancestral home to a diverse range of grape varieties and wines, both red and white. Some of the region's more familiar bottlings are found in today's set of red values. This includes a generous Gattinara, the most famous denomination in the Alto Piemonte subregion, where Antoniolo and Travaglini are leading estates.

Or look to Barbera! Whether it's produced in Alba, or in Asti—farther north in the Monferrato hills—it can make for easy-drinking wines, high in acid and low in tannins. The grape does especially well in warmer years like 2015 and 2017, when it can retain its

grape does especially well in warmer years like 2013 and 2017, when it can retain its freshness. Specifically, versions from Asti tend to be on the denser side, sometimes needing longer time in the bottle to fully harmonize. Altogether, today's examples make for an easy introduction to these styles, each being from a top estate.

Finally, any time you discover a 92-point Barolo for less than \$50, do not hesitate to try it. Both Giovanni Rosso and Schiavenza are located in the commune of Serralunga d'Alba, where the Barolos tend to be more austere, with tightly knit tannins that are certain to please any fan of hardier Piedmontese wine.

---



## ANTONIOLO

Gattinara 2014

Score: 92 | \$47

**WS review:** This still has one foot in its youth, with fresh cherry, berry, licorice, sandalwood and eucalyptus flavors. Turns lean and firm on the spicy, woody finish. Drink now through 2025. 1,250 cases made, 500 cases imported.—*B.S.*



## GIOVANNI ROSSO

Barolo 2015

Score: 92 | \$45

**WS review:** Fresh, offering cherry, strawberry, rose and white pepper aromas and flavors. Graceful, yet with ample grip on the long, dense and dusty finish. Captures the best of the vintage. Best from 2022 through 2040. 2,100 cases made, 1,200 cases imported.—*B.S.*





Score: 92 | \$47

**WS review:** A pure, elegant version, this red exudes strawberry, cherry rose, mineral and tobacco flavors. It's sleek and intense, with a firm base of tannins lining the finish. Best from 2024 through 2043. 1,040 cases made, 316 cases imported.—*B.S.*

# TRAVAGLINI

Score: 92 | \$32

**WS review:** Bursting with sweet, ripe cherry and plum fruit, this Gattinara also evokes salty licorice, loam, leather and rose hip notes. Firm and balanced, with a minerally aftertaste. Drink now through 2028. 180,000 cases made, 5,250 cases imported.—*B.S.*







Score: 91 | \$29

**WS review:** This red is well-defined by bracing acidity that marshals the black currant, black cherry, violet and mineral flavors to a long finish. Complex and harmonious, with a light grain to the texture. The aftertaste evokes spice and tobacco notes. Drink now through 2024. 8,000 cases made, 1,000 cases imported.—*B.S.*





## PELISSERO

Barbera d'Alba Piani 2017

Score: 91 | \$26

**WS review:** Deeply colored and concentrated, this red delivers saturated flavors of plum, blackberry, chocolate and toasty oak. Balanced and fresh, in a ripe, extracted style. The dusty finish echoes the chocolate and earth elements. Drink now through 2024. 4,300 cases made, 1,100 cases imported.—B.S.



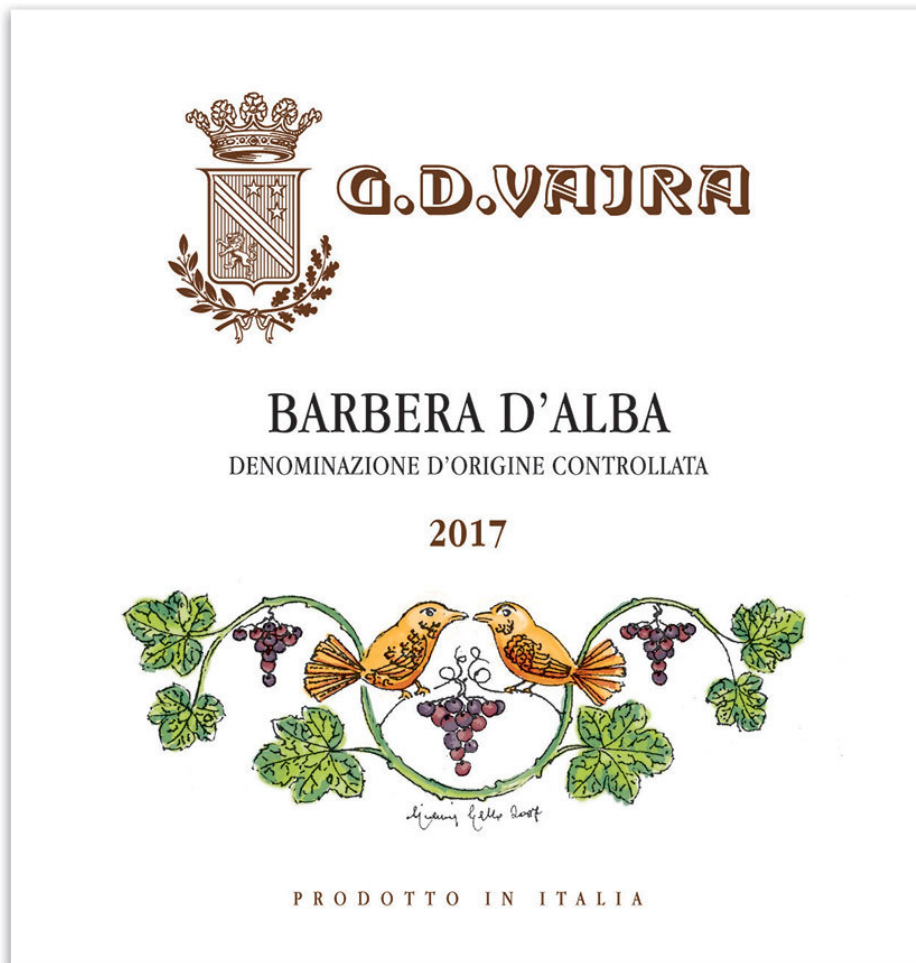


## AZELIA

Barbera d'Alba Punta 2015

Score: 90 | \$28

**WS review:** Fleshy, revealing leather, earth, plum and warm spice notes. The appealing texture and mouthwatering acidity make this red charming and accessible. Drink now. 560 cases made, 250 cases imported.—*B.S.*



## G.D. VAJRA

Barbera d'Alba 2017

Score: 90 | \$22

**WS review:** This is round, exuding black cherry, blackberry and iron flavors that are deftly integrated with the polished texture. The flavors build to a lengthy conclusion. Drink now through 2024. 2,500 cases made.—*B.S.*