

WINE News

“Reboot” your wine collection with great new vintages from Italy.



JANUARY 29, 2018 FEATURES

- 2 Don't Miss 2015 Rosso di Montalcino; Meet Timorasso
- 3 Stock up on 2013 Barolo
- 4 Late-Arriving 2012 Brunello

New Italian Arrivals

By Greg St. Clair

This year will bring a bounty of superb, quality wines from Italy.

The 2013 Barolo are truly beautiful and the 2015 vintage will be one of the best in recent memory, pretty much across the Italian Peninsula. I was in Tuscany in September 2015 and got to taste the young wines—and wow, incredible. But as hard to imagine as it is, the 2016s might even be better—whites and reds alike, everything seems to be extraordinary. Top to bottom, Alto Adige to Sicily, this year is going to be exciting.

While the vagaries of being an importer, and especially an Italian one, are always a wild ride, it makes trying to time the arrival of a new container with the release of this newsletter...somewhat tricky. We're missing the new container by two weeks.

Here are some highlights that will arrive shortly—look for them in a few weeks: **2015 Ornellaia Le Serre Nuove (\$59.99)** is just magnificent; **2015 Felsina Chianti Classico (\$19.99)** is a *wow* at the price; **2015 La Fortuna Rosso di Montalcino (\$17.99)** is exceptional, as are the Ermacora whites, including the new **2016 Ermacora Malvasia (\$14.99)**, and my favorite red wine of theirs, the **2016 Ermacora Schioppettino (\$14.99)**, is marvelous; the first of the 2016s, the **Poggiarellino Rosso di Montalcino (\$16.99)** shows incredible power and depth; and the **2017 Rocca di Montegrossi Extra Virgin Olive Oil (\$24.99)** is stunningly good. Lastly, I'd like to make sure that if any of you have any Italian wine questions, please write me directly: greg@klwines.com. I love to help.

Stunning Quality Prosecco

San Venanzio Prosecco Valdobbiadene Superiore Brut (\$12.99) With Valentine's Day just around the corner, you'll want to make sure you've got the bubbly! 2016 has been an exceptional vintage, and you don't have to spend a lot for this quality—the fruit here is so pure, clean and vibrant, it outpaces the appellation. The wine has so much minerality and clean focus yet still retains that Prosecco elegance and balance. Sensational finish!



Catzilla Returns

2015 Baccinetti “La Saporioia” Rosso di Montalcino (\$14.99) One of our favorite Rosso di Montalcino returns. This is full of sandalwood, wild cherry liqueur and wild Tuscan brush, while on the palate this is a big, rich wine with a luxurious feel and fine-grained tannic structure yet still has excellent balance. Grilled meats or your favorite pasta will be enchanted by this wine's amazing depth of flavor. For the locals—this is “Catzilla”!



From the Shores of Lake Garda

2016 Tenuta Rovaglia “Limne” Lugana (\$12.99) Last year's addition to our Direct Imports has been a huge success, and if one were to judge quality by the number of sales to our own staff, this wine would be right at the top! The nose is floral and spicy, while on the palate the wine has weight and a distinct richness, yet you immediately feel the snap of acidity, that vibrant center-palate zing that just lights up your mouth—and at only 13% abv.



Don't Miss Out on 2015 Rosso di Montalcino

Last year I started tasting the 2015 vintage for Rosso di Montalcino and I couldn't get over the quality level. I have always been a fan, but never has there been this quality level, not even in the glorious 2010 vintage in Montalcino. Many of you have probably tried wines from this vintage, perhaps because of the glee that most of the staff has displayed—we all love these wines. However, in this more recent vintage Rosso di Montalcino has come of age. This vintage is so good that it has allowed the wines to stretch the boundaries of where they have gone before. The concentration, complexity, depth of fruit and even color in this vintage are amazing, but for me it is also a preamble to the 2015 Brunello: Now, they might be a couple years off, but by tasting the 2015s you'll get a really good idea of what is coming down the pipe. What it won't give you is an idea of how good the 2016 vintage is, because I think it is even better than 2015—and that's going some. So here's just about the last batch of Rosso we are bringing in. Don't miss the opportunity—as I write this today we sent out an email about the 2015 Baricci and we sold out our 80-case allotment in a day. Don't wait—the next email might rob you of the opportunity!

2015 Tenuta di Sesta Rosso di Montalcino (\$14.99) I love the elegance, the subtle, earthy complexity of this wine, filled with the flavor of salted plums, wild herbs, freshly cut leather. There is so much there, and it is one of the most food-friendly wines I've ever had.

2015 Altesino Rosso di Montalcino (\$19.99)

Altesino's Rosso is a long, sinewy wine, showing layers of fruit, spice and a regal bearing. The linear focus gives the wine a bit of Tuscan nobility: I can see how it holds its head just slightly higher, it doesn't flow, it prances; there is real breeding in this wine. It is amazing.



2015 San Polo Rosso di Montalcino (\$24.99) This San Polo was a dramatic step forward for the winery. They've always made pretty wines, but more fruity than complex. In this vintage they've knocked it out of the park. This is verging on Brunello: more structure, more power, more depth of flavor and color. Truly a dynamic wine.

Timorasso: the Best Italian Grape You've Never Heard Of

I was introduced to this grape almost twenty years ago by Massimo Pastura of Cascina la Ghersa, a Piemontese producer who at the time didn't make a Timorasso but was so enamored by it he ordered two different bottlings at our dinner to show me what the grape was about. I was wowed, but there was such a small amount made, it was difficult to ever find any outside of Italy.

At that dinner Massimo selected two vintages that were five years apart to demonstrate the wine's versatility and aging ability. It was something I've never forgotten and it left an indelible impression. Yet it was one man, Walter Massa, who singlehandedly brought this grape from the edge of extinction and championed its quality such that today, there are more than 25 producers making Timorasso.

The grape has a classic Italian history: it was one of the most important white grapes in Piedmont until the end of WWII, when the ensuing exodus from the countryside to find work in the cities depopulated much of the landscape. Walter Massa started small and slowly convinced producer after producer to try growing this grape. I'm so glad he did. We have several of his "Cru" Timorasso, extremely small productions about 200 cases each, that highlight three different vineyards around the village of Monleale. They are extraordinary.

I find Timorasso to be like no other white grape I know of: its saline, savory, powerful mineral-driven structure lights up your mouth when you taste; it has incredible weight and richness yet it's also lively and fresh; and the finish seems to go on forever. While the rebirth of this vine has been somewhat recent, its ability to age has excited Italian

collectors for some time. We've got a selection of Timorasso in stock at the moment and I urge you to check them out! We'll have the wines in our tasting bars Saturday, February 3.

2015 Luigi Boveri "Derthona" Timorasso Colli Tortonesi (\$14.99)

2016 Vigneti Massa "Terra Petit Derthona" Timorasso Colli Tortonesi (\$19.99)

2015 Vigneti Massa "Derthona" Timorasso (\$24.99)

2013 Daniel Ricci "Terre del Timorasso" Timorasso Colli Tortonesi (\$24.99)

2015 Vigneti Massa "Sterpi" Timorasso Cru (\$59.99)

2015 Vigneti Massa "Costa del Vento" Timorasso (\$59.99)

2013 Vigneti Massa "Montecitorio" Timorasso Cru (\$59.99)

2014 Vigneti Massa "Montecitorio" Timorasso Cru (\$59.99)

Also check out Walter's Barbera Monleale—wow!

2010 Vigneti Massa "Monleale" Barbera (\$28.99)



You'll Want to Stock up on 2013 Barolo

This is what Antonio Galloni wrote in his *Vinous Media* website in February 2017 about this vintage of Barolo—I usually like to write my own take, but in this case he just nailed it: “In 2013, a cool growing season and late harvest produced gorgeous Barolos with striking aromatics, silky tannins, sculpted, vibrant fruit and mid-weight structures. Readers will find a number of thrilling, utterly captivating wines that speak to the pedigree and class that are the signatures of the best Barolo vintages... The 2013 Barolos continue to impress for their grace and finesse. The late-ripening season produced translucent, perfumed Barolos that capture the essence of site, in my mind the single greatest attribute that separates the great vintages from merely excellent or good years.”

Thank you, Antonio. I agree. While 2013 may never be considered a blockbuster vintage, I've never felt Barolo was a blockbuster wine. Barolo's always more intriguing when it is subtle, obtuse, brooding and never being too demonstrative. That's what Barolo is supposed to be—more mysterious, not obvious. While subtle and balanced, this vintage isn't wimpy, it's just prettier at an earlier age. Everyone has their own subjective tastes, but I'll let you know mine and what I'll be buying: I think the 2013 Brezza Sarmassa is extraordinary, with a little more depth than the Cannubi; the 2013 Schiavenza Broglio is a bit more down to earth—it's Serralunga, after all, and is more structured but displays amazing depth of flavors; the 2013 Giacomo Fenocchio Bussia is sensational—more supple, sweet tannins, long, long finish, just a really amazing wine; and the 2013 Francesco Rinaldi Cannubio so elegant, so aromatic so classically Canubbi—I love this wine. This is just the first wave of wines from this fantastic vintage. You are going to want to stock up!



These Wines are in Stock Now

- 2013 Brezza Barolo (\$37.99) 94 WE
 - 2013 Brezza “Sarmassa” Barolo (\$58.99) 96 WE
 - 2013 Brezza “Cannubi” Barolo (\$63.99) 98 WE
 - 2013 Cavallotto “Bricco Boschis” Barolo (\$69.99) 96 RP
 - 2013 E. Pira Chiara Boschis “Via Nuova” Barolo (\$69.99) 96 VN
 - 2013 E. Pira Chiara Boschis “Mosconi” Barolo (\$74.99) 96 JS
 - 2013 Fratelli Revello “Giachini” Barolo (\$54.99) 95 WS
 - 2013 Giacomo Fenocchio “Bussia” Barolo (\$59.99) 97 WE
 - 2013 Schiavenza “Broglio” Barolo (\$64.99) 95 WS
- ### Pre-Arrivals
- 2013 Cordero di Montezemolo “Monfalletto” Barolo (\$48.99) 94 WE
 - 2013 Cordero di Montezemolo “Gattera” Barolo (\$84.99) 96 JS
 - 2013 Cordero di Montezemolo “Enrico VI” Barolo (\$94.99) 95 VN
 - 2013 Francesco Rinaldi Barolo (\$45.99) 92 VN



The village of Barolo.

- 2013 Francesco Rinaldi “Cannubio” Barolo (\$59.99) 95 VN
- 2013 Giovanni Manzone “Castelletto” Barolo (\$47.99) 95 VN
- 2013 Giovanni Manzone “Gramolere” Barolo (\$49.99) 94 RP
- 2013 Giovanni Manzone “Bricat” Barolo (\$54.99) 95 VN
- 2013 Marcarini “La Serra” Barolo (\$46.99) 90 VN
- 2013 Marcarini “Brunate” Barolo (\$49.99) 91 VN
- 2013 Marchesi di Barolo “Sarmassa” Barolo (\$64.99) 96 JS
- 2013 Marchesi di Barolo “Cannubi” Barolo (\$69.99) 95 JS
- 2013 Massolino Serralunga d'Alba Barolo (\$39.99) 95 WE
- 2013 Pio Cesare Barolo (\$59.99) 95 JS

Barale

I first was introduced to Sergio Barale more than twenty years ago. I could tell he was a man who spent a lot of time in the vineyards. His hands alone said vineyard worker, but more than that, it was the way he approached walking: it wasn't a hurried direct line, it was a stroll as if he was seeing the vineyards for the first time, but it was in our store's aisles. He is a classic Piemontese producer: sparse amount of words, intense eyes, and you have a sense he's judging the worth of talking with you at every moment. His wines are pure, simple in the best sense of the word, with nothing added—just the purity of the vineyard and the winemaker trying not to mess it up. Based in downtown Barolo and founded in 1870, Barale is one of Barolo's oldest producers and has nearly 50 acres of vineyards.

These wines arrive in two weeks!

- 2013 Fratelli Barale Barolo (\$29.99)
- 2013 Fratelli Barale “Castellero” Barolo (\$44.99)
- 2013 Sergio Barale “Bussia” Barolo (\$49.99)
- Fratelli Barale Barolo Chinato (\$39.99)





New vineyard at Tenuta di Sesta facing Monte Amiata.

Late Arrivals in 2012 Brunello di Montalcino

The last of the 2012 Brunello di Montalcino are arriving and it's almost as if we're saving the best for last. I regularly pinch myself to think that we are the importers for so many of my favorite Brunello di Montalcino producers. Right place at the right time. I love the 2012 Brunello vintage: it is so well balanced, so expressive and so classically Montalcino. Kerin O'Keefe, who writes for *Wine Enthusiast*, perhaps defined it best as "A return to elegance." The 2011 vintage was a ripe, fleshy vintage with lots of ebullient fruit, and following that, the 2012 vintage seemed like a breath of fresh air. With so much lift in the wines, they remind me a bit of the 2010 vintage flavorwise: that dominant savory character, more umami and less obvious fruit. The wines have a more transparent personality—I don't mean in color, but that the soil seems to shine through and those are the flavors you taste. I'm a great proponent of hands-off winemaking, which doesn't mean a winery goes totally *au naturel*, but that they don't try to impose a style on the wine. They let it become itself. The real difference is made in the vineyard, not in the winery, and the healthier the vineyard is, the more vibrant the wine will be.

Montalcino is a region where irrigation is not permitted, so the vines cannot be forced in any specific direction—the vines have to be ready for any type of change in the weather. Here are three of my absolute favorites from the vintage:

2012 Baricci Brunello di Montalcino (\$49.99) Baricci is one of my first real memories of wine in Montalcino. I'd tasted many before that, but sitting at the family's dining room table perched atop the Montosoli hill, something clicked inside me. This wine began to imprint on my brain—it wasn't that it was so bold, because it wasn't, but the flavor profile was so unique I struggled to find the words to describe the flavor and I settled

upon "sweet earth." There is always a supple elegance to the wines from here, a gentle power, but it is that flavor that defines Baricci. I love this wine. **96 WE**

2012 La Fortuna Brunello di Montalcino (\$35.99) La Fortuna's Brunello is boisterous, it stands out, with more depth of fruit and slightly less of the savory character. This wine's nose is more Marasca cherry than plum, and spiced with bits of leather and Tuscan herbs. I can feel the sun on my face when I drink this wine. There's an energy I get like being warmed by the sun, and it gives the wine a bit more verve, a bit more rambunctious nature—there's a bit of youthfulness in it. The bulk of this wine comes from Montalcino's south face and it allows this wine to gain a bit more muscle and flesh. If you're looking for a horse with more spirit, this is your wine. **93 JS**

2012 Tenuta di Sesta Brunello di Montalcino (\$34.99) I always feel Zen-like when I taste the wines from Tenuta di Sesta. They are so understated, so elegant and have a "bend don't break" kind of strength: placid, almost simple upon initial nose and taste, and then a gradual expansion like muscles flexing—I'm not talking bulging muscles, more like long, swimmer's muscles, smooth, long and lithe. This wine has so much flavor, but for many who are used to the in-your-face boldness of California wines, it may not be so obvious, it may not be the loudest voice in the crowd but certainly one of the purest. This wine always does best with age or decanting: it seems so...regular until you taste an older bottling or decant a Rosso for a couple of hours. It's awesome and such a bargain. **93 DC**



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