



May 2017

Grapevine

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Store Hours: Mon – Sat, 9 – 9 & Sun, 12 – 6

My Name is...Barbera



A vineyard in Monferrato

Barbera is not a typo, referring to Streisand's childhood TV debut, but the name of a wine grape from the hills in the southeastern portion of Italy's Piemonte region...and it makes a wine that sings a lovely note with dinner.

Early-maturing Barbera is believed to have originated in the Monferrato hills around Asti. (For clarity, in the region of Piemonte is the province of Asti, across which runs the hilly wine district of Monferrato.) Barbera is a hardy, low-maintenance varietal that up until relatively recently had been used largely for local consumption or blending. In the 1980s, a small group of winemakers began experimenting to provide the same care and attention

given to other wines — considering factors such as strategic vineyard sites, reduced yields and the introduction of oak-aging, the last of which provides structure and softens the grape's naturally high acidity. The best wines are balanced and powerful, capable of aging well from eight to ten years.

Asti's soils are generally poor in organic material, stressing the vines, which equates to intense, flavorful fruit. The climate is wet and warm — great for ripening — and the elevation of Monferrato vineyards encourages drainage, further stressing the vines and making them work harder to produce fruit. (Think of it as a strong work

ethic that, combined with proper nurturing, yields a promising future.)

DOC (Denominazione di Origine Controllata) and DOCG (Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita) status noted on wine bottles refers to official regulations that must be followed, regarding how soon after harvest the wine must be made, minimum alcohol content, percentage of Barbera used and aging requirements. Usually, the smaller the zone, the more regulations and higher status. Barbera d'Asti achieved official DOC status in 1970 and was promoted to DOCG in 2008.

There are three primary Barbera DOC areas: Barbera d'Alba (though Alba is most known for Dolcetto), Barbera d'Asti and Barbera del Monferrato. There is a Piemonte DOC, as well; a larger area with fewer restrictions that can also produce delicious wines. The production area of Barbera del Monferrato Superiore DOCG, established in 2008, lies in the provinces of Asti and Alessandria. It's not always a matter of one status being inferior to the other, but which is best suited to the occasion or meal. A Piemonte DOC wine can be the delicious

answer to Friday night pizza, while a Monferrato DOCG can be uncorked for a special Mother's Day dinner. (There's an idea.)

Three stellar Barbera's: The **2016 Pico Maccario Lavignone Rosato** (DOCG) is salmon-hued, dry and refreshing. Barbera grapes are fermented in stainless steel, yielding clean fruit and a dry finish. \$12.99

Michele Chiarlo's 2015 Le Orme Barbera d'Asti Superiore (DOCG) is made from 100% oak-aged Barbera. Medium-bodied and robust, it has a palate of cherries and berries. \$11.49

La Spinetta's 2012 Ca' Di Pian Barbera d'Asti (DOCG) is 100% Barbera. Aged 12 months in new and seasoned French oak, then transferred to stainless steel for 12 months and finally aged in bottle for 12 more months, it is bright, rich and silky. **91 JS** \$17.99

If you haven't yet met, let us introduce you to the lovely *Barbera*. ♦

**Incredible Savings!
15% off all Wine —
Every Bottle,
Every Day!!!**

**Did you know...Of Piemonte's
45,000 hectares of vineyards,
33% are planted to Barbera.**

Wine Tastings Fri, 4-7 & Sat, 2-5

Days not mentioned will feature **New Arrivals!**

Fri 5/5: Wines & More for Cinco de Mayo: Festive wines, plus Jose Cuervo Margaritas & a Patron tasting

Sat 5/6: Wines for Your Kentucky Derby Party

Fri 5/12: Wines from Page 1: Ode to Barbera.

Sat 5/13: Wines for Mother's Day

Fri 5/19: May Staff Picks

Sat 5/27: Memorial Day Picnic Wines

Mushroom Risotto *Adapted from Giada De Laurentiis*

8 cups canned low-salt chicken broth
1/2-ounce dried porcini mushrooms
1/4 cup unsalted butter
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 cups finely chopped onions
10 ounces white mushrooms, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 1/2 cups Arborio rice or short-grain white rice
2/3 cup dry white wine
3/4 cup frozen peas, thawed
2/3 cup grated Parmesan
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, optional



Bring broth to a simmer and add the porcini mushrooms. Set aside until the mushrooms are tender, about 5 minutes. Keep warm.

Melt butter in a heavy large saucepan over medium heat. Add olive oil. Add onions and sauté until tender, 8 minutes. Add white mushrooms and garlic. Transfer the porcini to a cutting board, finely chop and add to the saucepan. Sauté until mushrooms are tender, 5 minutes. Stir in the rice and let it toast for a few minutes. Add the wine; cook until it is absorbed, 2 minutes. Add 1 cup of hot broth; simmer over medium-low until absorbed, stirring often, about 3 minutes. Continue to cook until the rice is just tender and the mixture is creamy, adding more broth by cupfuls and stirring often, 25-30 minutes. Stir in the peas. Mix in the Parmesan. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Serve with your favorite Barbera and Ian's staff pick, alongside the veal or on its own.

News & Events

A Celebratory Month of Tastings

Cinco de Mayo — wines, sangria, Jose Cuervo margaritas, Patron, tapas and Spanish guitar
Kentucky Derby — wines, Bourbon, mint juleps and southern ham biscuits

Mother's Day — wines and special brunch pairings

Memorial Day — wines, cocktails and picnic pairings

We'll have a celebration-worthy selection of wines and we always have all the cocktail ingredients you'll need!

La Fleur de Paradis

With all the holidays and opportunities to celebrate this month, add this refreshing, elegant cocktail to the lineup, next to the Margaritas and Mint Juleps. Mix up this gin, citrus juice, St-Germain elderflower liqueur and Champagne cocktail for a taste of paradise.



INGREDIENTS

4 oz Plymouth gin
1 oz Fresh lemon juice
1 oz Fresh lime juice
1 1/2 oz St-Germain elderflower liqueur
1/2 oz Simple syrup
2 dashes Orange bitters
2 oz Brut Champagne

DIRECTIONS

Add all the ingredients except the Champagne to a shaker and fill with ice.

Shake, and strain into two cocktail glasses.

Top with the Champagne and garnish each with an edible pansy, if desired.

May 2017 Staff Wine Picks

Sheila: 2015 Charles Krug Chardonnay (Carneros-Napa Valley) \$14.49 (reg \$16.99) 90 WS From Napa Valley's oldest winery, it is aged *sûr lie* and sees partial barrel fermentation. Tropical and citrus aromas with peach and pear flavors. *Lobster risotto

Joe: 2015 Manos Negras Pinot Noir (Patagonia, ARG) \$12.99 (reg \$14.99) Aged in seasoned oak, it is earthy and citrusy on the nose, with full body and earthy, dry flavors of leafy plum and berry fruits. *Grilled pork tenderloin

Max: 2015 Sottimano Bric Del Salto Dolcetto d'Alba (Piedmont) \$11.99 (reg \$13.99) 90 AG With malolactic fermentation and six months' aging in stainless steel, it is fruity, rich and elegant. *Tagliatelle with porcinis and sausage

Ian: 2012 La Spinetta Ca'di Pian Barbera d'Asti (Piedmont) \$17.99 (reg \$20.99) 91 JS Aged for 12 months in new and seasoned, medium toasted, French oak, with malolactic fermentation., it is then aged for another two months in bottle before its release. Violet and blackberry aromas, with firm tannins. *Slow-braised veal shank

Bill: 2014 Domaine du Cayron Gigondas (Rhône Valley) \$27.49 (reg \$33.49) 94 AG Grenache-driven with the remaining 30% comprised of Cinsault, Syrah and a drop of Mourvèdre for color, it has richness and longevity. Cayron's vines are on average 40+ years old with parcels up to 70 years old. *Grilled lamb chops