

Kyle Phillips's Italian Wine Review (IWR)

The authoritative online consumer newsletter about the wines of Italy

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2008

The 2004 Barolo, Tasted at Alba Wines

I approached the 2004 Barolo vintage with considerable anticipation -- it came upon the heels of two of the most difficult vintages in memory, and to be frank I was hoping that this time I'd taste wines I could recognize as Barolo.

I did; 2004 started more slowly than 2003, and though it did get hot during the summer months there were good day-night temperature excursions that favored the accumulation of aroma-producing compounds in the grapes, while the ripening took place at a more measured pace, allowing everything to come together and fall into place properly, as it were. The result was wines that though still very young display considerable grace and harmony coupled with supple power, and that will be well worth seeking out to set aside for enjoyment in future years. In short, it's excellent.

I'm still not sure which of the great recent vintages the 2004 most closely resembles. Perhaps the 1999, because it displays a similar sort of finesse, though it seems slightly readier than its older sibling did when it was presented a few years ago. One important thing worth noting is that, with respect to the 1999 vintage, most of those who were in the so-called Modernist or International camp have taken a step back from the extreme concentrations and heavy use of oak that were a hallmark of the style. In other words, Barolo as a whole is becoming more "traditional," and [as I have said before](#), I can't help but view this as a positive development.

As is always the case there is a degree of variation from Comune to Comune. This year I was favorably impressed by the wines from Barolo, and also by those from Serralunga and Monforte, while La Morra seemed slightly understated, as did Castiglione Falletto.

The pouring of the wines at Alba Wines is organized by Comune, so that is how they are presented here, though in the case of wineries that have vineyards in several different Comuni (Commendatore Burlotto, for example) I gathered all the wines together to make them easier to find.

Azienda Agricola Elvio Cogno

Via Ravera, 2

12060 Novello (CN)

<http://www.elviocogno.com>

Cogno Elvio Ravera Barolo DOCG 2004

Black almandine with black reflections and almandine rim. The bouquet is fairly rich, with greenish accents and some spice mingled with red berry fruit and a fair amount of alcohol that adds depth, while there are also some cedar and hints of balsam. A fair amount going on in a fairly traditional, very young key. On the palate it's ample, with bright red berry fruit supported by lively berry fruit acidity and by smooth sweet tannins that work well from below the surface to lead into a clean tart berry fruit finish. Graceful, in a rich key, and will drink very well with succulent red meats even now, though it will benefit from another year in the cellar, and improve markedly over the years, becoming quite impressive by the time it is mature.

88-90