

# Wine Spectator

One of the 2021 Barolos reaching this new height, the Aldo Conterno Barolo Romirasco 2021 (99 points, \$400), is the highest-scoring wine in this report. Packed with black fruit and violet flavors laced with iron, black pepper, eucalyptus and tar elements, this intense red is brooding and solidly built, yet with a sense of finesse. Close to matching this prowess is Conterno's Barolo Colonnello 2021 (98, \$250), which is taut and reserved, yet with a racy feel and marvelous length to its cherry, blackberry, violet, black pepper and mineral flavors.

"The 2021 vintage offers incredible generosity without sacrificing precision," says Giacomo Conterno, who manages the estate alongside his brothers. "This is the true essence of the vintage, which offers even the novice an effective representation of Nebbiolo in all its facets."

Conterno notes that each *cru* spent about three weeks macerating with the skins. "It was important to carefully evaluate the quality of the skins and adjust maceration times accordingly," he explains. "In 2021, those who waited too long, in my opinion, lost some freshness and roundness."

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Among the top-ranking Barolos that also reached new standards of excellence in 2021 are a number of other leading names. The G.B. Burlotto Barolo Monvigliero (98, \$165) is fragrant and silky, featuring green olive, green tea, rose, cherry, tamarind, iron and tobacco flavors; the Pira Chiara Boschis Barolo Mosconi (98, \$162) is a complex, fruity red that's succulent and beautifully balanced; the Giuseppe Rinaldi Barolo Brunate (98, \$450)

is elegant yet solidly structured, showing ripe elements of cherry, strawberry, orange peel and rose hip; and the Luciano Sandrone Barolo Aleste (98, \$160) offers cherry, black currant, violet, mineral and wild herb flavors that are perfectly in balance with its bright acidity and refined tannins.

"2021 is a really great vintage, one of those few lucky ones where things come together perfectly, just like recommended in a textbook," exclaims Chiara Boschis, co-owner and winemaker of Pira Chiara Boschis. "After a snowy and not too cold winter, which is the best way for the vines to get water, the vegetative flow happened with smooth regularity thanks to the cool trend of the season."

At Luciano Sandrone, co-proprietor Barbara Sandrone is equally enthusiastic about the year's wines. "2021 has a truly impressive structure," she says. "Its uniqueness lies in the extraordinary richness and concentration of the wine, which initially slows down its evolution. It was a dry year, but not excessively hot. The grapes reached optimal ripeness, with high levels of concentration and impeccable health."

With more than two dozen additional 2021 Barolos rating 97 points, the vintage is clearly the highlight among the current crop of wines from Piedmont, yet a number of 2019 *riservas* also impressed this year. A pair from Cavallotto offer exceptional quality in contrasting styles—the elegant, structured Barolo Bricco Boschis Vigna San Giuseppe Riserva (97, \$270) and the savory, complex Barolo Vignolo Riserva (97, \$216)—while Paolo Scavino's intense Barolo Rocche dell'Annunziata Riserva 2019 (97, \$325) also hits all the right notes.

In Piedmont's other great denomination, Barbaresco, the latest releases hail from the hot, dry 2022 growing season, so it's no surprise the top bottlings come from preceding harvests. The Produttori del Barbaresco Barbaresco Montestefano Riserva 2020 (96, \$89) is elegant and firmly structured, with a haunting aroma of rose, while the Giuseppe Nada Barbaresco Marcarini 2021 (96, \$60) delivers a beam of vibrant cherry and blackberry fruit augmented by violet, mineral and underbrush flavors. A trio of 2020s from Roagna round out the top-scoring Barbarescos.



Since taking the reins at his family's Giuseppe Nada estate in Treiso, Enrico Nada has continued to produce vibrant, powerful Barbarescos while also converting to organic viticulture.

April 30, 2026