# SUBHASIS GANGULI SOAKS IN THE NOTES OF ITALIAN RED WINES AT **GRANDI LANGHE**

t2 hits up some of the Twitter accounts that trended *#grandilanghe*

Every year, the love of wine draws a handful of writers, critics and bloggers to Alba, a town in Italy's Piedmont region, to assess the latest vintage of Nebbiolo wines — Barolo and Barbaresco.

This year, too, Grandi Langhe was hosted to assess the vintage of Barolo 2013 and Barbaresco 2014. However, there was a change in the format. Unlike in previous years when the event was held over five days, this time it was shortened to three days. This time one also got a chance to meet the producers directly, after a blind-tasting in the morning. A total of over 300 wines were blind-tasted in three days.

For me it was an opportunity to catch up with friends and taste some wonderful wines. This event is becoming so popular that every year more and more producers are joining in to show their wines to this select eclectic group.

However, two of the greatest wine producers of Piedmont, and possibly the whole of Italy, have eschewed from showcasing their wines. Alas, there were no wines from either Gaja or Bruno Giacosa. Why? What are they afraid of? Do they feel that showcasing their wines with a multitude of other producers would diminish their status, or their scores will be reduced in a blind-tasting among judges?

I would like to concentrate on the wines that were showcased. Barolo is by far the supreme wine of Italy. Fragrant, powerful, tannic, made from Nebbiolo grapes grown only in the Langhe region of Piedmont, it requires years of maturing to show its true potential. Hosts of young winemakers, however, are making Barolo in a more easy early drinking style, setting off a war between traditionalists and modernists.

**Barolo is by far the supreme wine of Italy. Fragrant, powerful, tannic...**

Barolo covers an area of roughly 2,200 hectares, comprising 11 communes. Its annual production is about 14 million bottles depending on the vintage. The five core communes are La Morra, Barolo, Castiglione Falletto, Monforte d'Alba and Serralunga d'Alba. The most famous and important Crus of Barolo all lie within these communes.

Barolo requires a minimum of 38 months ageing, of which 18 must be in wood. It is released in the fourth year after the harvest. For Reserva, the minimum ageing is 62 months, of which 18 must be in wood. It is released in the sixth year from the harvest.

Having lived in its shadow for many years and often called the twin brother of Barolo, Barbaresco covers an area of about 750 hectares comprising entire villages of Barbaresco, Treiso, Neive and the adjoining areas of Alba, producing about four million bottles. The wines of Barbaresco are less powerful but more elegant. When made well, the wines have superb fragrance of raspberries and violets.

Barbaresco requires a minimum ageing of 26 months, of which nine must be in wood. It is released in the third year after harvest. For Reserva, the minimum ageing is 50 months, of which nine must be in wood. It is released in the fourth year after harvest.

**Over three days I tasted about 200 Barolos and 100 Barbarescos. Here are my favourite wines of the lot, in order of tasting, not preference**

## BAROLO 2013

**Poderi Marcarini — Barolo 2013, Brunate:** Light garnet-colour wine. Flavours of ripe red fruits, violets, honey. Good acidity and soft tannins make a well-structured wine.

**Michele Chiarlo — Barolo 2013, Cerequio:** Flavours of lovely red fruits with good acidity. Structure somewhat linear. Will last.

**Francesco Rinaldi & Figli Barolo 2013, Cannubi:** Flavours of lavender, red fruits, violets on nose. Good minerality on the palate with nice acidity. Supple tannins make a wonderfully structured wine.

**Cantine Sant'Agata — Barolo 2013, La Fenice Bussia:** Deep garnet in colour. Ripe raspberries, violets, sweet spice and mace. Lots of minerals. Wonderful acidity and sweet tannins are well integrated into the wine. The finish is long and elegant.

**Poderi Ruggeri e Corsini — Barolo 2013, Bussia Corsini:** Almost identical in colour and flavours to the wine above. More mineral on the nose and the tannins are a little drier. Wonderful wine nonetheless.

**Giacomo Fenocchio — Barolo 2013, Bussia:** Wonderful flavours on the nose of violets, fruits, minerals and spice. Excellent acidity and the tannins are fabulously integrated into the wine. The length is long. Will take time to develop but will last a long time.

**Cascina Chicco — Barolo 2013, Rocche di Castelletto:** Another wonderful wine. The nose is full of floral notes along with some minerals. Extremely well integrated tannins and lovely acidity. The finish is long and elegant.

**Cavallotto Tenuta Bricco Boschis — Barolo 2013, Bricco Boschis:** Wonderful flavours with lots of floral notes. Some minerality and good acidity. Tannins are well integrated though there are hints that the tannins are a little dry. The length is long and the wine elegant.

**Oddero Poderi e Cantine – Barolo 2013, Rocche di Castiglione:** Wonderful wine, full of floral notes and minerals. Tannins are very well integrated with the fruits. The wine has a good length and an excellent finish. It is restrained but elegant.

**Giacosa Fratelli — Barolo 2013, Scarrone Vigna Mandorlo:** Fantastic. Great flavours on nose. Balsamic, dried flowers. Excellent mouthfeel with a great finish. Complex yet elegant.

**Alessandro Rivetto — Barolo 2013, Serralunga d'Alba:** Elegantly well-made wine with lovely complex aromas of fruits and dried flowers. Very balanced tannins with a long finish.

On the whole, the Barolo 2013 was better in the communes of Monforte d'Alba, Serralunga D'Alba and Castiglione Falletto. This is primarily due to their better tannic structure, holding the wine with its fruit and acidity.

## BARBARESCO 2014

**Ceretto-Barbaresco 2014, Asili:** Notes of ripe berries, rose, terracotta, and minerals. Nice structure with the tannins mingled with the acidity. Lean and austere at the moment but will open up with time.

**Montaribaldi-Barbaresco 2014, Sori Montaribaldi:** Bursting with red fruits, some mineral notes. Good acidity and the tannins are right. Good finish.

**Luigi Giordano-Barbaresco 2014, Montestefano:** Floral notes with good acidity. Lean tannins. Lots of elegance in the wine.

**Prunotto-Barbaresco 2014, Bric Turot:** Notes of lovely ripe red fruits, so typical of Nebbiolo. Some roasted spice. Good acidity with moderate tannins. Well-made wine.

**Bera-Barbaresco 2014, Barbaresco:** Wonderful red fruits, excellent acidity to go with the soft tannins. Aroma of dried flowers to the fore. Good length and a very good finish. Excellent.

**Cascina Morassino Di Bianco Roberto — Barbaresco 2014, Barbaresco:** Raspberries on the nose, good

mouthfeel. Excellent acidity and tannins, though the tannins are a little dry. Austere wine with plenty of elegance.

**Cascina Luisin — Barbaresco 2014, Rabaja:** Lovely red fruits, wonderful floral notes. Excellent acidity blended with supple tannins. Superb structure with a long finish. Exceedingly well-made wine.

**Cortese Giuseppe — Barbaresco 2014, Rabaja:** Another fabulous wine from this great cru. Notes of dried flower, balsamic, and red fruits. Wonderfully structured tannins and long finish.

**Castello Di Neive — Barbaresco 2014; Albesani Santo Stefano:** Another excellent wine. Red fruits, minerals and spice on the nose. Good acidity with sweet and supple tannins. A long finish.

The Barbaresco 2014 was superior in the commune of Barbaresco than the other communes. The 2014 vintage has been a disaster across Italy. Barbaresco was spared to some extent. But it is a vintage to collect. I would say, one can buy for early drinking not for long-term keeping.

*(Subhasis Ganguli is the founder-president of Kolkata Wine Commune)*