

Vino Wire

Dispatch from Alba

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VinoWire contributor **Tom Hyland** shares a first impression from [Alba Wine Exhibition 2009](#). Tom is the author of [Reflections on Wine](#).

Initial Thoughts on 2005 Barolo

“So what are your first thoughts on the 2005 Barolos?” I was asked by **Danilo Drocco**, winmaker at Fontanafredda in Serralunga d’Alba, in the heart of the Barolo zone. Drocco was certainly interested in my response, as he told me he had read some less than enthralling comments about the wines (interesting as they have not been released as of yet) and feared that the wines might not sell well in the U.S. (financial crisis or not). He also thought that after the glorious Barolos from 2004, this new vintage would not compare favorably.

Well after blind tasting the first 35 or so yesterday, I can report that the Barolos from 2005 are very good and in some cases excellent with a few outstanding bottlings. The wines as a whole are more subdued than those from 2004, but this is hardly a lightweight vintage, such as 2000.

Standouts among the 2005 so far include the “Cannubi” bottling from Sergio Barale, Giorgio Scarzello’s “Sarmassa” and the regular Famiglia Anselma bottling, a blend of grapes from Monforte d’Alba, Serralunga d’Alba and Barolo. Each of these wines have classic aromas of cedar and cherries with the Barale also having a hint of tar and the Scarzello boasting notes of balsamic. These are elegant wines with good depth of fruit and very fine acidity and should be at peak in 12-15 years.

The classics — ones that define the vintage — include those from Bartolo Mascarello, the “Brunate” from Francesco Rinaldi and the Prunotto bottling, a blend of grapes from Monforte d’Alba, Barolo and Castiglione Falletto. These three are outstanding wines, the Rinaldi offering beautifully defined acidity and a long, long finish while the Mascarello has remarkably spicy aromas and a beautifully defined finish with silky tannins and lively acidity. The Prunotto is classy with its orange peel and cedar aromas and excellent depth of fruit.

I will taste more Barolos today and tomorrow from other communes. So far, so good and I’m definitely looking forward to more Barolos from 2005, which may turn out to surprise many of us with its balance and elegance.