



Entrance courtyard of Paolo Scavino Winery.

Day Four in Piemonte

OUR FIRST WINERY VISIT was at Paolo Scavino. I have been visiting this property since 1995 and am a good friend of Enrica Scavino, daughter of Enrico Scavino, the owner and winemaker. This winery is well known for the utmost attention it pays to the viticultural aspects of winemaking. It could be the posterchild model of “wine is made in the vineyards, not the winery.” That being said, no expense is spared inside the winery, either.

We started the tasting with the Paolo Scavino Barolo 2018. This entry-level Barolo had medium body, fine tannins with sweet primary intensity of tart cherry and raspberry overtones finishing with a long, polished mouthfeel. Next was their Barolo



Wines tasted at Paolo Scavino Winery.

Ravera 2018. This wine has basic attributes of the normale, but with notes of rose, strawberry, cherry and iron, eucalyptus, and wild herbs. It has more concentration and a much darker quality of fruit

with blackberry and plum along with a touch of tobacco, toasted hazelnut, and dark spices. From one of Barolo’s most famous sites came the Cannubi 2018 from a rented plot which expired with this the last vintage in 2018. This wine showed the vintage in all its glory and will be missed in the future.

For an unforgettable lunch we headed to Monforte to one of Italy’s most famous restaurants, Da Felicin. I have been there many times since 1995 and have found nothing but outstanding experiences each time and this was no exception.

Our four-course lunch started with a bird nest of tagliatelle covered with sauce and white truffles, followed by pasta with morsels of veal, and then dessert. Wines served were the Cornarea Arneis



Luncheon table at Da Felicine.



Monforte D'Alba

2019, followed by Barbera D'Alba La Romualda 2013 and finishing with one of Italy's best red wines, the Sandrone Barolo Le Vigne 2000. At the end of the meal, I added another notch in my belt of tremendous gastronomic experiences at one of Italy's greatest restaurants.

After lunch, we stopped at the historic producer Domenico Clerico, also located in Monforte. This is a relatively new winery and is very famous for many wines. We had a tour and then a great tasting.

We started with the Dolcetto 2021 followed by the Barbera D'Alba 2020 and the Nebbiolo 2020. All were well made and a good opening act for what followed. Our first Barolo was the 2018 Estate blend, followed by the Pajana Barolo 2014 and then the Briccotto Barolo 2009. All of these wines were extremely well made and worthy of purchase.

The next day started with a visit to the Cagno Winery in Novello. We started with a new wine for



Luncheon wines at Da Felicine.

all of us—the Elvio Cagno Anas-Cette 2020 made from the Nascetta grape which was revitalized by Elvio Cagno. It shows aromas of melon, pineapple, white flowers, and creamy citrus. This wine is beautiful on the palate with texture, depth, and layers of mixed citrus and tropical fruits. What a discovery!

Our first red was the Nebbiolo Montegrilli 2021 followed by the Barbera D'Alba 2020. Both were very good examples of the Nebbiolo and Barbera grapes. This winery is known most for its Baroli. We had two of the most famous—the Barolo Ravera 2018 and the Barolo Ravera 2004. The younger wine shows red fruit flavors with rose petals and balsamic herbs. The older wine has a nose of rose, mint, tobacco, spices, coffee, chocolate, truffle, leather, and minerals. It has mellowed over time to show classic elegance and composure. What a memorable tasting.

We had lunch in La Morra at Bovio Restaurant. It is one of my favorite luncheon sites not only because of the wonderful food, but I think it has the best view of the countryside and hilltop



Wines tasted at Domenico Clerico.



Pasta course at Da Felicine.

castles of any restaurant. We had four courses of world-class food accompanied by three wines which paired perfectly. We started with the Massa Derthona 2017 from the Timorasso grape which Walter Massa brought back from near extinction. This wine paired very well with our appetizer of fruits and sauce in a pastry shell. With the risotto covered by white truffles, we enjoyed one of my favorite Barolos, the Aldo Conterno Barolo Cicala 2016. Finally we had a rib roast paired with another great Barolo—the Elio Altare Arborina 2016, which complemented the entrée perfectly.

We next visited a special winery of mine, as a friend and I were the U.S. importers for their wines. Mauro Veglio has been a solid, well-run winery making very good wines for decades, but has improved the quality over the past two decades since I was involved. We were hosted by Mauro's wife, Daniella Saffirio, and tasted the Dolcetto, Barbera, and several Barolo crus. All were great examples of their place of origin and we had a commanding view of the Alborina vineyard. Mauro Veglio's wines are available in the U.S. and I highly endorse them. In addition, Mauro and Daniella are fabulous individuals and love what they do and it shows in all their wines and hospitality.



Nebbiolo grapes at perfection.

For the last hour at Mauro Veglio, we were fortunate to spend it with their neighbor, Elio Altare, one of Italy's most famous wine personalities. He has been my friend since I first visited him in 1995. Through his benevolence I have met many of Italy's greatest wine makers and consider him to be one of my favorite people in the world. His daughter Sylvia is also a friend and together they produce some of Italy's greatest red wines.



Pat Bryant with Elio Altare.

Our final day started with a great visit and tasting at the Viette Winery. I have been visiting here for nearly three decades, but this day was special. My dear friend and winemaker Luca Currado stopped by during our tasting of great wines to "raid" his private cellar to end our tasting.

We started with the Viette Arneis 2019 followed by the Barbera D'Asti La Crena 2020, and the Barbera D'Alba Vigna Scarrone 2020. Those wines were followed by the Langhe Nebbiolo Perbacco 2020. The first Barolo was the Brunate 2018 which was extremely fine and prepared us for the Barolo Castiglione 1996, which Luca removed from his private cellar. According to the two employees doing our tour and tasting, this had never happened during their five years at the winery. This wine is a blend from several Viette vineyards and with 24 years of maturity from a great vintage, it has aromas of dried red fruits, leather, minerals, orange peel, and earth. The palate is medium in



Wines tasted at Viette.

weight with good concentration. Kudos to Luca for raiding his private cellar for this beautiful event, as well as a heartfelt thank-you to the staff for such a fine tour and tasting.

La Trattoria de la Posta has long been considered one of Italy's greatest places to dine. We chose it to finish our Piemonte experience and it was very enjoyable. We had a spacious and beautiful room with great waiters and food that was 'off the charts.' We started with Bruno Giacoso Arneis 2021 with a creamy vegetable custard for our appetizer, followed by an unforgettable combo of tagliatelle and risotto topped with white truffles. For the main course, we had the local specialty of rabbit with a superb sauce accompanied by an artistic side of vegetables. We had several wines with these courses, starting with the Giovanni Rosso Barbera D'Alba 2019 and the Sottimano Barbaresco Basarin 2018.



Dinner wines at Trattoria de la Posta finale.

The final wine with the rabbit was the exceptional Conterno Fantino Barolo Vigna Sori Ginesetra 2013, which was magnificent. We ended with the best panna cotta I can remember, paired with the Saracco Moscato D'Asti 2021. What a finale for a great trip. My friend Dave Cox was seated next to me and said that it was unbelievable—that in all our extensive visits to world-class restaurants globally over the past 25 years—he would have two of his best of five food-and-wine sensations ever at one restaurant from one meal.

À Votre Santé. 🍷



PHOTO: THOMAS BALSAMO

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