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AUGUST 22, 2006

# Piedmont's Other Glory

## *Great Barberas from the Langhe's Old School*

If the clash of modernism and traditionalism in Piedmont has taught us any lesson, it is that neither side has a claim to being "right." For every impassioned lover of Altare or Corino, there is someone who will fiercely argue for the superiority of Conterno or Mascarello. An Elio Altare Barolo may be strikingly different from a Giuseppe Rinaldi Barolo, but who's to say which is the greater wine?

The same is true for Barbera. With Roberto Voerzio's \$300 magnums leading the way, the modernists have claimed this grape as their own. But are their wines, with their lavish use of new wood, and their empha-

sis on extraction, the variety's greatest expressions?

### **Gems from the Old School**

Many would argue that, in fact, traditional Langhe winemaking has the potential to make more expressive, nuanced and far longer-lived Barberas than modernist methods. The problem is that so few of these wines are made, particularly from old vines in superior sites.

But there are some. Leading the short list would have to be Mauro Mascarello's Barbera Codana, Giacomo Conterno's Barbera Cascina Francia and Bruno ►

## *Gaja's 1971 Barbera "Sorì Vagnona"*

The father of Langhe modernism, Angelo Gaja became his family's winemaker in 1970—creating by the end of that decade a new paradigm: shorter macerations, whole-berry fermentation, and aging in French barrique.

But while Gaja's curiosity showed from the start, he was born into the Langhe's winemaking tradition, and his early wines were classically made. A case in point is his brilliant 1971 Barbera "Sorì Vagnona."

This wine came from the family's Vagnona vineyard, in the hills on the western edge of Barbaresco, overlooking Alba. The site enjoys a southwest exposure and the calcium in the soil gives its wines' great finesse. Today Angelo Gaja uses Vagnona's Barbera



as a component of his esteemed Nebbiolo-based wines, but in 1971 the fruit was used to produce this classically styled Barbera.

We recently located a parcel of this rare wine that had remained in the same

Piemontese cellar for nearly 30 years. From one of the Langhe's greatest vintages ever, the wine is amazing—virtually indistinguishable from a Barolo of the same year. It offers a rare window into how superb, classically made Barbera ages—as well as into Angelo Gaja's origins as a winemaker.

**1971 Gaja Barbera "Sorì Vagnona"**  
**\$145.00**

# PIEDMONT

► Giacosa's Barbera Falletto—each from Barbera planted in a vineyard famed for its profound Barolos.

These are arguably the greatest of all traditional Barberas, each a wine of majestic flavor and aroma, with great depth, structure and aging potential. After a decade or more of age, they begin to resemble the great Barolos of these producers. In fact, there is even a word for this aging process, *Baroleggiare*, which means “to become like a Barolo.”

For this offer, we have selected two wines to demonstrate the greatness of “old style” Barbera. On page 1 there is Angelo Gaja's very rare, classically made 1971 **Barbera Sorì Vagnona**. And below we have Mauro Mascarello's majestic old-vine **2003 Barbera Codana**, of which only 85 cases were made. Finally, for contrast, we add a stunning selection of Giacomo Bologna's mythic early cuvées, the bridge from Barbera's traditional roots to its modernist future. □

## Mauro Mascarello's Legendary Barbera “Codana”

*A wine with* the power of a traditional Barolo, Mauro Mascarello's Barbera “Codana” could be the ultimate old-style Barbera.

But had Mauro been less dedicated to his craft, this wine wouldn't exist. In 1991, he purchased a tiny strip adjoining his great Monprivato Barolo vineyard. A mere tenth of a hectare in size, it was planted to gnarled old Barbera vines at least a century old.

Because of their great age, and the superior *terroir*, yields were tiny, and any accountant would have told Mauro to replant the site to Nebbiolo and use the fruit in his great Monprivato Barolo. But Mauro saw the old Barbera as a treasure to be nurtured.

Vinified like his noble Barolos, and aged in *botti*, Mauro makes less than 85 cases of this magnificent

Barbera. And in the extraordinary 2003 vintage it is a masterpiece. Sensational now, it will age for years, developing further complexity. Don't miss it.

**2003 G. Mascarello  
Barbera “Codana”  
\$34.95 *bt.* \$75.00 *mag.***



Antonio Galloni in *The Piedmont Report*: “This generous, powerful old-vine Barbera, from the vineyard adjacent to Monprivato, offers a more delineated, aromatic nose and richer, rounder dark fruit on an ample, broad frame, with mineral and licorice flavors that gradually emerge from the glass. Mascarello's Barbera Codana has long been a favorite of mine and this 2003 is a great effort.”

## Giacomo Bologna: The Bridge to the Future

*In less than* a decade, Giacomo Bologna laid out Barbera's future, making the first great barrique-aged examples. From 1982, when he made the first Bricco dell'Uccellone, until his death in 1990, he created the standard for modern Barbera, inspiring future masters like Roberto Voerzio and Giorgio Rivetti.

His early vintages are now rare, but they've stood the test of time. We are pleased to offer the following selection from a fine cellar in Italy. *Extremely* limited.

**1988 Braidà Bricco Dell'Uccellone .....75.00**  
**1989 Braidà Bricco Dell'Uccellone .....89.95**

**1990 Braidà Bricco Dell'Uccellone .....89.95**  
**1990 Braidà Bricco Dell'Uccellone Magnum .....210.00**  
**1996 Braidà Bricco Dell'Uccellone .....59.95**

With its direct southern exposure, Uccellone produced Giacomo Bologna's signature wine. The wine hit its stride between 1988 and 1990, and the 1996, made by his son, is a masterpiece in this great vintage.

**1990 Braidà Bricco Della Bigotta .....79.95**  
**1990 Braidà Bricco Della Bigotta Magnum .....165.00**

In 1985, Bologna created a second cuvée that spends slightly longer in barrique. The 1990 is explosively rich.

**1990 Braidà Ai Suma .....95.00**

Only the second vintage of arguably Bologna's greatest wine. Painfully rare.

## CHABLIS

# Dauvissat's Magical 2004s

*"Deep and Classic Wines."* John Gilman in *View from the Cellar*

For devotees of classic Chablis, 2004 is our kind of year. It features the three things that we crave in great Chablis: full aromatic and flavor development, excellent structure and beautiful balance. The top wines are superb, and as good as they are now, they can only get better with time in the cellar.

Of the two growers representing Chablis' gold standard, Raveneau's 2004s have not yet been released, but the Dauvissat 2004s have just arrived and they are spectacular examples of classic Chablis.

In this vintage, as in the past, no one made better

Chablis than Vincent Dauvissat. His village Chablis and Petit Chablis have no peers, and the *premier crus* Séchet and Vaillons are better than many *grands crus*.

But the ultimate magic is to be found in his three top *cuvées*: the non-pareil *premier cru* La Forest and the coveted *grand crus* Les Clos and Les Preuses. These are as profound examples of Chablis as you're likely to find.

Having offered the two entry-level wines in May, we are pleased to offer the rest of this stellar line-up—again the superior unfiltered bottlings made for the European market. (See note below.)

*A note on bottlings: In his excellent 2004 Chablis review in View from the Cellar in January, John Gilman points out that his scores are based on having tasted the lightly filtered earlier bottlings for the US market, adding "for those who believe that the later bottlings (for Europe) are superior, please add a couple of points to the scores."*



### 2004 Les Preuses\*

94+ Gilman 92-94 Burghound

**\$79.95** bottle

*Burghound:* "... rich, sweet and unbelievably intense flavors ... explosively long finish. This is akin to having a vinous bomb go off in your mouth ... an energy and vibrancy that immediately declares that this is no ordinary grand cru."

Gilman: "... wonderfully complex ... a classic young Preuses mélange of grapefruit, lemon, oyster shell, spring flowers, a touch of hay and an underpinning of more chalky minerality."



### 2004 Les Clos

94+ Gilman 93-95 Tanzer

94 Rovani 92-95 Burghound

**\$79.95** bt. **\$45.00** half bt.

*Burghound:* "... power, muscle, sap, complexity, typicity, concentration and an almost palpable sense of stoniness as the flavors seem as though they're extracted directly from liquid minerals."

Tanzer: "Wonderfully opulent and seamless yet firmly structured ... I took a sip of this and was immediately struck by the thought that this could be the wine of the vintage."



### 2004 La Forest

92+ Gilman 90-93 Tanzer

90-93 Burghound

**\$39.95** bt. **\$24.95** half bt.

*Burghound:* "... complex and seductively perfumed ... a stony and notably focused finish of unusual intensity ... seriously impressive."

Gilman: "... outstanding ... a rock solid core of fruit, excellent structure, and a long, complex and snappy finish. This will be excellent."

Tanzer: "... wonderful energy and depth ... classic."

### 2004 R & V Dauvissat Chablis Séchet\* .....37.95

John Gilman: "90+ rating ... lovely in this vintage, offering up a fine nose of beeswax, green apples, a bit of grapefruit, oyster shell and spring flowers ... complex and quite concentrated in the mid-palate, with excellent acids, fine focus, and good length on the finish ... will be excellent."

### 2004 R & V Dauvissat Chablis Vaillons\* .....37.95

John Gilman: "92 rating ... lovely tones of sweet grapefruit, lemon, striking minerality, spring flowers and just the faintest hint of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is fullish, deep and complex, with lovely structure, bright acids, and a very long, tensile finish. Excellent juice."

## NORTHERN RHONE

# Michel Ogier

## Majestic Côte Rôties from a New Star

Unlike *Hermitage's* single slope, Côte Rôtie consists of two Côtes—Blonde and Brune—whose soils produce strikingly varied wines. But because most Côte Rôties are blends, we have few chances to

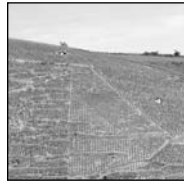
experience the compelling differences. Most notably, there's Guigal's La Mouline (Blonde), Turque (Brune) and Landonne (Brune), and, of course, there's Rostaing's Côte Blonde and La Landonne.

But there's one other exceptional source: Domaine Michel Ogier, whose diverse cuvées increasingly rival Guigal and Rostaing for our interest.

### Origins

An old Côte Rôtie family, the Ogiers have bottled wine under their own label only since 1980. Today, Stéphane Ogier runs the tiny 6-acre domaine, whose most prized holdings are a half acre in the Côte Blonde's Lancement and a tiny piece of Rozier, just above La Landonne in the Côte Brune.

Stéphane severely prunes to reduce yields, and his winemaking deftly balances traditional and modern.



Côte Blonde (left) and Côte Brune.

He practices whole-cluster fermentation in square stainless steel fermenters with a submerged cap and pumping over the must for extraction. New wood varies by cuvée, from 30% for Classique to 100% for Belle Hélène.

### Probing Côte Rôtie's Terroirs

Ogier's classic Côte Rôtie—in which Côte Blonde predominates—built the family's reputation for elegant, perfumed wines with fine tannins and silky textures. But it was **Cuvée Belle Hélène**—first made in 1995 from 55-year-old vines in the Rozier *cru*—that got the notice of collectors. A monumental Côte Rôtie, Belle Hélène approaches the massive opulence of Guigal's single-vineyards.

With a 100-point Parker rating for the 1999 Belle Hélène in his pocket, Stéphane Ogier launched two more super *cuvées* in 2001: the Côte Blonde **Lancement** and the Côte Brune **Les Embruns**.

Ogier's production is tiny across the board, making their wines difficult to find. But we like a challenge. From fine European sources, we've assembled the unprecedented range of wines that follow.

## The Côte Rôtie Classique

**2003 Côte Rôtie**  
**94 WS 89-92 Tanzer**  
**\$49.95 bt. \$110.00 mag.**



*Wine Spectator*: "... layers of fig, plum and boysenberry fruit ... suave and pure, with a fine minerality in the background ... keeping it grounded in its terroir. **\$70.**"

Tanzer: "Supple, nuanced and full ... flavors of lightly roasted red fruits, leather and game."

**2000 Ogier Côte Rôtie ..... 45.00**

Tanzer: "90 rating ... smoked meat and pepper. Juicy and nicely delineated ... more intensity on the back half ... good breadth and spicy sweetness."

**1999 Ogier Côte Rôtie ..... 89.95**

**1999 Ogier Côte Rôtie Magnum ..... 189.95**

Parker: "95 rating ... fabulous ... magical ... a glorious bouquet of bacon fat, crème de cassis, licorice, violets ... great presence in the mouth, and a knock-out finish."

### Incredible Price!

**2002 Côte Rôtie**  
**90 Tanzer**  
**\$24.95 reg. \$55**



Tanzer: "... their 2002 *cuvée classique* includes the juice that would normally be used to make the Belle-Hélène and Lancement bottlings ... Aromas of currant, brown spices, leather, pepper and oak. Sweet, peppery, intensely flavored and aromatic ... This could not be anything but Northern Rhône syrah ... Finishes precise and persistent .... **\$55 retail.**"

**1998 Ogier Côte Rôtie ..... 59.95**

Tanzer: "91+ rating. Deep, smoky aromas ... a chewy texture, a strong peppery quality ... lovely subtle length and late notes of game and leather."

# NORTHERN RHONE

## Ogier's Coveted Côte Rôtie Belle Hélène

**2003 Côte Rôtie  
Belle Hélène\***  
**92-94+ Parker**  
**92-95 Tanzer**  
**\$139.95**

Parker: "Given the tiny yields in 2003, there are **only 100 cases** of this wine ... scorched earth, bacon fat, blackberry ... with licorice, roasted meat and tar notes ... very brawny, powerful Belle Hélène ..."

Tanzer: "Quite powerfully structured, muscular and youthfully clenched ... superb lift and grip."



**2001 Côte Rôtie  
Belle Hélène**  
**94+ Parker**  
**\$159.95**

Parker: "... a sweet nose of black raspberry liqueur intertwined with creme de cassis, licorice, dried herbs, and toasty vanilla. Full-bodied and rich, with fabulous concentration as well as texture ..."

**2000 Côte Rôtie  
Belle Hélène**  
**98 EWS**  
**\$159.95**

Executive Wine Seminars: "Ethereal nose is the best of the evening; rich, expansive, fruit-driven, pure and seductive ... Follows through brilliantly on the palate offering layer upon layer of complex flavors. Great concentration ... Incredibly long and balanced finish. A truly thrilling wine, one that reminds us why we chose wine as our hobby instead of stamp collecting."

**1999 Ogier Côte Rôtie Belle Hélène ..... 375.00**

Parker: "100 rating ... seamless, majestic ... the kind of concentration found only in Guigal's top cuvées ... enormous levels of both extract and concentration ... Bravo!"

**1998 Ogier Côte Rôtie Belle Hélène ..... 179.95**

Parker: "95 rating .. sumptuous, but it will obviously be almost impossible to find ... new saddle leather, roasted meats ... super-concentrated ... will last for a generation."

**1997 Ogier Côte Rôtie Belle Hélène ..... 99.95**

Parker: "92 rating ... sweet toasty new oak aromas intertwined with jammy kirsch and creme de cassis. With airing black olive scents also emerge ... it is a glorious Côte Rôtie. Anticipated maturity: 2004-2017."

**1995 Ogier Côte Rôtie Belle Hélène ..... 250.00**

The legendary, and now extremely rare, first vintage of Belle Hélène. Blink and you'll miss it.

## Cuvées Lancement & Embruns

Cuvée Lancement's floral and mineral nuances—marked by notes of violet, flint and aromatic herbs—reflects its Côte Blonde origins. This important new wine hit the ground running with its amazing, and now rare and highly sought-after, 2001.

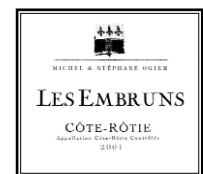
**2001 Côte Rôtie  
"Lancement"**  
**96 Tanzer**  
**\$145.00**



Tanzer: "Knockout nose ... dense ... with uncanny verve for a wine with such a velvety texture and compelling sweetness. A wine of great finesse and nuance, but also distinctly large-scaled for an example from the Côte Blonde. Extremely broad and long ... Great syrah."

Ogier's Embruns is a rich, full-throttle Côte Rôtie—having been made from plots near Les Grandes Places and Viallière in the Côte Brune. The first release, 2001, sets a high standard for vintages to come.

**2001 Côte Rôtie  
"Les Embruns"**  
**91 Tanzer**  
**\$65.00 reg. \$125**



Tanzer: "Moderately saturated ruby-red. Aromas of violet, mocha, woodsmoke and leather. Fat, rich, dense and chocolatey ... This has a deeper pitch to its fruit. Finishes with lovely sweetness and supple tannins." \$125 retail price.

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## CHAMPAGNE

# A Golden Year

## *Charles Heidsieck's Brilliant 1990 Brut Millésimé*

*Champagne's* 1990 vintage was magical, the perfect weather yielding dozens of great wines. But the *Wine Spectator* has singled out two as the vintage's best: Krug and Charles Heidsieck's Brut Millésimé.

The *Spectator's* first review of the 1990 Charles Heidsieck was in 1998, when it topped 225 other Champagnes, including Cristal, Winston Churchill, Dom Perignon (Brut *and* Rosé), even 1976 Krug Collection. Charles Heidsieck 1990 not only got the highest score (97), it also earned the following praise:

"This dazzling brut from the powerful 1990 vintage marries the forceful fruit flavors and firm texture of the vintage with the Charles Heidsieck house style of fine-beaded effervescence and enticing flavor complexity. It will be fine for the millennium, but given its vibrancy and lingering finish you could just as well save it to ring in 2010."

Then, in 2001, the 1990 was tasted again, this time earning an even higher rating: 98 points.



1930s Charles Heidsieck poster

The 1990 Charles Heidsieck Brut Millésimé symbolizes the dramatic turnaround of this historic house since Remy Martin bought it in 1985, sparing no expense to restore it to greatness. With its preponderance of Pinot Noir, the 1990 Brut Millésimé offers marvelous richness, combined with real elegance.

Amidst vanishing availability, we have continued to search out this great Champagne, securing a new, beautifully cellared lot in England. Don't miss it.

**1990 Charles Heidsieck  
Brut Millésimé\***  
**98 Wine Spectator**  
**\$95.00 limited**



*Wine Spectator*: "Seamless from start to finish. An elegantly woven tapestry of fruit blossoms, citrus, honey and vanilla, creamy and pliant, finely integrated with the firm structure. This really sings today."

## *A Different Take on Madeira*

### *Barbeito's Seductive VB Reserva*

*The economics* of Madeira are changing. With the great old wines disappearing, producers are developing new styles, in which younger, fresher wines are used, occasionally to remarkable effect.

One of the most widely acclaimed of these innovations has been Barbeito's **VB Reserva**, a 50/50 blend of *canteiro*-aged Verdelho and Bual, which creates a fascinating marriage of richness and delicacy.

The Verdelho component is from a prime southfacing vineyard in Estreito de Câmara de Lobos and was aged for four years in barrel in a relatively cool warehouse.

The Bual is from São Vicente on Madeira's north coast; it, too, was aged for four years in wood, but in a warmer warehouse, causing more evaporation and concentration. The wines were blended in 2003 and then aged for two

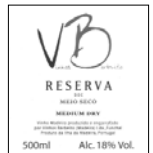


São Vicente, source of the Barbeito VB's Bual

additional years in cask, resulting in an amazingly delicate, medium-sweet Madeira. Lightly chilled, it's a marvelous aperitif, but we prize it even more as an alluring after-dinner drink.

Just 210 cases of 500ml bottles were produced. Very limited.

**Barbeito VB Reserva**  
**\$24.95 500 ml**



Brilliant tangerine and deep gold in color. Pungent aromas of wild honey, toffee, orange peel and almond. Very high-toned and tangy in the mouth with a refreshing citric quality and undertones of dried apricots. The finish is slightly sweet and virtually seamless, persisting much longer than most young Madeiras. A great value.

# Russian River Largesse

*Hansel's Great Pinots & Chardonnays at Breathtakingly Low Prices*

In 1978, when Walter Hansel planted 250 Chardonnay vines next to his home, he could not have imagined that, one day, his would be one of the elite names for Burgundian-styled California Chardonnay and Pinot Noir.

Walter got early encouragement from Tom Rochioli (who taught him such basics as proper vine-spacing), but the turning point came when his son Stephen entered the picture a few years later. It was the Burgundy-loving Stephen who dramatically increased the extent of the family vineyards, introducing Pinot Noir and purchasing a further 65 acres to plant.

Stephen also took the Hansels from being just growers to becoming producers, making his first wines for sale in the 1996 vintage. And it has been Stephen who has kept his focus while prices escalate around him—remaining true to his mission of producing wines with unheard-of price-quality ratios.

*"This estate is on fire."  
Robert Parker*



*Hansel's vineyards on Hall Road.*

Stephen's latest releases are from the 2003 and 2004 vintages and begin with the fine RRV Chardonnay and Pinot selling for under \$30. Even more notable, however, are his single-vineyard cuvées, all of which can be had for about \$45 or less. That kind of pricing is unknown today, especially for sought-after wines like these.

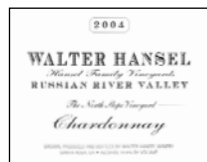
A few weeks ago we had the privilege of tasting Stephen's newest wines, settling on three to offer: his wonderfully opulent **2004 North Slope Chardonnay** and two limited-production Pinot Noirs with familiar names. The 129-case **2003 Hirsch Block 6** of course comes from the great vineyard made famous by Williams-Selyem. And the 285-case **2003 Cuvée Alyce** is named for Stephen's colorful mother and is a selection of those Pinot Noir barrels that are the most opulent and expressive.

Each of these three cuvées represents the quintessence of Russian River Valley winemaking ... but at bargain prices.

## *North Slope Chardonnay*

A new release (and not yet reviewed), this is a classic Hansel Chardonnay and a stunning value. From the northernmost site on the Hansel ranch, the slope is pronounced, allowing even sun all day. Produced from low yields, and aged in 50% new oak, this cuvée offers great richness and beautiful balance.

**2004 Chardonnay**  
**"North Slope"**  
**\$29.95**



Medium gold in color. The effusive and compelling nose offers an abundance of roasted hazelnuts, citrus and brioche. The palate is full and expansive, its generous flavors of pear, baked apple and citrus leading to a long, ripe, toasty finish. A steal.

## *Two Stunning Pinot Noirs*

**2003 Pinot Noir**  
**"Hirsch Vyd. Block 6"**  
**\$44.95**



Tanzer: "Sweet, complex nose hints at smoke, herbs and earthy forest floor. Then concentrated, strong and sweet, with black fruit and earth flavors complicated by a chocolatey nuance that lingers into the sweet finish, which boasts very good persistence."



**2003 Pinot Noir**  
**"Cuvée Alyce"**  
**\$35.95**

Parker: "285 cases made ... cropped at .7 tons of fruit per acre ... a distinctive crushed rock, sassafras, Asian spice, raspberry, and cherry-scented perfume. Big and rich ... it should drink well for 5-8 years."

# One Hot Brunello

## *The 2001 La Serena*

*The parents and* grandparents of Andrea and Marcello Mantengoli had been growers in Montalcino since 1933, but they never gave a second thought to becoming producers of Brunello. How could they? In their world, only aristocrats like the Biondi-Santis, Costantis, Barbis and the Franceschis at Il Poggione were worthy of making Brunello.

Those notions vanished in the 1970s and 1980s when dozens of new Brunello estates were created, many by farmers like the Mantengolis. By the time their sons Andrea and Marcello joined them in 1988, anything was possible. As the years passed, their one hectare of vines became nine, and gradually their "La Serena" Brunello got known outside Southern Tuscany.

Last month, La Serena's emergence as a superstar

received a huge boost from the *Wine Spectator*, which gave the 2001 Brunello one of the highest ratings of this great vintage: 96 points.

We have secured a few cases of this already-scarce Brunello at an amazing price. This is one of the true bargains of the 2001 Brunello vintage. Don't miss it.

**2001 La Serena  
Brunello di Montalcino\***  
**96 Wine Spectator**  
**\$49.95**



*Wine Spectator*: "Very ripe aromas of plum, almost prune, with dried flowers and cedar. Full-bodied, soft and velvety with loads of fruit and a long, long finish. Best ever from here. Decadent and seductive."

## *1999 Soldera Brunello Riserva*

*"The 1999 harvest has given Gianfranco Soldera the best grapes since 1983, the vintage that gave birth to the Brunello Riserva 1983, the greatest wine of that region I have ever tasted."*

*Daniel Thomases*

It's now here: possibly the finest traditionally made Brunello of our lifetimes. Sampled from barrel two years ago, it was the greatest young Brunello we'd ever tasted. Now in bottle, it is simply profound. We are proud to be able to offer this monumental wine at an extraordinary price. Very limited.

**1999 Soldera Brunello Riserva**  
**95 Antonio Galloni**  
**\$225.00 limited**



Antonio Galloni: "It displays heady, complex aromas of smoke, tar and scorched earth, along with plenty of sweet dark fruit and tobacco flavors, in a potent, brooding style showing a rich inner tension between its fruit and the structure of the vintage. It should drink well to age twenty-five ... the Riserva is well worth the extra dollars in vintage 1999."

● **Also available in limited quantities: the normale 1999 Soldera Brunello (94 Thomases) \$175.00** ●

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