

ODDERO

Decanter

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Top Barolo 2011 Riservas: Riding the rollercoaster

- [Stephen Brook](#)

Stephen Brook reviews the vintage and picks out wines to consider buying for your cellar...



The vintage

This was a rollercoaster vintage, with fluctuating weather conditions – wet March, hot April, cool and sometimes stormy early summer, and a hot August.

Cooler, damper conditions in September slowed the ripening but led to ripe grapes with excellent colour and tannins. The harvest was about two weeks earlier than usual and completed by the end of September.

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Uneven ripening was a characteristic of the vintage, but conscientious growers could rectify that in the vineyard and by sorting.

The wines

Like the 2007s and 2009s, these are wines packed with fruit, which makes them accessible relatively young, although they have the structure to age. Acidity is generally higher than in 2009.

Elisa Scavino of the Scavino estate sees the wines as 'aromatic, with rounded fruit, lower in tannins than 2010 or 2013 but more structured than 2012. They're elegant wines with silky tannins.'

The quality seems to be consistent across the region.

To buy or not to buy

The Riservas are now coming onto the market, and a selection, from which the following recommendations was made, was tasted blind in Alba, and non-blind in London.

Riservas, with their longer ageing (62 months in all) and, one hopes, stricter fruit selection, are inevitably more expensive than the regular Barolos, but such is the appeal of the latter, that the additional outlay for a Riserva may not always be justifiable. It's an individual decision.

Certainly, the best wines are excellent and will repay cellaring.



Oddero, Barolo, Monforte d'Alba, Bussia 'Mondoca', 2011

Red fruits nose, with some smoky, leathery tones too, but not too evolved. Dense and opulent, a full-bodied wine with chewy tannins that are still slightly at war with the ripe fruit. But this has impressive weight and punch. Very long.

POINTS 93