

## Piemonte vintages

3 Sep 2008 by Jancis Robinson

**2009** Hot conditions have created ripe reds with fairly high alcohol and good quality.

**2008** Good for Nebbiolo thanks to long, late summer sunshine – but the earlier- ripening Dolcetto and Barbera did not fare so well.

**2007** Hail and arid conditions resulted in a low- yielding year, but of good quality fruit.

**2006** A coolish summer was followed by an Indian summer punctuated by two bouts of rain but the grapes were healthy enough to withstand them. Promising.

**2005** Reduced crop of decent but unremarkable wines for medium term drinking.

**2004** Very promising with few extremes of weather and well balanced wines.

**2003** As elsewhere, the heatwave shrivelled grapes and resulted in some unbalanced musts although the oldest vines in Barolo and Barbaresco managed to withstand the weather and yield some exceptional wines.

**2002** Piemonte's run of good to great vintages was finally broken with disastrous hail in parts of Barolo, rot, unripeness and unusually cool weather. The thin-skinned Barbera suffered most in this small vintage.

**2001** Excellent quality (and quantity) from an early vintage slightly more in the voluptuous mould of 1999 and 1997 than particularly long- term. No shortage of ripeness or structure, but an occasional shortage of acidity.

**2000** Very good, partly thanks to a prolonged heatwave from mid- August to mid- September. Dolcettos were relatively simple but both Barbera and, especially, Nebbiolo were exceptional with excellent acidity as well as ripeness and great definition of flavour. For the long term.

**1999** Very good quality yet again for Nebbiolo- based wines, and Dolcetto which was much more successful than the later- ripening Barbera. Voluptuous Barolo and Barbaresco recalls 1997.

**1998** More structure and potential than 1997 and some very fine, elegant wines.

**1997** A hot growing season resulted in record ripeness levels but some worryingly low acidities.

**1996** Superb Barolo and Barbaresco for keeping.

**1995** Hail- reduced crop of deep- coloured wines made from grapes which benefited from a sunny autumn. Probably a notch below 1989 and 1990.

**1994** Sugar and acid levels reasonable despite prolonged September rains. Not up to Tuscany's performance.

**1993** Nebbiolo and Barbera didn't really ripen before it rained. May be similar to 1988.

**1992** A large harvest, generally low on weight and power.

**1991** A smallish crop of light to mid- weight early- drinking wines.

**1990** With colossal power and big aromas these are very exciting wines which have repaid extended bottle age.

**1989** A superb, healthy crop. Top Barolos are thrilling and repay the wait.

**1988** Initially over- rated, these are attractive, soft, full renditions.

**1985** A few remain impressive, but excessive yields caused some to fade early.

**1982** Oddly similar to Bordeaux: gorgeous young, they have shown they have had the weight and balance to last.

**1978** Formidable, even aggressive wines that have developed at a snail's pace.

**1971** Classic Barolos: rare but worth seeking out the big names.