



Maria Cristina Oddero

(Serralunga d'Alba).

Since taking the helm, Maria Cristina has been making small changes in the vineyards as well as in the maceration and aging of the Barolos. Overall, there is a move toward organic viticulture. The maceration times for the top cuvées—Brunate, Bussia Soprana Vigna Mondoca and Vigna Rionda—have been reduced by about a week, and they employ more submerged cap than pump-overs for gentler extraction. Only older oak is used, both *barriques* and 2,500- to 10,500-liter casks of Slavonian and Austrian origin.

These efforts have taken the Barolos to new qualitative heights since the excellent 2010 vintage. The textures are suppler without sacrificing the wines' complexity or longevity. Prices are reasonable given the quality. —B.S.

Oddero Barolo Bussia Vigna Mondoca Riserva 2010 | 95 | \$110 | 150 cases made

This comes from a single plot in the Mondoca vineyard (Bussia MGA). A minimum of four years in oak lends savory aromas of leather, mushroom and spice to the cherry flavors.

Oddero Barolo Brunate 2012 | 92 | \$125 | 180 cases made

The homogenous south-to-southeast exposure of this vineyard allows Nebbiolo to ripen well in most vintages, lending richness and ripe fruit to the wine. Supported by dense tannins.

Oddero Barolo Rocche di Castiglione 2012 | 92 | \$79 | 40 cases made

The most refined and perfumed of the Oddero lineup. Licorice, cherry, leather and spice flavors show density, richness, complexity and length.

Oddero Barolo Villero 2012 | 92 | \$75 | 500 cases made

Generally more structured than the Rocche, and often austere in its youth, this 2012 is linear and firm, with savory notes of fresh herbs, tobacco and dried cherry.

Oddero Barolo 2012 | 89 | \$42 | 4,000 cases made

The basic Barolo is a blend of Nebbiolo from Bricco Chiesa around the winery; Capalot, also in La Morra; and Bricco Fiasco from Castiglione Falletto. Rose, cherry, licorice and spice flavors are matched by an elegant yet structured profile.

Tabarrini

A Passion for Sagrantino

A hilltop town in Umbria, smack in the middle of Italy, is the source of Montefalco Sagrantino, the best Italian red you've never heard of. And while other producers are the more visible faces of Montefalco, the vivacious Giampaolo Tabarrini is its heart.

Owner and winemaker Tabarrini transitioned his family's 54-acre estate in the mid-1990s, ending sales of the winery's grapes and bulk wine to bottle his own. The area's distinctive indigenous grape, Sagrantino, had experienced a revival, thanks largely to the efforts of local producer Marco Caprai of Arnaldo Caprai. In 1992 the Montefalco Sagrantino appellation (then labeled as Sagrantino di Montefalco) achieved DOCG status.

Tabarrini set to work exploring the potential of the grape and his family estate, improving vineyard management of the

vigorous Sagrantino vines and starting construction of a new winery in 2000 (completed in 2004).

In 2002, Tabarrini made a radical decision: He would bottle single-vineyard Sagrantino. Tabarrini was the first in the area to do so, and it's still a rarity today. In the past, Tabarrini vinified each vineyard separately and then blended them into one wine. But he became increasingly convinced that the soil, altitude and exposure of the particular sites resulted in dramatically different expressions, each of which warranted its own aging regimen and appreciation.

Tabarrini runs the property with his wife, Federica, and a small team, including consulting enologist Emiliano Falsini, whose technical know-how allows Tabarrini's ideas to take shape.

In addition to the three single-vineyard bottlings—Colle Grimaldesco, Campo alla Cerqua and Colle alle Macchie—the winery exports three wines to the United States: a Sangiovese-based Montefalco, the white Adarmando from Trebbiano Spoletino and a dessert wine from Sagrantino, the Passito. —A.N.

Tabarrini Montefalco Sagrantino Colle alle Macchie 2011 | 94 | \$70 | 250 cases made

The most muscular of the single-vineyard wines, with a dense core of minerality from the clay- and limestone-based *terroir*.

Tabarrini Montefalco Sagrantino Campo alla Cerqua 2011 | 92 | \$60 | 150 cases made

An elegant version, with sculpted tannins and a sanguine edge to the ripe fruit and savory herb flavors. Sourced from soil with abundant river stones and pebbles.

Tabarrini Montefalco Sagrantino Colle Grimaldesco 2011 | 92 | \$45 | 1,160 cases made

A rich and burly red from the oldest vineyard, which marries clay, silt, sand and stone. Abundantly aromatic.

Tabarrini Montefalco 2012 | 90 | \$29 | 1,900 cases made

A juicy red blend of Sangiovese, with Sagrantino and Barbera, this shows well-spiced black cherry, tar and herb notes.

Tabarrini Umbria White Adarmando 2014 | 88 | \$29 | 750 cases made

Rich glazed nectarine and lemon parfait notes are brightened by snappy acidity in this creamy white made entirely from the local Trebbiano Spoletino grape.

84 Castello Banfi Sangiovese Toscana Collepino 2014 \$11 Black cherry, earth and tar flavors quickly give way to dusty tannins in this red. Herbaceous notes mark the finish. Drink now. 17,500 cases made.—B.S.

ITALY

Tuscany / Other

98 Avignonesi Vin Santo di Montepulciano Occhio di Pernice 2001 \$280/375ml Intense and ethereal at once, this concentrated sweet white saturates the palate, with caramel, espresso, roasted almond, fig and cacao aromas and flavors. A very clean style of Vin Santo, showing impressive harmony and complexity. Drink now through 2030. 208 cases made.—B.S.

95 Avignonesi Vin Santo di Montepulciano 2001 \$220/375ml Thick in consistency, with aromas and flavors of dried fig, espresso, macadamia nut and raisin. Intensely sweet, offering lingering accents of leather and cigar. For all the unctuousness, this stays balanced and finishes clean. Drink now through 2030. 208 cases made.—B.S.

94 La Mannella Brunello di Montalcino Riserva 2010 \$250 This young red offers fresh cherry, currant, strawberry, leather and tobacco flavors, aligned with a dense layer of tannins. Lingers with a vein of mineral and a bright floral note. All the components are there for a fine future. Better than previously reviewed. Best from 2019 through 2033. 420 cases made.—B.S.

94 Poggio al Tesoro Bolgheri Superiore Dedicato a Walter 2011 \$99 Black currant, violet, black cherry and wild thyme aromas and flavors are the hallmarks of this sleek, intense red. Vibrant, with a pebbly grain to the tannins and a long, mineral-tinged finish. Cabernet Franc. Drink now through 2023. 100 cases imported.—B.S.

92 Barone Ricasoli Vin Santo del Chianti Classico 2008 \$50/375ml Aromas and flavors of orange peel, orange blossom honey and molasses mark this vibrant, dessert-style white. Light and racy, with the acidity for foie gras. Offers a long, mineral finish. Drink now through 2024. 300 cases made.—B.S.

91 Castello Banfi Bolgheri Aska 2013 \$33 A firm, tight version, whose cherry and currant flavors are fused to dense, dusty tannins. Tobacco, mineral and underbrush notes play out on the lingering finish. Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2018 through 2029. 650 cases made.—B.S.

90 Tenuta Le Calcinale Vernaccia di San Gimignano 2015 \$18 A bright and juicy version, boasting floral, peach, grapefruit and honey aromas and flavors. Pure and elegant, finishing with a characteristic hint of bitterness. Drink now. 2,350 cases made.—B.S.

90 Tenuta La Fuga Brunello di Montalcino 2011 \$64 A warm, rich red, boasting black cherry, plum, earth, tobacco and iron aromas and flavors. Loaded with tannins, this leaves a burr on the finish but should come together in a year or so. Best from 2018 through 2028. 2,250 cases made.—B.S.

90 Renieri Rosso di Montalcino 2013 \$20 An enticing version, boasting sweet cherry, berry, spice and licorice flavors. Round, generous and juicy, with a vibrant finish. Shows fine balance overall. Drink now through 2020. 6,000 cases made.—B.S.

89 Fattoria Torcalvano Gracciano Vino Nobile di Montepulciano 2013 \$26 This is spicy, offering vanilla, toast and milk chocolate accents to the core of cherry flavors. Firm, dusty tannins lend support, with a moderately long finish. Drink now through 2020. 3,500 cases made.—B.S.

86 Castello Banfi Rosso di Montalcino 2014 \$27 An elegant cherry- and earth-flavored red, with glimpses of tobacco. Finishes with dusty tannins and moderate length. Drink now. 56,500 cases made.—B.S.

ITALY

Umbria

92 Tabarrini Montefalco Sagrantino Passito 2006 \$70/375ml A mouthwatering sweetie, offering rich notes of chocolate-covered strawberry, apricot preserves, sea salt caramel and abundant spice. Bright, lingering and hard to stop sipping. Drink now through 2026. 1,958 cases made.—A.N.

90 Falesco Umbria Marciliano 2013 \$50 This elegant red boasts rich and creamy layers of black currant and boysenberry coulis, anise, mocha and dried thyme. Bright and expressive, with fine-grained tannins firming the citrus-tinged finish. Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Drink now through 2023. 500 cases made.—A.N.

90 Tabarrini Montefalco Boccato 2013 \$23 This red is bright and medium- to full-bodied, with grippy tannins that are well-meshed with an appealing mix of ripe black cherry, tar, blood orange zest and fragrant spice notes. Drink now through 2023. 1,950 cases made.—A.N.



GIAMPAOLO TABARRINI
Owner & Winemaker

88 Falesco Cabernet Sauvignon Umbria Tellus 2014 \$16 Aromatic, with hints of tar and dried mint, this medium-bodied red offers a creamy mix of crushed currant and plum fruit, smoke and spice. Chewy. Drink now through 2019. 7,000 cases made.—A.N.

87 Falesco Chardonnay Umbria Tellus 2015 \$16 Light-bodied and crisp, with a pleasing fleshiness to the Gala apple, blood orange zest and almond skin flavors, followed by a fresh, chalk-tinged finish. Drink now. 7,000 cases made.—A.N.

87 Falesco Sangiovese Umbria 2014 \$14 Light- to medium-bodied and creamy, this balanced red offers an aromatic mix of plumped cherry, grilled herb and anise notes, with light tannins on the finish. Drink now through 2019. 3,300 cases made.—A.N.

84 Vitiano Umbria 2015 \$12 Light and easy-drinking, with baked plum, dried thyme and chocolate pudding notes. Chewy. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Sangiovese. Drink now. 50,000 cases made.—A.N.

ITALY

Valle d'Aosta

91 Grosjean Fumin Valle d'Aosta Vigne Merletta 2010 \$32 This has settled into a range of game, mushroom, cherry and woody underbrush aromas and flavors, lingering with dark cherry and spice notes. Dense, with a firm base of tannins. Drink now. 95 cases imported.—B.S.

90 Grosjean Petite Arvine Valle d'Aosta Vigne Rovettaz 2014 \$24 A rich, mouthfilling white, sporting apple, pear, salted butter, honey and herb flavors. Well-structured and balanced, with fine, stony length. Drink now through 2020. 70 cases imported.—B.S.

90 Danilo Thomain Valle d'Aosta Enfer d'Arvier 2014 \$34 Round and juicy, exhibiting black cherry, black currant and floral aromas and flavors. Offers a smoky, earthy component and a chalky, mineral feeling on the savory finish. Petit Rouge. Drink now through 2020. 204 cases imported.—B.S.

90 Lo Triolet Pinot Noir Valle d'Aosta 2015 \$23 This is silky, revealing cherry, raspberry, smoke and spice aromas and flavors. Delicate and persistent, with a mouthwatering aftertaste. Drink now through 2020. 350 cases made.—B.S.

88 Ermes Pavese Valle d'Aosta Blanc de Morgex et de La Salle 2014 \$30 Apple, straw and lemon flavors mark this juicy white, which features a chalky underpinning, finishing with a touch of grip. Prié Blanc. Drink now. 7,253 cases imported.—B.S.

ITALY

Veneto / Amarone

94 Tedeschi Amarone della Valpolicella Classico La Fabriseria Riserva 2011 \$325 A rich, racehorse of a red, with a sense of finesse to the integration of dense and sculpted elements. Offers a rich streak of smoky mineral and forest floor, showing a lovely range of cherry and black raspberry coulis, mandarin orange peel and sandalwood flavors, with a long, grippy finish. Drink now through 2031. 210 cases made.—A.N.

92 Fratelli Speri Amarone della Valpolicella Classico Vigneto Monte Sant'Urbano 2011 \$78 A mouthwatering red, well-meshed and expressive, offering fine-grained tannins layered with crushed cherry and raspberry, spice box and orange peel flavors, with rich notes of loamy earth and smoke. Long and lasting on the zesty finish. Drink now through 2027. 8,300 cases made.—A.N.

92 Tedeschi Amarone della Valpolicella Classico Capitel Monte Olmi Riserva 2010 \$105 Baked currant and fig cake notes are laced with tea leaf, wood smoke and citrus peel accents in this bright, tightly meshed red. Dense tannins provide firm structure. The lasting finish echoes a streak of spicy minerality. Drink now through 2027. 1,085 cases made.—A.N.

91 Nicolis Amarone della Valpolicella Classico 2010 \$79 A finely balanced red, medium- to full-bodied and fresh, with sculpted tannins structuring the crushed mulberry, wild herb, smoky mineral and spice box flavors. Chewy finish. Drink now through 2027. 2,200 cases made.—A.N.

90 Musella Amarone della Valpolicella Riserva 2010 \$67 This bright, medium-bodied red shows well-knit tannins and appealing flavors of juicy, sun-dried cherry, lavender, dried fig and spice. An accessible version, with a lightly chewy, citrusy finish. Drink now through 2022. 2,500 cases made.—A.N.

90 Pasqua Amarone della Valpolicella 2011 \$43 This is richly aromatic, offering aromas of tar, spice and underbrush followed by flavors of baked cherry, dried thyme and singed orange peel, framed by chewy tannins and juicy acidity. Drink now through 2024. 5,600 cases made.—A.N.

ITALY

Veneto / Other Red

92 Allegrini Corvina Veronese La Poja 2011 \$95 A lovely, medium- to full-bodied red, with a rich nose of ripe fruit and tar-tinged mineral. Layers creamy tannins with flavors of plumped cherry, dried fig and espresso cream, revealing abundant spice and herb details that linger on the finish. Drink now through 2026. 300 cases imported.—A.N.

91 Nicolis Valpolicella Classico Superiore Seccal Ripasso 2013 \$35 Well-balanced and creamy, this elegant red frames chewy tannins with ripe crushed cherry, star anise, smoke and subtle chocolate pudding flavors. Offers a lasting, juicy finish. Drink now through 2023. 5,500 cases made.—A.N.