

Series: Worldwide wine routes

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# Piedmont wine route: top 10 guide

Taste the best of Italy's Piedmont region on this route through Langhe and Roero, enjoying its barolo and barbaresco wines, staying at vineyard B&Bs and eating at traditional osterie

**John Brunton**  
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Barolo wine region, Piedmont, Italy Photograph: Bon Appetit/Alamy

Even in the midst of summer, the idyllic vineyard landscapes of Piedmont are rarely invaded by crowds of tourists, and the run-up to the grape harvests, beginning in September, can be an ideal time to visit winemakers, who have more time than usual to let visitors taste their vintages. Great wines are made all over the region, but the key area, just an hour's drive from Turin, is the Langhe and Roero, separated by the winding Tanaro river. The Langhe's rolling vine-clad hills produce barolo and barbaresco, two of the world's greatest red wines. The Roero has started producing its own wines much more recently, including the excellent white arneis, and landscapes here are still a mix of thick woodlands, farmland and, now, vines. There cannot be another part of Italy that is so well-organised for wine enthusiasts, who are welcomed over plates of salami and cheese for tastings, often without making an appointment, while many *viticoltori* have opened up their wineries as inexpensive B&Bs. Then there is the food. Meals in a Piedmont *osteria* or agriturismo tend to be gargantuan affairs – antipasto, pasta, a hearty main course and delicious dessert – all at exceptionally good value.

## WINEMAKERS TO VISIT

Paolo Manzone

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Paolo Manzone. Photograph: John Brunton

Drive too fast and you'll miss the sign pointing to a narrow dirt track that zigzags down through an amphitheatre of vines until you reach the *cascina* (farmhouse), where Paolo Manzone makes outstanding barolo wines and his wife, Luisella, runs a comfy B&B. Paolo is innovative, forever experimenting with new blends and techniques, without abandoning the traditions surrounding barolo's unique grape, nebbiolo. He describes his crisp, fresh dolcetto d'Alba as "a wine I make for my father - not elegant but rustic and drinkable, like the one he used to travel the countryside with, selling in demijohns". The round, robust €11 nebbiolo d'Alba is "my burgundy because I believe the nebbiolo grape can stand on its own in the same way pinot noir does in France, and it does not have to come from the narrow confines of the Barolo area to be recognised as a great wine". He makes two barolos, the traditional *serralunga*, aged in large, old oak barrels, and the more modern *meriame*, using smaller French barrels. And he has just built a Fort Knox-like strongroom where he aims to stock 10 years' of successive vintages to see how they develop – so tastings here in a few years' time should be even more interesting.

• *Cascina Meriame, Serralunga d'Alba, [barolomeriame.com](http://barolomeriame.com), +39 0173 613113*

### Ca' del Baio

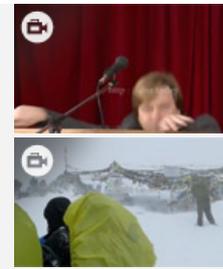


Sisters, Paola, Valentina and Federica Ca del Baio, at their family vineyard. Photograph: John Brunton

Barbaresco has historically been the "little brother" of the more famous barolo, but when you visit an estate like Ca' del Baio, you realise that wines made in the Barbaresco zone can reach equally great heights. Three young sisters, Paola, Valentina and Federica, have transformed this family vineyard and Paola explains that when her great-grandfather bought the land in 1900, everyone thought he was mad, as it was worthless woodland. Today a hectare of barbaresco is worth a small fortune. Even their most simple wine, dolcetto d'Alba, – "great with a pizza", says Paola – is excellent and costs only €6, while the elegant Langhe nebbiolo, from vineyards with the same grape as barbaresco but geographically outside of the denomination, is also a steal at €8. The barbaresco ranges from €18-€25, but will really need to wait a few years before opening. End the tasting with their speciality moscato d'Asti, a unique sweet, fizzy white that has hardly any alcohol.

• *Via Ferrere Sottano 33, Treiso, [cadelbaio.com](http://cadelbaio.com), +39 0173 638219*

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