

Barolo 2001: 10 years on

They were rated as of exceptional quality on release and have now had a decade to mature, so how have the Barolo 2001s developed? Kerin O'Keefe led a team of expert tasters to find out

THE 2001 VINTAGE, with its perfect conditions and long growing season, has been hailed by both critics and producers as a classic year of exceptional quality for Barolo, destined for lengthy cellaring. To celebrate the 10th anniversary of this acclaimed vintage and to see how it is holding up, *Decanter* assembled a team of experts to Alba to taste 64 Barolo 2001s.

The panel participants jumped at the chance, and expectations were high. '2001 has always been about finesse and ageing potential, so I can't wait to see if the wines have held up as expected,' said Mauro Carosso, while David Berry Green added that he has 'always loved the clipped, red fruit character of the 2001s'.

The results

Look more closely, however, and a marked stylistic inconsistency seems to have marred the vintage, with the best wines showing their pedigree and living up to expectations, but others falling decidedly short. Four exceptional wines received five-star Awards and a dozen received four stars, but a higher-than-expected number were unbalanced and declining, and still others were rather anonymous, lacking typicity and grace. Not what you'd expect from a vintage classified 'Exceptional' – the highest mark awarded by the Renato Ratti Barolo evaluation chart, long considered the benchmark of Barolo vintage guides.

As a panel taster, I had expected to find more 2001s with the poise, finesse and freshness demonstrated in the two

19.5pt wines, both made by traditionalist Giuseppe Mascarello. Instead I was surprised by the number of wines that were overwhelmed by alcohol or were drying up.

All the tasters noted that most of the high-scoring wines, which showed balance, vibrancy and longevity, were made in a more traditional manner that allowed Nebbiolo, the only grape allowed in Barolo, to shine through. Excessive concentration and alcohol, however, plagued a surprisingly large number of wines, as did overwhelming new wood.

As Carosso pointed out, 'While many of the traditionally crafted 2001s are ageing beautifully and still youthful, it was a surprise to see how many are already declining, and how many are dominated by alcohol or excessive concentration.' Berry Green agreed, saying, 'I'm concerned not only by the high percentage of wines that were fading away, but also by the number of wines with atypical aromas and flavours for Nebbiolo.' Perhaps Angelo Peretti best summed up the vintage, reflecting that, '2001 was a great vintage that came about during a period of great evolution in Italian oenology; when many producers were experimenting with winemaking technology and methods that focused more on intense concentration and big tannins rather than naturally expressing the grape variety.'

Right: the 2001 vintage was much vaunted in Barolo, but our tasters were a little underwhelmed. Left: both the traditionally produced Mascarello wines shone, averaging 19.5 points out of 20



Our team of tasters...

Kerin O'Keefe
freelance wine writer

Angelo Peretti
freelance wine writer
and journalist

Mauro Carosso
sommelier,
the Torino branch of
*Associazione Italiana
Sommelier*

David Berry Green
wine buyer, *Berry
Bros & Rudd*

The wines were assembled by the Consorzio di Tutela Barolo Barbaresco Alba Langhe e Roero. Scores listed are the average of the tasters, with the initials after the note those of the taster responsible.



If you have 2001 Barolo in your cellar....

The general consensus among the panel was that a number of the Barolo 2001s are already at their peak. While those made in a traditional fashion still have ageing potential, they are already enjoyable. If you aren't sure what style of Barolo you have, drink now and enjoy.

THE RESULTS

Giuseppe Mascarello, Riserva Cà'd'Morissio

Monprivato ★★★★★ 19.5pts/20

£255.45 **Berry Bros & Rudd**

Very refined, floral aromas with balsamic and mineral notes. Spicy and fresh palate, with velvety tannins. Very intense with impressive length. **Drink:** from 2013. (MC)

Giuseppe Mascarello, Monprivato ★★★★★ 19.5

£65 **Bordeaux Index**

Almost decadent nose of macerated berries, mineral and mint. Loaded with sweet spice, dried rose petal and liquorice. Complex and elegant with fantastic length.

Drink: from 2011. (AP)



Aurelio Settimo, Rocche ★★★★★ 18.5

£21.69 (2002*) **The Wine Library**

Classic aromas of leather, rose, earth and truffle, with delicious creamy cherry and truffle flavours lifted by a pure minerality. Well balanced and fresh on the palate, with firm, ripe tannins. Great length and depth.

Drink: from 2015. (KO)

Bruna Grimaldi, Badarina, Vigna Regnola

★★★★★ 18.5

N/A UK www.grimaldibruna.it

Intense floral, earthy aromas with a lively palate of wild cherry, vanilla and spice. Well structured and nicely balanced. Still youthful but already enjoyable.

Drink: 2011–2020. (KO)



Castello di Verduno, Massara ★★★★★ 18

N/A UK www.castellodiverduno.com

Refined and composed, with nuances of mixed herbs and hay. Very fine and elegant.

Drink: 2011–2015. (DBG)

Ceretto Brunate ★★★★★ 18

£75 (2000) **The Fine Wine PA**

Smoky, balsamic nose, a whisper of mint. Lovely ripe fruit, well-integrated oak and liquorice

notes. Still tight, with packed tannins. **Drink:** from 2015. (KO)

Famiglia Anselma, Riserva Adasi ★★★★★ 18

£508.80 (2000, case of 12) **Everywine**

Layers of enticing spice, pepper, liquorice and wet earth. Well structured with very concentrated fruit combined with evident alcohol and still young, aggressive tannins, but should evolve nicely.

Drink: from 2015. (AP)

Fratelli Revello, Vigna Giachini ★★★★★ 18

£502–747.99 (case of 12) **Everywine, Fine & Rare**

Nose of mature red fruit, spice and nuts. Well structured with bright red fruit flavours. Very fresh with bracing tannins. **Drink:** from 2015. (AP)

'2001 has always been about finesse and ageing potential'

Mauro Carosso, sommelier

* When the 2001 vintage is unavailable, we have listed the price of the closest vintage to it, for reference

Borgogno Serio e Battista, Riserva Cannubi

★★★★★ 17

N/A UK www.borgognoseriobattista.it

Intriguing aromas of walnut liqueur, pipe tobacco and macerated red fruit. Fresh palate of ripe fruit with bracing tannins but shy on the length. **Drink:** from 2012. (AP)

Monfalletto, Cordero di Montezemolo,

Vigna Enrico VI ★★★★★ 17

£35 (1998) **Fine & Rare**

Floral nose of rose petal and tar and earth. Silky palate with cherry and strawberry flavours and a hint of leather. Balanced and fresh with nice length. **Drink:** 2011–2020. (KO)

Paolo Scavino, Riserva Rocche dell'Annunziata ★★★★★ 17

£600 in bond (2004, case 6) **Justerini & Brooks**

Classic aromas of leather, dried rose petal and truffle. Dense, with mouthwatering fruit. Full bodied with well-integrated but evident oak.

Drink: 2011. (KO)



Poderi Colla ★★★★★ 17

£29 (2004) **WoodWinters**

Intense floral nose with layers of mineral, earth, underbrush and balsamic notes. Smooth palate with bracing but fine tannins, great length.

Drink: from 2012. (MC)

Renato Ratti, Marcenasco ★★★★★ 17

£283 (2006, case 12) **Fine & Rare**

Classic nose of rose and violet, leather and earth with hint of meat juices. Lovely rich palate of cherry, spice, truffle and mineral. Gripping tannins accompanied by noticeable alcohol. **Drink:** from 2012. (KO)



Batasiolo, Riserva ★★★★★ 16.5

£135.37 (2003, case of 6) **Everywine**

Funky aromas of earth, animal and leather

NORTH: BAROLO

that eventually burn off. Rich, succulent red fruit and vanilla palate but a somewhat abrupt finish.
Drink: from 2011. (KO)

Elio Sandri ★★★★★ 16.5

N/A UK www.cascinadisa.com

Elegant nuances of underbrush, nut, musk and wild berry marinated in brandy. A classically made Barolo, still very young and tannic. Needs more time.

Drink: from 2015. (AP)

Fontanafredda, Lazzarito ★★★★★ 16.5

£38.93–43.95 **Enotria Winecellars, Everywine**

Nose reveals violet and fruit steeped in alcohol. A big palate of red berries marinated in spirits with just a hint of liquorice. Well integrated but drying tannins.

Drink: 2011. (AP)

Cascina Bongiovanni ★★ ★ 16

£42–46.99 (2003) **Colasanti, Wine Discoveries**

Refined nose of cherry liqueur, nut, ripe berry and brandy that all carry over to the palate. Good varietal typicity but could have more depth. **Drink:** 2011. (AP)



Damilano, Riserva ★★ ★ 16

N/A UK www.cantinedamilano.it

Refined, balsamic nose of herbs and mineral. Simple and approachable but drying tannins.

Drink: from 2011. (MC)

Gigi Rosso, Riserva Arione Sôri dell'Ulivo ★★ ★ 16

N/A UK www.gigiroso.com

Complex leather, truffle and spice on the nose. Mouthwatering sour cherry flavours

with nice minerality. **Drink:** from 2012. (KO)

Gianni Gagliardo ★★ ★ 16

N/A UK www.gagliardo.it

Aromas of forest fruit and blackberry, with a fresh and juicy palate. Straightforward. Very drinkable.

Drink: from 2011. (AP)



Scarzello, Vigna Merenda ★★ ★ 16

£37.99–40.35 **Corks of Cotham, Weavers**

Very earthy aromas of leather, berry and spice. Ripe raspberry and tobacco with nice depth. **Drink:** from 2011. (KO)

Attilio Ghisolfi, Bricco Visette ★★ ★ 15.5

N/A UK www.ghisolfi.com

Classic Barolo aromas of leather, tar and rose. Creamy cherry, strawberry flavours and mineral accompanied by marked alcohol.

Drink: from 2015. (KO)

Eraldo Viberti ★★ ★ 15.5

N/A UK www.eraldoviberti.com

Wild cherry, pastry cream and spice nuances. Gripping tannins and fresh acidity that are, however, slightly overwhelmed by alcohol. **Drink:** from 2012. (KO)

Michele Chiarlo, Riserva Tortoniano ★★ ★ 15.5

£20.29–28.04 **Everywine, Nickolls & Perks, Slurp, Wine Direct**
Nebbiolo and coffee nose. Soft and elegant, but starting to dry out. **Drink:** 2011–2014. (DBR)

Antica Casa Vinicola Scarpa, Tettimorra ★★ ★ 15

N/A UK www.scarpavini.it

Nose is somewhat closed but a very expressive palate with young, vibrant red fruit marked by obvious alcohol.

Drink: from 2012. (AP)

Cascina Bongiovanni, Pernanno ★★ ★ 15

£71.50 (2004) **Colasanti**

Soft and succulent. **Drink:** 2011. (DBG)

Cascina del Monastero, Riserva ★★ ★ 15

N/A UK www.cascinadelmonastero.it

Layered nose of stewed fruit, underbrush and spice. Somewhat evolved palate and tannins.

Drink: 2011. (AP)



Cavallotto, Riserva Bricco Boschis Vigna San Giuseppe ★★ ★ 15

£431.25 (2004, case 6) **Christopher Keiller**

Jammy nose of dark fruit, dried prune and hint of blood orange. Concentrated fruit, very tannic. **Drink:** from 2011. (AP)

Fontanafredda La Villa ★★ ★ 15

N/A UK www.fontanafredda.it

Smoky nose loaded with red berry, underbrush, Porcini mushroom and tobacco leaf. Palate is tight and tannic though may evolve.

Drink: from 2012. (KO)

Marchesi di Barolo, Cannubi ★★ ★ 15

£44.50 **Italian Wine Boutique**

Aromas of ripe prune with traces of vanilla. Overripe fruit on palate along with rather bitter tannins.

Drink: from 2011. (AP)



Viberti Giovanni, Buon Padre ★★ ★ 15

N/A UK www.viberti-barolo.com

Spicy, evolved nose of green tea. Palate has juicy berry, but tannic and a bit green on finish.

Drink: from 2012. (AP)

Vigneti Luigi Oddero, Vigna Rionda

★ ★ ★ 14.75

£576 (case 12) **Antique Wine Company**

Ripe dark fruit and spice aromas with a whiff of vanilla. Coffee and caramel palate with drying wood tannins. **Drink:** from 2011. (KO)

Cascina Ballarin, Bricco Rocca ★★ ★ 14.5

N/A UK www.cascinaballarin.it

Balsamic nose of aromatic herbs. Rich flavours and decent length but a bit lean. **Drink:** from 2013. (MC)

Cascina del Monastero ★★ ★ 14.5

N/A UK www.cascinadelmonastero.it

Austere nose with spice, berry and mineral. Pleasant, straightforward palate with moderate length. **Drink:** from 2018. (MC)

Fontanafredda, La Rosa ★★ ★ 14.5

£42.51–55.50 **Enotria Winecellars, Slurp**

Refined, ethereal nose. Simple, with still present and elegant tannins. **Drink:** from 2015. (MC)

For full details of UK stockists, see p95.

'2001 was a great vintage during a period of evolution, when producers experimented with new methods'

Angelo Peretti, wine writer

Also tasted: Batasiolo, Cantine Terra di Barolo, Riserva Castello; Michele Chiarlo, Cerequio; Manzone Giovanni, Riserva; Marchesi di Barolo, Riserva; Bric Cenciurio, Coste di Rose; Cascina Adelaide, Riserva Elen; Monti, Bussia; San Biagio, Sori del Rovere; Rivetto dal 1902, Riserva; Ferrero Fratelli, Manzoni; Podere Rocche dei Manzoni, Riserva Vigna Cappella S Stefano; Gianni Gagliardo, Preve; San Biagio, Riserva; Alario Claudio, Riva; Cavallotto, Riserva Vignolo; Casetta Fratelli, Riserva; Enzo Boglietti, Case Nere; Famiglia Anselma; Massolino, Riserva Vigna Rionda; Paolo Scavino, Bric del Fiasc; Viberti Giovanni, Riserva La Volta; Oddero Poderi e Cantine, Mondoca di Bussia Soprano

Faulty: Gianni Gagliardo Cannubi; Manzone Giovanni, Riserva; Fratelli Casetta, Vigna Case Nere; Sobrero Francesco, Riserva Pernanno; Veglio Michelino e Figlio; Virna, Preda Sarmassa