



Paolo Scavino Barolo Bric del Fiasc



'The modern history of the Scavino family starts with this vineyard, within the Fiasco cru. Here the Nebbiolo grapes were always the best: consequently in 1978 young Enrico convinced his father Paolo to vinify these grapes separately. In this way the first, and still most loved cru, was established. The austere and fascinating king of the Scavino home'

Last Wednesday over 250 clients and their guests cross the cobbled courtyard of Somerset House to taste their way through more than 240 wines in 9 different rooms at our first ever Portfolio Tasting. It was, I think it's fair to say, a roaring success with clients and staff alike revelling in the chance to taste such a huge and diverse range of wines in the course of a single evening.

One attendee was Elisa Scavino, granddaughter of Paulo Scavino, who kindly agreed to come and host a master class tasting of four vintages of their spectacular Cru Barolo, Bric del Fiasc. Barolo fans new and old were treated to an in depth look at this great vineyard starting with a beautifully elegant, perfumed and refined 2005 that belied the lukewarm reception this vintage received at release and demonstrated once again that so called lighter vintages can give enormous pleasure in their own right. It is ready to go now and quite outstanding.

The 2004 tasted next boasted greater concentration and depth, more tannic structure and density, though arguably, at this juncture, less of the haunting Nebbiolo perfume that can be so arresting in these wines. While quite approachable now, testament to the wine making prowess and polish inherent in the Scavino wines, it will undoubtedly benefit from another five years of cellaring and probably will not peak for a further five. We fully expect this to be out of this world when it reaches full maturity.

The 2003 Bric del Fiasc followed, a wine of richness, power and wild, open, broad flavours. Elisa's feeling is that their 2003s have required more time than people originally bargained for, time that she feels has allowed the wines to shrug off the warmth of the growing season, refocus and be calmed. It made a fascinating counterpoint to the two previous wines, and seemed to represent a great success in the context of this hot Piedmontese vintage. Undoubtedly the old vines of their Fiasc holding will have helped moderate the extremes of the growing season.

The final wine in the line up was the 1998, a vintage somewhat overlooked in the run of stellar vintages from 1996 to 2001. When pressed for which recent vintage it might have resembled when young, Elisa suggested the 2005, with perhaps a little more warmth to the fruit. Whatever it may have reassembled in its youth, it was quite delicious on the day, showing ripe and open aromatics that are just beginning to take on some more mature notes, a sweet core of fruit and tannins that simply melted on the palate. A fitting finale.

It was all in all a fascinating, thoughtfully presented and illuminating line-up that sent us out into the night keenly aware of the wonderful quality of this special Castiglione Vineyard that sits right at the heart of the Scavino estate.

as an addendum, a note on the 2006 vintage. The more and more growers we consult the more and more praise we hear for the 2006 vintage. Whilst powerfully tannic and extremely difficult to see into in their youth, there is a classical element to these wines that wine makers describe as textbook Barolo. Those looking for a modern day equivalent of a 1999, 1996 or 1989, ie a vintage capable of long and advantageous ageing, are advised to consider this vintage .