



Pio Cesare 2019, Piedmont

"speak of fruit, not oak...starting to tell a real story of place"

Antonio Galloni

Barolo - £240 per 6 bottles IB

Barolo Ornato - £435 per 6 bottles IB

Just the week before last, the charming and informative Federica Boffa hosted the UK Trade for dinner to taste the Pio Cesare range from the **brilliant** 2019 vintage. The Cesare Vermouth aperitivo really set things going, which we offer below. Pound for pound, the straight Barolo at £40 a bottle for a 96-point wine looks the best buy, though I suspect the Ornato will ultimately be that noticeable little step up which, for the Piedmontese aficionados, be took tempting to ignore!

House Style

The Cesare style is best described as textbook Barolo. So much so, WSET often uses Pio Cesare in blind tastings as the characteristics are classics of the region. It is easy to see why the 2019 vintage is held in such high esteem (*full vintage report below*). It shows brilliant delineation of site and the perfect balance between concentration, richness, freshness and structure. Speaking of textbook, I'm drinking their 2009 Barbaresco at home at the moment - hugely perfumed, well structured (need to open in both the decanter and glass) and drinking beautifully and will continue to do so for a solid ten years to come, probably quite a bit longer. The 2019 Barbaresco wasn't showing as well as the Barolos on the days so far now, we've decided to leave off the offer today, but may have a re-taste and revert if warranted.

Wines

We started with **Barbera** from the heralded Mosconi Cru, best known for top Barolo. The site's quality really shining through the region's other top grape - a delicious and interesting wine.

Cesare's **Barolo** 'classico' has traditionally been blended across the region's communes. It comes from eight sites, across five top villages to give a balanced style. It has a wonderfully fine texture, exotic richness and superbly delineated fruit.

In 1985 the family first introduced a single vineyard offering. **Ornato** is very

nearly a monopole, they own roughly 95% of this Serralunga Cru. Despite this, only 2,000 cases are bottled each year from the heart of the south-facing amphitheatre; giving density and a noticeable step up on power over the estate Barolo. The generosity is balanced with superb minerality and freshness.

We loved the **Cesare Vermouth**, the family only make 1,000 bottles! Originally made in the 1950s by Federica's Grandmother, it was revived in 2016 to the **original family recipe**. Made from Chardonnay and blended with 26 herbs, it is a delicious savoury/sweet aperitivo. We drunk it neat over ice with a twist of lemon (dangerously good!), and would be equally at home in a Negroni or other cocktails.

Estate Background

Federica is the fifth generation of her family to manage the Pio Cesare estate. She is only 25, but took over when her father passed away tragically in 2021 at 66 years of age. Founded in 1881 by Cesare Pio, the house was largely a negociant based in Alba for the first 100 years of business. It was the third generation, Giuseppe Boffa, who started buying Barolo vineyards in the 1960s. The family now owns 75ha of land. The house style is classical and traditional, all vineyard work done by hand and the majority of the wine aged in very large *botti* to allow maturation without overt oak influence.



Pio Cesare Fides Barbera d'Alba Vigna Mosconi 2019

£165 per 6 In Bond

Drink dates: 2023-2032

"This is bright and focused, exuding blackberry, black cherry and violet flavors. Balanced and firm on the long, fruit- and earth-tinged aftertaste. Drink now through 2025." 92 Points Wine Spectator, Bruce Sanderson and n.38 in the Top 100 wines of 2021



Pio Cesare Barolo 2019
£240 per 6 In Bond
Drink dates: 2026-2038

"The 2019 Pio Cesare Barolo has a very immediate and appealing nose...it has a beautiful, melting texture and super refined, perfectly ripe tannins. It is a classic Barolo in the old tradition of blending grapes from several different vineyard sites, in this case, three vineyards in Serralunga (Ornato, La Serra and Briccolina) as well as sites in La Morra, Grinzane Cavour, Novello and Monforte. Among the sweet red fruit and spice is a little twist of iron and a distinctive mineral note which evokes the Ornato vineyard and adds an extra dimension. This 2019 Barolo has such an appealing, outgoing and charming personality but also the power to last. I particularly like the transformation that has taken place with the tannins - they now glide gracefully across the palate." 96 points Susan Hulme MW



Pio Cesare Barolo Ornato 2019
£435 per 6 In Bond
Drink dates: 2028-2045

"This 2019 Pio Cesare Barolo Ornato is a distinctive and characterful single vineyard wine from Serralunga d'Alba, first produced in 1985. It is only made in the best years and from a selection of the best plots from the Ornato vineyard. The colour is an intense, youthful and blue toned ruby suggesting a low pH and higher acidity. The nose is beautifully incisive and persistent with seductive notes of violet and transparent, cool, red fruit such as raspberry, combined with a faint iron tonic aroma and distinctive mineral notes. On the palate there is a mouth-watering, tangy long finish with a range of flavours from raspberry, blood orange, orange peel and iron. This is an energetic and lively wine with a delicately balanced structure like fine bone china. I love its vibrant acidity, the finesse of the tannins and its distinctive personality." 97 points Susan Hulme MW



Pio Cesare Vermouth di Torino £95 per 3 In Bond

Made to the Boffa family recipe from the 1950s, using Chardoanny grapes and a blend of 26 herbs.

A delicious aperitivo, either served neat over ice or as a high quality addition to negronis and other cocktails. It is dangerously drinkable; smooth, well-balanced and the sweet/savoury notes making it incredibly moreish. A great addition to your cocktail cabinet.



The Vintage

The 2019 vintage was nigh on perfect in Piedmont, leading to comparisons with great vintages such as 2010 and 2016.

Snow melt from the alps combined with rainfall early in the year allowed the vines to refresh and rejuvenate in advance of the growing season.

The growing season was long and steady with no heat spikes, allowing the grapes to reach ideal maturity without stress. Cool nights freshened the grapes maintaining vital acidity and structure. The end of the summer was cool and dry, allowing the growers to choose the ideal moment to pick. The grapes were still on the vine going into the second week of October, ideal for the late-maturing Nebbiolo grapes.

The Wines

The 2019 Barolo are brilliant and balanced combining power with freshness. They combine pure, elegant fruit, moderate alcohol, beautiful aromatics and fine grained structure. There is a clarity and finesse that allows individual terroir to shine through with clarity.



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