



April 2016

Grapevine

Price Chopper Plaza 1355 New Scotland Road Slingerlands, NY 12159
518.439.5535 slingerlandswine@yahoo.com www.slingerlandswine.com

Store Hours: Mon – Sat, 9 – 9 & Sun, 12 – 6

The Quiet Majesty of Italy's Piemonte Region

Langhe, Roero, Monferrato: It sounds like a line of Italian poetry, its translation ripe for a non-Italian-speaker's fertile imagination. In fact, they are geographic designations inside northwest Italy's Piedmont region. Bordering Switzerland and France, Piedmont is surrounded on three sides by the Alps, with the Apennines to the southeast, and the Mediterranean to the south. Called *Piemonte* in Italy, meaning 'foot of the mountain,' it embodies majesty, with its mountains, lakes, rivers, villages, castles, truffles, hazelnuts and...vineyards. Wines made from nebbiolo, barbera, dolcetto, moscato, cortese and arneis, to name a few, from the likes of Asti, Alba, Dogliani, Roero, Gavi, Barolo and Barbaresco are tremendous. We'll look at a few in this breathtaking region of Italy.

Barolo and Barbaresco, both villages and DOCG zones in the Langhe area of Piemonte, are the royal wines made from the slow-ripening nebbiolo grape — tannic despite its thin skin. (It is also grown in Gattinara, where it is sometimes blended with a bit of bonarda.) Nebbiolo's name is derived from *nebbia*, meaning *fog*, which cloaks the region, due to the topography of mountains, the Mediterranean, Valle d'Aosta and Po and Tanaro Rivers. The styles of wine in these two regions are quite different, with Barolo considered polished and powerful and Barbaresco described as elegant and approachable. The effect of soil on the resultant wines is a marvel. To the west in Barolo, rich limestone yields a lush, fragrant wine. East,



A vineyard overlooking the village of Serralunga d'Alba, taken this past March by friend and customer, Marco Varisco.

in Serralunga d'Alba, the looser sandstone results in complex, powerful wines, with greater aging potential. **Azelia, Seghesio, Paolo Conterno and Fratelli Serio & Battista Borgogno**, all highly rated Barolos, and the **Moccagatta Barbaresco** would all make excellent choices for your next dinner party / wine tasting.

Barbera and dolcetto can tolerate cooler, less sunny spots better than the late-ripening nebbiolo and still reach desired ripeness. Barbera ripens a few weeks earlier than nebbiolo (and a bit later than dolcetto) and its characteristic acidity and light tannins are more pronounced if grown in high yields; but with careful pruning, it can make a concentrated wine with notable red and black fruits and balanced acidity. Grown in Monforte d'Alba,

Alba and Asti, it is made into delicious, food-friendly wine. **Michele Chiarlo's** version should make its way home with you for your next roast chicken, pizza or spaghetti and meatballs night.

Dolcetto, meaning 'little sweet one,' is so named because of its low acidity and sweeter taste. Grown mostly in Langhe, Alba and Dogliani, its low acidity is complimented by earthiness and light tannins, and it is rarely oaked, showing the grape's true expression. The **Francesco Boschis Dolcetto di Dogliani** is another one to try.

North of Alba and separated from Langhe by the Tanaro River, heavily forested Roero is the place for arneis. Translated to 'little rascal,' the grape can be difficult to grow, but the wine from this fickle grape is crisp and bone

dry, possessing pear, apricot and floral aromas. **Michele Chiarlo's** is a lovely example.

Gavi, in the southern part of the region near Liguria, is also the name of the wine considered the region's finest white. Made from cortese, it has bracing acidity and a light, clean fruitiness. **Leone d'Oro Gavi** possesses the characteristic floral, peach and lemon flavors.

Moscato d'Asti and Asti Spumante are both made from the moscato bianco grape, grown in Asti and both are made according to the charmat method, with the second fermentation in tank, instead of in bottle, as with the *méthode champenoise*. The main difference is that Spumante is fermented longer, making it fizzier. Both have a soft sweetness and make a refreshing toast to any occasion.

Piemonte's rich and exceptional cuisine of truffles, mushrooms, pastas, cheeses, meats and risottos is perfect for the spectrum of food-friendly wines. Simply put, try them. ♦

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Did you know... Before a Barolo can be released, it must be aged for three years, by law: two in barrel and one in bottle. Barbaresco, on the other hand, needs only to be aged two years.

Wine Tastings Fri, 4-7 & Sat, 2-5

Sat 4/9, 4/23 & 4/30: Fantastic New Arrivals

Fri 4/15: April Staff Picks: Our new favorites for Spring!

Sat 4/16: Malbec World Day & Rosé: Malbec World Day is April 17th, so we'll taste Malbecs and a couple of Rosés. because we are determined to win you over.

Fri 4/22: United States of Pizza Wine Pairing: A fun tasting based on a recently published book. See sidebar.

Fri 4/29: Wines from Piemonte: Check out the article on page 1. Don't miss this beautiful tasting.

Fri 5/6: 90s Value Wines: Highly rated wines at great price points keep coming in, so we'll keep sharing them.

Sat 5/7: Wines for the Kentucky Derby: A festive lineup of winners for your Derby party.

The United States of Pizza: Wine Pairing Guide to four American pizza styles

Tour the US and you'll find countless styles of pizza — a worthy endeavor, if you have enough vacation days. This month, we'll have a pizza-wine tasting, featuring four styles paired with wines: New York (triangular, slightly charred, thin crust with Sangiovese), California (healthier takes on classics with farm fresh toppings with Barbera d'Asti or Falanghina), Philadelphia (thick Sicilian crust with slightly sweet tomato sauce with Rosé or Beaujolais) and Detroit (square shaped deep-dish with sauce on top of Wisconsin cheese with Cabernet Sauvignon). Don't miss this fantastic tasting that is likely to elicit some strong opinions...Friday, April 22nd, from 4 to 7. We hope to see you!

Asparagus and Peas with Warm Tarragon Vinaigrette

Adapted from Cooking Light Magazine

- 2 cups fresh or frozen green peas, thawed
- 1 1/2 lbs asparagus, trimmed, halved crosswise
- 1 lb sugar snap peas
- 5 center-cut bacon slices
- 3 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 3/4 cup chopped shallots
- 2 Tbsp tarragon vinegar
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 Tbsp chopped fresh tarragon
- 3/4 tsp kosher salt
- 1/4 tsp black pepper
- 1 1/2 tsp grated lemon rind



Bring 3 quarts water to a boil over high heat. Add green peas, asparagus and snap peas; cook 3 minutes. Drain; rinse under cold water. Drain. Cook bacon in a large skillet over medium heat until crisp. Drain on paper towels; crumble. Discard all but 1 Tbsp drippings; add oil to pan over medium heat. Add shallots; cook 4 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add vinegar and mustard; cook 30 seconds. Add asparagus mixture, tarragon, salt, and pepper; cook 1 minute. Remove from heat; stir in crumbled bacon and rind. Enjoy with Sheila's April staff pick, below.

April Showers Sparkling Cocktail

This cocktail is as fresh as Spring rain and perfect for perfumed sunny days with a lingering chill in the air. It is clean and floral, like Spring rain, with a fine raciness, thanks to the bubbles.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 oz Tuthilltown Spirits Half Moon Orchard Gin from New York
- 3/4 oz St. Germain elderflower liqueur
- Moscato d'Asti, chilled
- lime and mint leaves for garnish



DIRECTIONS

Combine the gin and St. Germain in a shaker with ice. Shake and strain into a chilled flute. Top with Moscato d'Asti. Garnish with lime wheels and mint leaves and toast to April showers and plentiful May flowers.

April 2016 Staff Wine Picks

Sheila: 2012 Starmont Chardonnay (Carneros) \$13.99 (reg \$16.99) Partial malolactic fermentation and sur lie aging add richness. Aged in 70/30 stainless steel and oak. *Asparagus and peas with warm tarragon vinaigrette

Max: 2012 Qupé Syrah (Central Coast) \$15.29 (reg \$17.99) 91 W&S The cooling Pacific fog allows grapes to ripen evenly, resulting in refreshing acidity, balanced alcohol and fruit-forward suppleness. *Gouda lamb burger

Ian: 2014 Kettmeir Müller Thurgau (Alto Adige-Südtirol) \$16.99 (reg \$19.99) The limestone soil and stainless steel fermentation with brief maceration on the skins makes this aromatic and full. *Scallop risotto

Bill: 2014 Domaine Reverdy Ducroux 'Beau Roy' Sancerre (Loire Valley) \$15.99 (reg \$18.99) Made from 100% old vine Sauvignon Blanc grown on argilo calcaire soil, it is aromatic with ripe citrus. *Goat cheese herb pizza

Damian: 2010 Barón de Magaña (Navarra) \$19.19 (reg \$22.49) 93 RP A 35/35/20/10 blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Tempranillo and Syrah, it is balanced, bright and spicy. *Pan-seared duck breast with dark cherry sauce

Karen: 2009 Vecchia Cantina Leone d'Oro Vino Nobile (Montepulciano) \$16.99 (reg \$19.99) 92 WS This 90/10 blend of Prugnolo Pentile (Sangiovese Grosso) and Canaiolo was aged 24 months in Slovenian oak casks. The flavor is harmonious and full-bodied with soft tannins and lush fruit. *Chicken cacciatore and polenta