

# A Fabled Barbaresco

## *Enrico Moresco's Epic 1979 "Pajoré"*

*Enrico Giovannini-Moresco* occupies a special place in Barbaresco lore. In the 1960s and '70s, he was revered by local winemakers, not the least of whom was Angelo Gaja. But with his retirement in the '80's, Moresco became forgotten, and today only histories of *Piemontese* wine bear witness to his importance.



In his prime, Moresco owned 28 acres in one of Piemonte's greatest vineyards, Pajoré, blessed with a 230- to 300-meter elevation and perfect southern exposures. Between 1967 and 1979 he made only five Barbarescos—the 1967, 1971, 1974, 1978, and 1979. Daniel Thomases has called the 1974 "glorious," while Sheldon Wasserman, in his landmark *Italy's Noble Red Wines* called the 1971 and 1979 the greatest Barbarescos of their vintages.

### Wines of "Immense Proportions"

In his 1991 book—published one month before he died at the age of 51—Wasserman described Moresco's style of Barbaresco as "a full-bodied, richly flavored wine of immense proportions, a fuller, more assertive style of Barbaresco."

Wasserman attributed this style to Moresco's daring: "One of the major reasons for its bigness and intensity is that Moresco believed in harvesting late, waiting until the grapes were totally ripe, despite the obvious hazards, and also in limiting the size of his yields by severe pruning." Such a philosophy was virtually unheard of in Barbaresco at that time and presaged the great Barbarescos of the 1990s.

The 1979 vintage marked a turning point for Moresco. Not only did he make possibly his greatest

wine, but he began the process of handing his domaine over to Angelo Gaja. As the story goes, Gaja had fallen in love with Moresco's 1971 Barbaresco and was determined to buy Moresco's vines. According to Wasserman, Gaja got his foot in the door in early 1979—taking over Moresco's

viticulture and winemaking, but doing everything as the older winemaker dictated.

Over the next three years, Gaja continued to make Moresco's wine, purchasing half his vines in the process. In 1985, Gaja bought a further 45%, leaving only 5% in Moresco's hands, from which he reputedly made a tiny amount of wine, though few ever saw a bottle.

### This Offer

Last year, a friend in the wine trade brought a bottle of Moresco's 1979 Barbaresco Pajoré to a dinner where we were drinking the monumental 1971 Giacosa Barolo Falletto Riserva and 1982 Soldera Brunello Riserva. The Moresco was a revelation, easily holding its own in such company—its deep color and rich, youthful flavors indicative of a much younger wine.

As it turned out, the bottle was part of a cellar belonging to an early Moresco customer. We could tell from this example that the cellar conditions were superb, and so we bought every bottle we could.

This wine is not only an important piece of Piemonte history, it's a fabulous Barbaresco. Don't miss it.

**1979 Moresco Barbaresco**  
**"Podere del Pajoré"**  
**★★★★ Wasserman**  
**\$125.00**

Wasserman: "This is certainly the wine of the vintage, and more than that—an outstanding wine that might even surpass Moresco's legendary 1971—a superstar. Tobacco and cherry aroma has a component that is suggestive of the woods, hints of leather, strawberries and a mélange of other scents, incredible richness and intensity, packed with fruit, great concentration, chocolate notes, this is a great wine."

### ***Wasserman's Italy's Noble Red Wines***

For students of Italian wine, this is the most valuable book ever written. This encyclopedic work evolved from several smaller editions during the 1980s, but the massive 1991 edition is the one to have. It's *very* rare today, as there was only one printing.

**Sheldon & Pauline Wasserman, *Italy's Noble Red Wines***  
**Hardcover with dustjacket, 762 pp., 1991 ..... 125.00**