

# CELLAR MASTER WINE CLUB

March 2024

## 2022 Palacios Camins

Priorat, Spain

Named the 2015 “Man of the Year” by Decanter Magazine, Alvaro Palacios is an important figure in the wine industry. This prestigious title is awarded to people who have made an exceptional contribution to the universe of wine.

The son of the owners of Rioja’s Palacios Remondo, Alvaro Palacios spent his early 20s working and studying winemaking outside of Spain. His experience abroad - particularly in Bordeaux - instilled in him a deep passion for great wines and led him to return to Spain with the ambition to make wines that could be world-class. To achieve this dream, Palacios was drawn to the historic hillsides of slate soil and its traditional grape varieties of Garnacha and Carinena. Now widely considered to be among the more important new Spanish wineries in a generation, Alvaro Palacios embodies the spirit of “The New Spain.”

Tiny and entirely composed of craggy, jagged, and deeply terraced vineyards, Priorat is a Catalan wine-producing region that was virtually abandoned until the early 1990s. This Spanish wine’s renaissance came with the arrival of one man, René Barbier, who recognized the region’s forgotten potential. He banded with five friends to create five “Clos” in the village of Gratallops. Their aim was to revive some of Priorat’s ancient Carignan vines, as well as plant new—mainly French—varieties. These winemakers were technically skilled, well-trained, and locally inspired; not surprisingly their results were a far cry from the few rustic and overly fermented wines already produced.

This movement escalated Priorat’s popularity for a few reasons. Its new wines were modern and made with well-recognized varieties, namely old Carignan and Grenache blended with Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Merlot. When the demand arrived, scarcity commanded higher prices and as the region discovered its new acclaim, investors came running from near and far. Within ten years, the area under vine practically doubled.

Priorat’s steep slopes of licorella (brown and black slate) and quartzite soils, protection from the cold winds of the Siera de Monstant, and a lack of water leading to incredibly low vine yields, all work together to make the region’s wines unique. While similar blends could and are produced elsewhere, the mineral essence and unprecedented concentration of a Priorat wine is unmistakable.

[www.wine.com](http://www.wine.com)



*“Hints of stewed herbs to the nicely baked cherries, strawberries and some hibiscus and dark spices. Fruity, medium-bodied on the palate with fine-grained tannins and a fresh, medium-long finish.” James Suckling*

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## 2020 La Spinetta Barbaresco Bordini Piedmont, Italy

The Rivetti family story begins in the 1890s, when Giovanni Rivetti, left Piedmont for Argentina. Like many Italians then, he dreamed of returning a rich man, perhaps even one day able to make great wine in his homeland. He never did, though his son, Giuseppe “Pin” did. Pin married Lidia, bought vineyards, and began to make wine. In 1977 the family took up residence at La Spinetta (top of the hill) in Castagnole Lanze. It was the heart of the Moscato d’Asti country, a rather light and simple dessert wine. But the Rivettis believed that Moscato had the potential for greatness and set out to prove it by making Moscato Bricco Quaglia and Biancospino.

In 1985 La Spinetta made its first red wine, Barbera Cà di Pian. After this many great reds followed: In 1989 the Rivettis dedicated their red blend Pin to their father. From 1995 to 1998 they started to make their first Barbaresco Gallina, Barbarescos Staderi, Barbera d’Alba Gallina, Barbaresco Valeirano, and the Barbera d’Asti Superiore. In 2000 the family began making a Barolo and built a state-of-the-art cellar, Barolo Campè.

A wine that most perfectly conveys the spirit and essence of its place, Barbaresco is a true reflection of terroir. Its star grape, like that in the neighboring Barolo region, is Nebbiolo. Four townships within the Barbaresco zone can produce Barbaresco: the actual village of Barbaresco, as well as Neive, Treiso, and San Rocco Seno d’Elvio.

Broadly speaking there are more similarities in the soils of Barbaresco and Barolo than there are differences. Barbaresco’s soils are approximately the same two major soil types as Barolo: blue-grey marl of the Tortonion epoch, producing more fragile and aromatic characteristics, and Helvetian white-yellow marl, which produces wines with more structure and tannins.

Nebbiolo ripens earlier in Barbaresco than in Barolo, primarily due to the vineyard’s proximity to the Tanaro River and lower elevations. While the wines here are still powerful, Barbaresco expresses a more feminine side of Nebbiolo, often with softer tannins, delicate fruit, and an elegant perfume. Typical in a well-made Barbaresco are expressions of rose petals, cherry, strawberry, violets, smoke, and spice. These wines need a few years before they reach their peak, the best of which need over a decade or longer. Bottle aging adds more savory characteristics, such as earth, iron, and dried fruit.

Notes from [www.wine.com](http://www.wine.com)

*“The La Spinetta 2020 Barbaresco Bordini (with 10,000 bottles made) has a spicy note on first nose that recalls cinnamon and a touch of something darker like crushed clove. This warm-vintage expression of Nebbiolo embraces rich fruit aromas of blackberry and dark currant, and there is an earthy side with rusty nail and potting soil. It closes with high-toned accents of balsam herb or eucalyptus oil.”* **Wine Advocate 93**



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