

# Barolos distinguished by 2 methods of aging

Producers of Italian barolos may be divided into two classes: traditionalists and modernists.

Simply put, traditionalists use time-tested methods and age the wine in large, upright wooden casks that are frequently 50 years old and older. Those who employ more modern production methods with short-

ened aging time in wood, and employ small French oak "barriques," are called modernists.

Pio Boffa, the young, energetic administrator of the century-old winery, Pio Cesare, gave us his views of the classification, traditional vs. modern. Although this is one pro-

ducer's viewpoint, it is one that is elated by shared or being grappled with today in making barolo, one of Italy's renowned wines.

"When we purchased stainless steel tanks for fermentation and small French barrels for aging some of our wines, people began to label us new wave," Boffa claims. "But we have not broken with our traditional taste and quality. Our vinification methods have been altered in order to maintain our identified style."

Boffa believes that through the 100 years of Pio Cesare's existence, spring and fall seasons in the Barolo and Barbaresco regions have become shorter. Summers are longer and better and clones of the nebbiolo grape have been altered by changes in the microclimate.

"IT HAS BEEN necessary for our vinification of barolo to change with the times in order to maintain the style identified as Pio Cesare," Boffa contends.

Boffa has an advantage only granted to well-established producers. He has the opportunity to taste very old barolos from the family wine library. His object is to keep the same style, using innovative methods.

Boffa maintains he will never confuse the unique character of a barolo with another wine made in the same appellation with the same grapes but a different vinification method.

To illustrate this, Boffa has experimented making a young nebbiolo, aging red wines in French oak barrels, aging Cortese di Gavi in barrels, and making cabernet sauvignon and chardonnay (non-traditional Italian varieties), now growing in his vineyards.

As a direct result of experimentation, nontraditional wines with proprietary names like Ornato and Il Nebbio have been released by Pio Cesare.

"We will never use a proprietary name for our barolo, even if we



focus on wine

Eleanor and Ray Heald

could, because we respect the traditional taste of this wine and do not want to confuse consumers," Boffa emphasizes. "With the use of proprietary wines, we can prove that, with the same grapes that we

are growing in the Piedmont, we can make totally different wines, in new styles, using innovative methods with absolutely no confusion or competition with the original, traditional wines."

## WINE SELECTION OF THE WEEK

1985 Pio Cesare Barolo Riserva DOGG (\$31) is the crown jewel of this producer, deriving its structure from grapes originating in the Pio family vineyards. Grapes harvested from other small, well-positioned parcels in the Barolo zone, lend nuances and finesse to the wine.

It exhibits vivid color, elegance, fruit, body, finesse and balance. With extraordinary aging potential, it will reward one's patience with an even more delectable bottle

bouquet beginning in the mid 1990s.

## WINE BULLETIN BOARD

You can meet Pio Boffa and sample the wines of Pio Cesare at dinner at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 30, at the London Chop House in Detroit. Highlight of the evening will be matching Boffa's highly regarded barolos with rare Northern Italian white truffles, the mushroom-like "white diamond." All-inclusive cost is \$95 per person. For reservations phone Jim Luffy at Cloverleaf Market, 357-9400, or the "Chop" at 562-0277.

## Cookbook has best of Chesapeake Bay

AP — There just is no thinking of the Chesapeake Bay without thinking of crabs. Unless you think of oysters.

There are plenty of other foods typical of this East Coast region — cole slaw, stewed tomatoes, baked fish, ham, rabbit, black walnuts — but it is the crabs and oysters that are so alluring to the diner and are so fascinating with a way of life that has become endangered.

Soft-shells and boiled crabs, crab imperial. Raw oysters and oysters roasted over an open fire, scalloped oysters, oyster stew, oyster stuffing. These are the gems of the Chesapeake.

All of these are in "The Chesapeake Cookbook," (Clarkson N. Potter, New York, \$30), along with much more. More than 150 recipes take the cook from the first settlers of Maryland, Virginia and Delaware to today's innovative dishes.

THE LAND AND water have provided residents from pre-colonial times to the present with an abundance of provender, both cultivated and wild, say authors Susan Belsinger and Carolyn Dille.

Recipes in the cookbook are divided into two sections.

First is a series of menus for Chesapeake-style feasts, a crab feast topped off with a skillet peach cake, warm goose salad and oyster chowder for a holiday dinner and Joyce's vinegared ham for a hunt breakfast.

The second is organized traditionally, by course. The authors say Chesapeake cooking is based on three tenets — Respect for local ingredients; close observation of the matter at hand, whether it be bread or goose, and a regard for the taste of things themselves.

Among the recipes in the section are pickled oysters, cornmeal waffles, soft-shell clam chowder, crab cakes, smoked bluefish and rabbit fricassee.

THE DISHES ARE influenced by immigrants from Germany, Italy, Poland, Africa and other places. And as communities became entrenched, dishes even changed from place to place within the region.

Take crab cakes in Maryland. They're different in Easton than in Baltimore than on Smith Island.

Tidewater Virginia puts ham in its crab imperial; Maryland cooks use green pepper.

Photographs by Michael Scott show people and places of the bay, such as a crowd at an oyster festival or an oyster trough. There also are black-and-white photographs that teach how to shell a crab.

Belsinger, a fourth-generation Maryland resident, teaches and lectures about food and gardening. Dille is a former resident of Maryland and a food writer and consultant.

**CRAB IMPERIAL**  
1½ pounds backfin crabmeat  
2 tablespoons minced sweet green

pepper

2 tablespoons grated onion

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

2 tablespoons chopped parsley

1 tablespoon dry sherry

Dash of cayenne

½ cup heavy cream

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

¼ cup fine dry breadcrumbs

3 tablespoons unsalted butter

Pick the crab carefully to remove the cartilage. Keep the meat in as large pieces as possible. Soften the green pepper and onion in the 2

tablespoons butter for a few minutes. Mix the crab, softened vegeta-

bles, parsley, sherry, cayenne and

cream. Season lightly with salt and pepper.

Just before serving, preheat the oven to 450 degrees. Fry the breadcrumbs in the remaining 3 tablespoons butter over medium-high heat for 1 minute or so.

Butter 6 to 8 cleaned crab or scallop shells, or ceramic baking shells. You may also use a 1-quart baking dish that can withstand very high heat. Mound the crab mixture in the shells. Sprinkle the breadcrumbs over the crab. Bake for about 10 minutes, until the crab is bubbling and golden brown. Serve hot. Makes 6 to 8 servings.

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