

White Truffles and Barbaresco. The Jewels of Langhe and Roero

Marina Melchionda (November 25, 2009)



On November 18th, the Italian Tourism Board and the Region of Piedmont hosted a dinner at the Serafina Restaurant in NYC to present the white truffle from Alba, and Barbaresco wine, two prestigious products that make of the territory of Langhe and Roero an ideal destination for food&wine tourism



"Tonight we celebrate the White Truffle from Alba and Barbaresco". With these words the Director of the Italian Tourism Board in North America Riccardo Strano welcomed the dozens of people gathered for the "Langhe and Roero : a taste of Piemonte" event at the Serafina Restaurant on Broadway. The dinner presentation was organized in collaboration with the Region of Piedmont to present to the American market and audience two products that make of the region a fundamental stop for all those who are passionate about Italian wine and food.

At the tables set in a separate, cozy dining room of the restaurant, tourist agents, sommeliers, and press representatives had a chance to meet political and civic representatives of the Piedmont region, and got to know more about the beauty and possibilities of those territory. With them were the owners of Serafina, Vittorio Assef and Fabio Granato, who sat at the same table of the honorary guest of the evening, Mrs. Ivana Trump.

"I have been planning to visit Alba from the longest time; I am fond of its white truffles. That's why I am so humbled and honored to host such an event in one of my restaurants", commented Mr. Assef. It was Mr. Fausto Perletto, the President of ATL Langhe and Roero, who was asked to introduce the products to his dinnermates.

"This evening you can taste the best of our products. The white truffle is a specialty of Alba, a small town that every year, during this period, hosts an International Festival dedicated to it. The Barbaresco, on the other hand, is one of our most prestigious wines and is named after the village of Barbaresco in the Langhe territories. Our territories are the perfect destination for wine & food aficionados, but our monuments, castles, and landscapes, are great attractions for every kind of tourist. (...) I welcome all of you to visit us and explore the hidden beauties of our region", he said.

A convivial atmosphere characterized the whole evening, as the guests were invited to discover the richness of the white truffle through all of their five senses. Goblets hosting huge white truffles were passed down from a guest to the other, as everybody was invited to smell them in all their richness, with the advice to resist the temptation to taste or, better, to put a chunk of them in one's pocket!

Pietro Giovannini, the President of [Enoteca Regionale del Barbaresco](#) [2], introduced the wine served during the event by saying that "it must be feared and loved at the same time, just as a woman. Tonight we have a selection of four kinds of Barbaresco, produced in different vintages: the 2006 Orella Barbaresco DOCG; the 1999 Bric Bolin Barbaresco DOCG; the 1996 Camp Gros Barbaresco DOCG; and the 1985 Barbaresco DOCG, that has aged for more than 24 years. As you'll sense how different they taste according to their vintage, and how Barbaresco can thus be easily paired with the most diverse kinds of dishes, you'll understand many of the secrets of its success".

Alberto Bianco, the Mayor of the town of Barbaresco, also explained us how important this product is to the economy of the territory he governs: "Our wine producers have been exporting throughout the world from the longest time, and a good percentage of their profits come from international commerce. This economic crisis has without a doubt been affecting their business, but we still maintain high levels of exportation. The place where we export most is the United States, in particular the big metropolis centers such as New York, Chicago, and San Francisco." At the same time, he continued, as wine & food trips are gaining popularity, Barbaresco has become an important source of attraction for the city, contributing to the development of infrastructures and openings of businesses who operate in the field of tourism.

The five-course dinner started with a delicacy that has made Serafina Restaurant famous in Manhattan, their Focaccia di Sofia, a thin focaccia bread sprinkled with white truffle. Another truffle specialty that followed was a whipped risotto with Castelmagno cheese and sweet caramel shallot sprinkled with white truffle. It was Mr. Assef himself that shredded the tuber before our and Piedmont Chef Franco Piumatto's eyes. And we must say, he did it with professionalism, but also with visible emotion!

The entree was a Tender Veal medallion with crust of spiced bread and ciret sauce, accompanied by traditional Piedmont polenta and a Crouton with Robiola cheese and black pepper on a bed of stewed sauce with honey.

No dinner is complete without dessert: both Italians and Americans agree on this. A cream pudding with stewed pears served with zabayone cream was a perfect, delicate end to our rich and earthy



meal. We did not miss our share of chocolate as well, as silver trays of a fine assortment of authentic Ferrero Rocher were brought to our tables. [The Ferrero company](#) [3], known worldwide for its most famous product, Nutella, and for candy bars such as the Rocher and the Raffaello, was in fact originally founded in Alba.

"The region of Piedmont present its products in New York every year, and as a company founded and launched in Alba we are glad to participate to this initiative. Even if our products are globally well-known by now, we still remember where we come from and are strongly bounded to Alba, and take every occasion to show it", said Alessandro Bampa, Marketing Manager at Ferrero U.S.A.

The dinner more than satysfied all of us. The service was impecable, the dishes and wines we tasted encouraged us to plan our next trip to Piedmont in the shortest time possible!

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