March 25, 2025

Barbera

We've tasted the occasional Australian sangiovese or nebbiolo that has captured our attention, but performance, to this point in time, has been patchy. Barbera, on the other hand, has shown itself to be versatile, and successful wines have been made in a range of regions as this tasting demonstrates.

Barbera is known for relatively high natural acidity, and in its Italian home, the Piemonte area, is often deacidified to achieve balance. We don't know how often the reduction of acid is practised in Australia, but even some of the best wines below would have benefited from a little fine tuning in that regard.

Regardless of acid, barbera yields wines that are fresh and flavoursome, suitable for drinking in their first five years. They can reward further cellaring, but deliver considerable pleasure early. We strongly suggest that you start exploring. Any of the wines reviewed below will provide a good starting point.

2023 Vinea Marson Heathcote Barbera Deep colour with a purple edge. Rich red plums show out on the nose together with hints of bramble. It's a powerful, strongly varietal, wine of considerable depth, balanced by fine, persistent tannins and fresh acidity. Sealed with Diam. ($36.00) ★★★★★
https://vineamarson.com/collections/estate/products/2023-barbera

2024 Coulter Wines Adelaide Hills Barbera Vibrant purple colour. Very floral perfumed nose. This is a lively wine packed with varietal flavour. Very drinkable now but will improve. Grab it on release. (Not yet available) ★★★★☆
https://www.coulterwines.com/

2022 Billy Button The Affable Alpine Valleys Barbera A powerful varietal style offering intense red fruits characteristics with bramble nuances. Long, fine tannins feature on a satisfying, balanced palate. ($38.00) ★★★★☆
https://www.billybuttonwines.com.au/product/2022-billy-button-the-affable-barbera

2023 Pizzini King Valley Barbera Fresh gorgeous, complex (faint undergrowth) red fruits nose. A rich, balanced, satisfying red that, because of its intensity and fine tannins, is a pleasure to drink. Excellent value. ($25.00) ★★★★☆
https://www.pizzini.com.au/collections/red/products/pizzini-barbera-2023

2023 David Hook Central Ranges Barbera Ripe, slightly evolved, red fruits show on the nose. A firm but balanced wine, with impressive varietal fruit weight. (Not yet released) ★★★★☆
https://www.davidhookwines.com.au/wines

2023 Tarrawarra Estate Yarra Valley Barbera Absolutely classic barbera varietal nose with a hint of reduction. An appealing medium-bodied style with an acid-fresh finish. ($40.00) ★★★★☆
https://shop.tarrawarra.com.au/wine/2023-estate-barbera

2022 First Drop Wines Moderno Adelaide Hills Barbera Red berry nose with a faintly herbal overtone. Flavours are mouth-filling and at the ripe end of the scale, supported by balanced tannins and acidity. ($30.00) ★★★★☆
https://firstdropwines.com/products/2022-moderno-barbera

2021 Vigna Bottin McLaren Vale Barbera Very appealing fresh, complex nose - red berry, earth, faint undergrowth. Vibrant, intense fruit on a long, even palate. ($44.00) ★★★★
https://vignabottin.com.au/our-wines/

2021 Prōterō Gumeracha Adelaide Hills Barbera Great colour. Purple edge. Vibrant loganberry and licorice aromatics with slight reduction. Still very primary in flavour. Needs time to evolve and integrate all components. ($40.00) ★★★★
https://pannell.com.au/products/protero-barbera-2021

2024 Longview Jupiter Adelaide Hills Barbera Vibrant dark cherry nose. A delicious early-drinking barbera. Simply voluptuous. Bottled only days prior to tasting. (Not yet released) ★★★★
https://www.longviewvineyard.com.au/

2023 Angullong Fossil Hill Orange Region Barbera Fresh varietal red fruits aroma, together with good weight and balance. ($30.00) ★★★★
https://www.angullong.com.au/wine/2023-angullong-fossil-hill-barbera

2022 Coulter Wines C5 Adelaide Hills Barbera Red berry and plum, with hints of grilled meats reduction. Complex and interesting. ($30.00)
★★★★
https://www.coulterwines.com/

2023 Billy Button The Affable Alpine Valleys Barbera ($38.00)
★★★☆

2022 Ceravolo Adelaide Hills Barbera ($25.00) ★★★☆

2016 Ceravolo Adelaide Hills Barbera ★★★☆

2023 Tumblong Hills Table of Plenty Gundagai Barbera ($25.00)
★★★☆

2022 Michelini Italian Selection Barbera ($28.00) ★★★☆

2024 Hastwell & Lightfoot McLaren Vale Barbera ($35.00) ★★★☆

2023 Kaesler Barossa Valley Barbera ($35.00) ★★★

2023 Wildwater Geographe Barbera ($35.00) ★★★

2023 Margan Ceres Hill Barbera ($40.00) ★★★

2024 Vignerons Schmölzer & Brown King Valley Barbera ($40.00)
★★★

2023 The Little Wine Company Barbera ($35.00) ★★☆

2021 Billy Button The Affable Alpine Valleys Barbera ($38.00) ★★☆

2023 XO Wine Co Small Batch Adelaide Hills Barbera ($35.00) ★★

2023 La Cantina King Valley Barbera ($28.00) ★

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