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Try Sampling Wines From These Four Italian Regions



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With travel to and within Europe restricted and at times onerous (masks, new forms to fill out, restrictions on numbers allowed into restaurants and museums)—this is an ideal year to delay physical travel and instead virtually visit Italy via videos, books, podcasts, music and wine.

Below are brief notes about four different Italian regions producing vintages. These are not wine appellations but larger, politically administrative regions (of which the country has 20). These include the northernmost (Trentino - Alto Adige), the southernmost (Sicily) as well as two others (Piedmont and Tuscany) reputed for producing iconic wines conducive to aging. These wines can be purchased from producers or regional wine boards directly, from Italian wine stores or from one of various online outlets.

Piedmont.

The northern half of Italy resembles a (tilted) letter T, and the bulk of the left (western) part of the horizontal bar is the Piedmont region—which means ‘foot of the mountains’ (the peaks being the Alps). The climate is influenced by air from chilly Alps to the north and warm Mediterranean winds blowing in from the south. Growing above a complex limestone base are primarily two red grapes—Nebbiolo (producing Barolo and Barbaresco wines) and Barbera. White wines include Arneis, as well as other popular international varieties.

Well priced wines to try include those listed below.



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Forte Masso. Barolo. 2015. (DOCG.)

Initial aromas of sultanas and ash, cigar and limestone. Tastes include marmalade, with characteristics of a modern Barolo—suave rather than austere. This alive and generous wine pumps out brilliant, focused energy. Pair with duck breast, or even banana chocolate crème brûlée—where sweetness complements the wine’s acidity.