

Virna

2015 Barolo "Cannubi"

Piedmont, Italy

April 2019

Score: 99 Points

I have the highest respect for Virna Borgogno's wines, and put my money where my mouth is...by buying at least one or two of her wines in her portfolio in most years, ranging from the Riserva through the cru wines and right down to the *normale* Barolo DOCG bottling. This, however, is the most striking young wine I've ever tasted from the estate, and from a vintage that is not my favorite. Perhaps I should write "admirable" rather than "striking," as what is really special about this is its magical *purity*. Sure, there's an alluring sweetness to the fruit, but there is actually nothing remotely overdone about any of the wine's components or characteristics. The fruit got picked at just the right moment...and the wine got pulled out of barrel at just the right moment, and all the other little details were right on the button too. As this matures and fills out with tertiary notes from bottle age, it may very well merit another point. At the risk of lavishing too much praise on the wine, I should confess that my raw note from the first (blind) taste of it concludes with, "...a sexpot, but of the Grace Kelly variety!" One last note: Virna has long sold a wine that was presumably derived from this same plot under the name "Cannubi Boschis," which is also used by Sandrone. Because I was tasting blind in January and didn't see the bottle, I can't swear that the 2015 is designated simply as Cannubi rather than Cannubi Boschis. Some designations that included two crus were recently forbidden, and this is exactly what happened to the (often superb) Virna bottling of "Preda

Sarmassa” from earlier vintages. Additionally, the boundaries of the Cannubi cru were recently enlarged, which could also explain why the organizers at Nebbiolo Prima had this down as “Cannubi” rather than “Cannubi Boschis.” If you find all of these details tiresome, then consider not buying this wine...which will leave more for me! (MF)

