

REGIONS OF THE MONTH



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LE MARCHE

Le Marche is a remote area between the Adriatic Sea and the Apennine mountains, a quiet region, whose inhabitants drink more wine per capita and live longer than other Italians. Its pre-Christian inhabitants were the Piceni, who were assimilated by the Romans, and its coastal capital Ancona was established by the Greeks. In the Middle Ages, the region marked the southern boundary of the Holy Roman Empire, from which it got its name, "Le Marche" or "boundary." In the 15th Century, Urbino became one of the leading cultural centers of Europe, and its Palazzo Ducale is one of Italy's most beautiful Renaissance palaces. Ascoli Piceno is almost as extraordinary with its Piazza del Popolo. But the smaller towns of San Leo and Urbina are also remarkable medieval monuments. Visitors also come to Le Marche for its beaches on the coast and for its skiing on the peaks of Monti Sibillini.

The Castelli di Jesi DOC zone in the hills west of Ancona is the home of Verdicchio, which has been dramatically increasing in quality in the last ten years, so much so that many now consider it central Italy's best wine for fish, but Verdicchio should not be confused with the unrelated Verdicca, Verdone, Verdello, or Verduzzo, whose names all refer to their green skins. Verdicchio di Matelica is grown at a higher altitude and can have even more intense flavors. The wines from both DOC zones also make fine sparkling wine. Other whites such as Bianchetto del Metauro and Falerio dei Colli are also good with seafood.

The red wines of Le Marche are based mainly on Sangiovese or Montepulciano, the most important Rosso Piceno, is mostly Sangiovese. Rosso Conero is based on Montepulciano.

ABRUZZO

Abruzzo has its fair share of art and architecture throughout its hill towns and mountain villages, but the Apennine mountains dominate the region, taking up two thirds of the area and attracting hikers and skiers to resorts. The vast Parco Nazionale d'Abruzzo is one of Europe's most important nature preserves.

Descendants of various hill tribes, who settled the region in the Bronze Age, the Abruzzesi were difficult to unite, although the Greeks, Romans Swabians, Aragonese, and Bourbons all tried. Before the advent of modern transportation, the inhabitants were isolated in hill towns and villages clinging to the sides of mountains. After the 12th century, the Abruzzesi were ruled by a succession of dynasties based in Naples to the south. As a result, their diet, speech, and customs are more similar to their southern neighbors than to their neighbors to the north or west.

The hills in the region are highly favorable for grapevines. The two classified wines are Trebbiano and Montepulciano, not to be confused with the town of that name in Toscana, where Vino Nobile is made. When grown on the lower hills, Montepulciano has an irresistible character, full bodied and smooth with the capacity to age. In the higher areas, the vines produce a lighter version, Cerauolo, which is a sturdy, cherry-colored rose'. The white Trebbiano d'Abruzzo has been described as a phantom vine, since its origins are unclear. At its best, the wine can develop a Burgundy-like complexity after four or five years of aging.

Italian Winery of the Month



Marotti Campi Winery

Wine from Ancient Roman Settlements to the Present

Marotti Campi

Marotti Campi is located in Le Marche near Morro d'Alba, an area of hills where ancient Roman villages were built and later medieval fortifications. Its fertile, generous soil has always been dedicated to winegrapes and is the center of the DOC zones, Lacrima di Morro d'Alba and Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Classico. The Marotti Campi family has owned land here for more than a century. The 122-hectare estate devotes 52 hectares to the production of wine, especially to Lacrima di Morro d'Alba, of which it has one of the largest plantings in the appellation. The family villa, built in the 19th Century on the site of a Roman settlement, is opened to the public for wine tasting. The winemaker is Roberto Potentini.

by the Vannucci family. Since 2002, Lambreto Vannucci has been managing the estate. The family makes wines only from its own 7.5 hectare vineyard, which is planted with the indigenous grapes of the area, including Montepulciano d'Abruzzo, Trebbiano, and Pecorino. Wine guide "Gambero Rosso" says of the winery, "... we're fond of their fidelity to varietal and terroir character, the skilled use of oak in ageing, and the substantial extract."

Strappelli

The Strappelli estate is located in Abruzzo in the heart of the Torano Nuovo countryside in the province of Teramo. With the Adriatic to the east and Gran Sasso to the south, the vineyard extends over nine hectares made lush and fertile by the mild climate of summer rains and gentle winds.

The Strappelli family has been cultivating vines and nurturing wine for generations,

See WINERIES next page

Centorame

Centorame is located in the Abruzzo region at Casoli di Atri and was founded in 1987



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WINES OF THE MONTH



ARTISAN SERIES

Marotti Campi
2007 Lacrima di Morro d'Alba, Rubico
Made from 100% Lacrima di Morro d'Alba grapes, this wine perfectly accompanies pasta and rice dishes, grilled fish, roasted meats, and cheese. Deep ruby red in color with purple reflections, the bouquet suggests woody fruits and spring violets. Its taste is smooth, fresh, and velvety with smooth tannins. Serve at cool room temperature.

Marotti Campi
2007 Verdicchio di Castelli di Jesi Superiore
This wine is 100% Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi and is characterized by a bright, straw yellow color with green reflections and by a bouquet with aromas of acacia and wild flowers. Dry and full-bodied, the wine is intensely flavored and fresh with a long finish. Serve chilled with appetizers, pasta, and rice dishes, fish, and white meats. Enjoy it also as an aperitif.

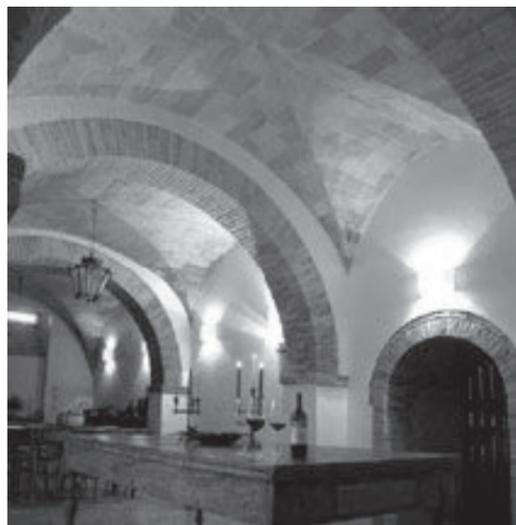


WINERIES from cover
a responsibility that compelled Guido Strappelli to return the vineyards to organic production. The winery specializes in the native Montepulciano d'Abruzzo, Trebbiano d'Abruzzo, Pecorino, and a native Malvasia variety and took a giant leap forward in 1990 with the construction of a new, state-of-the-art winery.

WINEMAKER SERIES

Marotti Campi
2006 Lacrima di Morro d'Alba, Orgiolo
The Lacrima grape or *teardrop* in English is an ancient, indigenous varietal that is cultivated in a very restricted area in the hills of the Marche region, bordering Morro d'Alba. The varietal takes its name from an evident teardrop of juice which oozes out of very ripe grapes. Characterized by its intense bouquet with hints of berries, violets, vanilla, and roasted coffee, the Orgiolo is a typical expression of the Lacrima grape. Aged in seasoned oak barrels for six months, the wine is soft, velvety, and full-flavored and is best served with pasta and rice dishes with intense sauces, grilled red meats, or roasted white meats.

Centorame
2006 San Michele Montepulciano d'Abruzzo
Made from the estate's 18 year-old, 3.5 hectare Montepulciano vineyard, the San Michele was aged for 12 months in French oak barrels and has deep, rich plummy fruit with firm but soft tannins. Italian wine guide "Gambero Rosso" describes the Centorame San Michele as a "juicy" wine, "whose savoury, tannin-rich palate closes nicely on a note of roasted coffee beans." Serve this delicious, fruity Montepulciano at cool room temperature with roasted and grilled meats and aged cheeses.



Wine cellars at Marotti Campi

WINES OF THE MONTH

COLLECTOR SERIES



Centorame
2006 Castellum Vetus, Montepulciano d'Abruzzo
Made from the estate's 18 year-old, one hectare Montepulciano vineyard, the Castellum Vetus refers to the ancient castle of Duchi d'Acquaviva, who lived in the area of Casoli in the 14th Century where the estate is located. The Castellum Vetus was aged for 15 months in French oak barrels, made from different forests and for another eight months in bottle before release from the winery. Characterized by a ruby red color with deep violet reflections, the Castellum Vetus has aromas of blackberry and blueberry with hints of vanilla and cocoa. The palate is rich and fruity with well integrated tannins. "Gambero Rosso" describes this fine wine as having "typical fruit-rich aromas and just the right amount of oak. We found it to be juicy and compact on the palate ..." Decant and serve at cool room temperature with roasted and grilled meats.

Strappelli
2003 Montepulciano d'Abruzzo, Celibe
The Celibe Montepulciano is produced only from the best vintages and the oldest vines in the estates organic vineyards. The Strappelli Celibe is aged in French oak barrels for 24 months and for six months in bottle before release and shows ripe plum and cherry aromas that continue on the palate and finish with coffee. The finish is long and the texture elegant. Decant before serving at cool room temperature.



Centorame Familia

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