

WINES OF ABRUZZO

Pecorino, the increasingly popular white wine from Italy's eastern coast

The central Italian region of Abruzzo has a natural vocation for viticulture. The mountains shelter the region's eastern side from the cold winter winds. In summer, on the other hand, sharp temperature changes shape the special aromatic complexity of the grapes. The hillsides are a patchwork of vineyards, set among the Mediterranean scrub and vast olive groves. Here nature, art, culture, landscapes, food and wine go hand in hand in Europe's most verdant, and still largely unexplored, region.

THE LAND OF PECORINO

Pecorino is an ancient grape variety, with documentary evidence dating back to the 2nd century BC, and is reputedly one of varieties brought to Italy during the Greek migrations. Rediscovered in the 1990s, Pecorino now makes high-quality wines. It thrives in cool



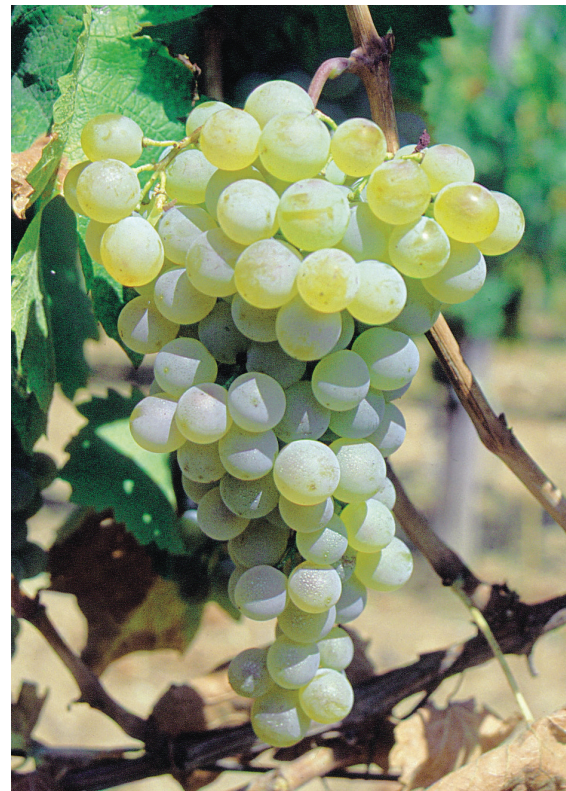
areas with marked temperature fluctuations and is used throughout the region of Abruzzo to make wines of different organoleptic characteristics that are expressive of terroir,

winemaking and ageing methods.

Why is it called "pecorino"?

Allegedly because sheep (pecore) learned to love the early-ripening grapes as they passed through the hillside vineyards in September.

But now Pecorino is Abruzzo's grape of the future and has gone from covering 70 to 2500 hectares in 20 years as winemakers recognise the vast potential of the variety with its distinctive characteristics.



TOP PECORINO WINES

(Tasting notes by Decanter World Wine Awards judge, Alessandra Piubello)

Torre dei Beati, Bianchi Grilli per la Testa, Abruzzo DOC Pecorino 2020 93

£10 Matthew Clark

Staying true to his minimalist philosophy since 1999, Fausto Albanesi portrays his terroir, now certified organic, with respect. The complex nose includes notes of medicinal herbs, orange peel and balsamico. Full, vigorous and deep on the palate, with masterful length. **Alc** 13.5%

Cirelli, Abruzzo DOC Pecorino 2019 93

£20 Enotria

Francesco Cirelli moved to Abruzzo to establish his winery in 2003. His wines are certified organic and aged in clay amphorae. Intense aromas of pepper, chamomile and ginger. Delicious saline palate. Dynamic and well-balanced. **Alc** 13%

Faraone, IGT Colli Aprutini Pecorino 2019 93

£13 Berry Bros & Rudd

This historic family winery, now with young oenologist Federico Faraone at its helm, has seen 51 harvests. Aromas of white flowers, wild herbs and spices. Well-structured, bolstered by lively acidity. Good length and depth. **Alc** 13%

Rapino, Gira, IGT Terre di Chieti Pecorino 2018 92

£27 Wine It Limited

Emilio Rapino is the second generation of this winery founded in 1972. The decision to release the 2018 now was inspired: its bouquet has become complex and varied, leading to balanced acidity and impressive delicacy in the mouth. Certified organic. **Alc** 12.5%

Fontefico, La Foia, Abruzzo DOC Pecorino Superiore 2018 92

£25 Bellavita

Brothers Nicola and Emanuele Altieri have been making wine since 2006 on their 15-hectare estate in Vasto, about a mile from the sea. La Foia has a distinctive nose of

vanilla custard, chamomile and spices. Full-bodied and saline. Certified organic. **Alc** 14.5%

Pasetti, Colle Civetta, Abruzzo DOC Pecorino Superiore 2020 92

£ 25 Bianca Trading

This historic Abruzzo producer is now run by the fifth generation of the Pasetti family. Colle Civetta has an intense nose bursting with thyme, citrus and white flowers. Its firm, sapid palate flows well. Enticingly quaffable. **Alc** 13.5%

Fattoria La Valentina, IGT Colline Pescaresi Pecorino 2020 91

£ 15 Berkmann Wine Cellars

Since brothers Sabatino, Andrea and Roberto Di Properzio bought the property in 1994, their estate has become an international beacon for Abruzzo wines. Barley sugar and meadow herbs feature in the distinctive bouquet. Fine, elegant, tangy and inviting. Certified organic. **Alc** 13%

Tenuta Terraviva, Abruzzo DOC Pecorino 2020 90

£15 Uncharted Wines

Terraviva opened in the 1970s, but has been revitalised in recent years by the founder's son-in-law, Pietro Topi. Their Pecorino, grown on clay soils, has aromas of dried peach, dried flowers and aniseed. Lively mouthfeel with a long finish. **Alc** 12.5%

Talamonti, Trabocchetto, Abruzzo DOC Pecorino Superiore 2020 90

£16.95 Vinum Limited; Christopher Piper Wine

Antonella di Tonno, Talamonti's director, and husband Rodrigo bought the estate's 45 hectares in 2007. Their Trabocchetto has an intense nose of mint, jasmine, apricot and pear. A pillowy soft attack is offset by freshness and length. **Alc** 13%

Marramiero, Abruzzo DOC Pecorino 2020 89

£15 Delitalia

50 hectares of vineyards and a family tradition of grape-growing since the 1900s was turned into a winery by Dante Marramiero in 1994. Today, Emilio continues

his father's legacy whilst moving with the times. Aromas of thyme and chamomile, plus a full-bodied palate and zesty drive. **Alc** 13%

Orlandi Contucci Ponno, Abruzzo DOC Pecorino Superiore 2020 88

£19.45 Independent Wine Ltd

Founded in the early 1970s, the winery has been part of Agricole Gussalli Beretta since 2007. Juniper, thyme, spices and a balsamic hint on the nose. Structured and sapid, with a refreshing acidic drive. **Alc** 13%

Chiusa Grande, Vinosophia, Abruzzo DOC Pecorino 2020 86

£17 Swig

Franco D'Eusanio founded his winery 30 years ago, focusing on organic, sustainable production. Jasmine, acacia honey and aromatic herbs on the nose. Balanced and generous in the mouth, with a soft, persistent finish. **Alc** 13.5%

Paride d'Angelo, IGT Colline Pescaresi Pecorino 2020 86

£18 Prime Wine

Founded in 1967 and now owned by Paride

D'Angelo, who began bottling under his own name five years ago. On the nose, scents of apricot, aromatic herbs and barley. A tangy, agreeable palate with acidic drive. **Alc** 13%

Torre Zambra, The Family Estate, Colle Maggio, IGT Terre di Chieti Pecorino 2020 86

£14.99 The Oxford Wine Company

The De Cerchio family began bottling wine 60 years ago. Third-generation Federico is now at the helm. This Pecorino, from the Colle Maggio vineyard in Colonnella, shows aromas of meadow herbs and apricot, with a fresh racy palate. **Alc** 13%

Biagi, IGT Colli Aprutini Pecorino 2020 86

£16.5 Brevevita Ltd

Third-generation winemakers Fabrizio and Luca Biagi founded their winery in 2006. This wine is from their Colonnella vineyards, at over 200m altitude on clay-limestone soil. Aromatic herbs and white peach on the nose. Structured and enveloping in the mouth. Long finish. **Alc** 14%