

Chiara de Iulis Pepe

Emidio Pepe, Abruzzo, central Italy

emidiopepe.com

Chiara de Iulis Pepe welcomes us smiling and resolute, feet rooted to the ground and a clear gaze beyond the horizon. Now 32 years old, since childhood she has absorbed the Pepe values. Wine and family are one in the Pepe household in Torano Nuovo, in the Teramo hills of Abruzzo where, 60 years ago, a revolution began.

Third-generation Chiara took over from her aunt Sofia in 2020, who in turn had succeeded her father – Chiara's grandfather – Emidio Pepe in 2000. At 27 years old, Chiara decided to take the bull by the horns. 'Drinking, selling and talking about wine was no longer enough for me,' she says in a firm and confident voice. 'The time had come to actually make it.' Chiara was ready; her grandfather and aunt's teachings were deeply rooted within her, and the oenology and viticulture course in Dijon plus work at a French biodynamic company gave her the final push. 'My intention,' she explains, 'is to carry forward the vision of those who came before me, trying to perfect a few details wherever possible.'

Subtle renewal

The generational transition has been fluid in this female-run company; so much so that, even now, the three generations co-exist in harmony. When she took over, Chiara slowly replaced the existing team. 'Those who work in the vineyards, besides being updated on pruning and biodynamic agriculture introduced by aunt Sofia in 2005, also perform cellar duties, so that the two teams communicate with each other.' The work follows the established Emidio Pepe path, with no change of direction: no filtration or clarification, only vitrified concrete containers, spontaneous fermentation, manual destalking for the reds, grape treading for the whites, and lengthy ageing. 250,000 bottles are currently ageing in the cellar. Every year, approximately 43% of the 80,000 bottles produced are set aside, but this will rise to 60% when the new cellar is completed in 2027.

Chiara has introduced steel tanks with refrigerated double bottoms suitable for treading the white grapes, and which also permit gravity filling into the tanks for manual destalking of the reds. But her focus is on the vineyard. She reacts to the unpredictable climatic conditions with determination, intelligence and heart.

With the same experimental nature as her grandfather, she has introduced vineyard treatments using cow's milk (in solution, it has been found to have fungicidal properties that act against powdery mildew), covering the soil with green manure without digging it in, and in the new 2ha (strictly pergola)



system, she uses agroforestry and widely spaced planting layouts.

'Our wine,' Chiara states, 'must continue to be genuine, digestible, and to express the location and its vitality.' **Alessandra Piubello**



Emidio Pepe, Trebbiano d'Abruzzo Selezione Vecchie Vigne, Abruzzo, Italy 2022 96

£118 Dynamic Vines

Aromas evoke white tea, camomile, white pepper and yellow fruits. Its luminous and vivid flavours are complex, voluminous and deep, revealing considerable personality. With a tactile consistency across the palate, it closes on a vibrant thrust of pulsating energy. From a vineyard planted in 1988, at 240m on calcareous clay soils. Organic. **Alessandra Piubello Drink 2025-2038 Alc 12.5% ►**



Alessandra Piubello is an author and journalist from Verona, working in Italian culture, wine and food. Co-editor of the *I Vini di Veronelli Guida Oro* wine guide, she is also a DWWA judge across multiple Italian categories