



Emidio Pepe



# Cerasuolo d'Abruzzo

At the opposite end of the scale to all those ultra-pale pinks, this rosé-only DOC offers textured, characterful, food-friendly wines

STORY & SELECTION ALESSANDRA PIUBELLO

Cerasuolo embodies the most intimate soul and essence of Abruzzo: a wine that represents the mountainous and marine duality of the region. It is the wine of tradition, the wine of Abruzzo's yesteryear table, the wine of the family, the wine offered to distinguished guests; and yet, from being a supposedly outdated wine, it has become the new 'avant-garde'.

The *forze e gentile* ('strong and gentle') Abruzzo region, as journalist and diplomat of the day Primo Levi (1853-1917) described it, is perfectly embodied in Cerasuolo d'Abruzzo's characteristics: a rosé with the spirit of a red, and/or a light red with the fresh drinkability of a rosé. It's a multifaceted wine that can't be pigeonholed.

Cerasuolo has the rare gift of substance and vigour, characteristics that come from the red Montepulciano grape (minimum 85% in the blend), but in a lighter, more slender and agile form thanks to cold macerations of 8-12 hours during production. A versatile, highly fruity and very drinkable wine, Cerasuolo d'Abruzzo's ability to evolve in the bottle is surprising. Being a rosé with greater structure, it offers plenty of nuance – attractive for consumers who look for wines that are full of expressiveness and invite them to take the next sip.

An everyday wine for all budgets, it corresponds to the contemporary trend for seeking wines that

are authentic, work well at the table and are also suited to convivial sharing. Versatile, approachable and gastronomic, it's the perfect accompaniment to a wide variety of meals: fish, meat, pasta, cheese, vegetables, or ethnic and fusion cuisine.

## Special status

Cerasuolo d'Abruzzo was the first Italian DOC formed exclusively for a rosé wine. Changes to the production regulations effective as of 2023 now incorporate Superiore versions (minimum 90% Montepulciano) in the sub-zones of four Abruzzo provinces: Colline Teramane to the north, through Colline Pescaresi, to Terre di Chieti in the south and Terre Aquilane inland.

In cooler areas with a larger temperature range – the high hills inland – Cerasuolo d'Abruzzo tends towards a more subtle and incisive profile, greater freshness and modest body. Contrastingly, the vineyards in warmer areas, often closer to the Adriatic coast, tend to produce more structured and mellow wines with intense, pulpy fruitiness.

The genuine frankness and softness of this grape are expressed both in its austere complexity and its pleasant appeal, reflecting its distinctive and naturally energetic character. Extremely contemporary and versatile, it's often much more than a 'simple' rosé, and sometimes even indistinguishable from a light red wine.

The name Cerasuolo derives from *cerasa*, 'cherry' in the local dialect, which immediately evokes both its rather intense colour and the particular chewy texture that make it easily recognisable. Authentic Cerasuolo d'Abruzzo does indeed taste of cherries, and its slightly rustic fruitiness and texture can't be found in other Italian rosés. It can be drunk chilled in summer to accentuate its crisp fruitiness, and exemplifies the joy of sharing at the table.



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PHOTOGRAPH NIC CRILLY-HARGRAVE



**92**  
**De Angelis Corvi 2024** **B**  
 £24.90 (2023) **Brevevita**  
 Sour cherry and herbs intensify the aromas. Genuinely authentic character here, sapid, if occasionally slightly rustic, with captivating complexity and tension. A gentleman of the old school, Corrado De Angelis Corvi has been working quietly for almost 25 years across his 9ha of certified organic and biodynamic vineyards, to preserve the health of both vines and drinkers. **Drink** 2026-2030 **Alcohol** 14.5%



**92**  
**Emidio Pepe 2024** **O**  
 £46.67 (ib) -£75 **Avint-Garde, Cépage, Christopher Keiller, Cru, Dynamic Vines, Ideal Wine Co**  
 Tense and textured, authentic and energetic, typically distinctive, with inviting aromas of cherry and pomegranate, as well as floral nuances. It undergoes brief maceration and spontaneous fermentation in concrete tanks, with no filtration. Guardians of an ancient winemaking tradition, the Pepe family has been crafting this wine since the 1960s. A drinking experience. **Drink** 2026-2030 **Alc** 14%



**92**  
**Faraone, Le Vigne di Faraone 2024**  
 £24-£25 **Berry Bros & Rudd, Bottle Apostle**  
 Intense and captivating with its fragrant notes of red fruit and aromatic herbs. The palate is complex yet open, combining substance and grace for a lively and thirst-quenching glassful. This organically farmed family winery, now run by oenologist Federico Faraone, has been faithfully bottling Cerasuolo d'Abruzzo since the 1970s. **Drink** 2026-2029 **Alc** 14.5%



**92**  
**Inalto, Superiore 2024**  
**inaltovinidaltura.it**  
 A benchmark style showing typical aromatics of cherry, raspberry and redcurrant, giving way to a full, deep palate with tension and a vibrant character, ideal for versatile, easy drinking. Adolfo De Cecco (of the famous premium pasta dynasty) conceived this project in 2016 and established Inalto two years later, selecting a patchwork of varied vineyards located at 400m-800m. Fruit for this wine is sourced from those at the lower levels. **Drink** 2026-2029 **Alc** 13.5%



**92**  
**Podere della Torre 2024** **O**  
**poderedellatorre.it**  
 A striking bouquet that offers hints of black cherry and blood orange. Fresh on the palate, with lively, lingering weight that invites another sip. Authentic vigneron Diego Della Torre and business partner/friend Franco Graziano have been tending their 5ha of vineyards for more than 20 years, organically for half of that time. The suite of characteristics of the 1970 Montepulciano clone that they use to produce this crisp and authentic wine are unique. **Drink** 2026-2027 **Alc** 13.5%



**92**  
**Tenuta I Fauri, Baldovino 2024** **O**  
 £20 **York Wines**  
 Intense and textured, the essence of briefly macerated Montepulciano d'Abruzzo can be felt in its complexity, while the palate is lively, smooth and fresh, with a hint of citrus and pepper. A genuine, joyful, traditional wine that authentically reflects the territory and the style of the Di Camillo family's artisan vocation. **Drink** 2026-2028 **Alc** 14.5%



**92**  
**Terraviva, Giusi 2024** **O**  
**POA £ Uncharted Wines**  
 Located a couple of kilometres from the Adriatic sea and its beneficial influences, this certified-organic estate, which uses biodynamic practices, lies among the Colline Teramane hills. The striking vitality of Giusi's red berry fruits is at the heart of its energetic and feisty palate, with a well-paced progression of flavours right up to a lengthy finish. **Drink** 2026-2028 **Alc** 13%



**92**  
**Torre dei Beati, Rosa-ae 2024** **O**  
**POA £ Matthew Clark**  
 Captivating, fragrant aromas of cherry, rosehip and tamarind. The balance between softness, acidity and sapidity makes this an engagingly easy-drinking accompaniment to food. Located at 250m-300m in Loreto Aprutino, one of Abruzzo's top areas for viticulture, Fausto Albanesi and his wife Adriana have been producing wine organically and artisanally since 1999. **Drink** 2026-2029 **Alc** 14%



**91**  
**Cataldi Madonna, Malandrino 2024**  
**POA £ Astrum Wine Cellars**  
 Giulia Cataldi Madonna, a young fourth-generation oenologist, has been running the oldest winery in Ofena, some 30km inland from Pescara, since 2019. Aromas of blackberry, pomegranate and Morello cherry characterise the bouquet, enriched with subtle notes of aromatic herbs. Fruit and acidity come together on a round, sapid and persistent palate. **Drink** 2026-2028 **Alc** 13.5% ▶

● Rosé wine

○ Organic ● Biodynamic



91

● **Ciavolich, Fosso Cancelli 2023**

£42 **FortyFive10°**

From a historic Abruzzo wine-producing family, Chiara Ciavolich has been running the Loreto Aprutino estate for more than 20 years. Sourced from a vineyard at least 40 years old, the wine is aged in terracotta amphorae. A Cerasuolo d'Abruzzo with great substance and personality, intact fruit and a delicious, sapid and lengthy finish, this is an ideal table companion.

**Drink** 2026-2027 **Alc** 12%



91

● **Cingilia 2024** ◉

£17 (2022) **WoodWinters**

An appealing raspberry fragrance, followed by ripe cherry and blood orange. Substantial texture and a lively, agile and incisive taste progression make for a very satisfying drink. Fabio Di Donato grew up in his father's vineyards, where the 40-year-old oenologist and vigneron now has his own small 7ha organic farm, which he works carefully using artisanal techniques.

**Drink** 2026-2027 **Alc** 13%



91

● **Cioti, Patherus Superiore, Colline Teramane 2024** ◉

**cantinacioti.it**

From vines more than 40 years old, this has pleasant fruity aromas allied to a vibrant and suitably tannic palate that reveals character and drive, freshness and substance, making it an impressive wine. Fourth-generation winemaker Vincenzo Cioti and his father Filiberto tend vines on 7ha at 400m.

Respectful of biodiversity, they're keen on recovering almost obsolete ancient clones, and the estate has been certified organic since 2008. **Drink** 2026-2028 **Alc** 13.5%



91

● **Cirelli, Anfora 2023** B

£30-£31.50 (2022) **The Great Wine Co,**

**The Umbrella Project**

The focus here is on fruit, albeit with floral notes. Full and juicy, structured yet lively and fresh, with memorable drinkability. In 2011, Francesco Cirelli was the first in Abruzzo to vinify and age wine in terracotta amphorae. On a 22ha mixed farm, his 7ha of certified-organic and -biodynamic vines are in a unique location among spectacular ravines and rolling hills in Atri, Teramo province, only 8km from the Adriatic sea.

**Drink** 2026-2028 **Alc** 13%



91

● **Fattoria Nicodemi, Le Murate Superiore, Colline Teramane 2024** ◉

£18 **Winetraders UK**

Fragrances shift between black cherry, wild raspberry and hints of rose, while on the palate, the fleshy fruit is graceful and tense, displaying sapidity, elegance and respectable length. Third-generation Alessandro and Elena Nicodemi have run the family business for 25 years, tending a single 30ha block of organic vineyards.

**Drink** 2026-2028 **Alc** 13.5%



91

● **Fontefico, Fossimatto Superiore, Terre di Chieti 2024** ◉

**fontefico.it**

Sourced from the very stony Vigna del Pozzo vineyard, this is intense and fragrant on the nose, the palate conveying a distinctive character of fleshiness with thirst-quenching acidity, then a sleek finish. Managed by the Altieri brothers Nicola and Emanuele, the 15ha of certified-organic vineyards on the Punta Penna headland, in Abruzzo's far south, are caressed by the sea winds and absorb the light reverberating from the Gulf of Vasto. **Drink** 2026-2027 **Alc** 13.5%



91

● **Rapino, Gira 2021**

£19 **D Vine Cellars**

From vines aged 50 years or more, this Cerasuolo d'Abruzzo demonstrates longevity. Wine artisan Emilio Rapino has been working four certified-organic hectares for more than 10 years. Firmly believing that wine needs to evolve slowly, he only markets it after several years. The result is a fascinatingly individual wine with surprising balance and sapidity, lively and respectful of its origins. **Drink** 2026-2028 **Alc** 12%o



90

● **Masciarelli, Villa Gemma Superiore, Terre di Chieti 2024**

£24 **Les Cave de Pyrene**

From vineyards at 400m in San Martino sulla Marrucina in the Chieti area, where the story of the late Gianni Masciarelli, a leading figure in the success of modern Abruzzo winemaking, began in 1981. Fragrant, lively, fresh and convivial, this gastronomic wine is ideal to pair with a range of everyday dishes or to be shared between friends. **Drink** 2026-2028 **Alc** 14%



90

● **Speranza, Impeto Superiore, Colline Pescaresi 2024**

**speranzavini.it**

An intense and deep bouquet introduces a well-structured palate, animated by a compelling momentum that drives the clear terroir character on multiple levels. Edoardo Speranza runs his 5ha certified-organic estate producing artisanal wines faithful to the authentic tradition passed down from his grandfather. **Drink** 2026-2027 **Alc** 13% **D**