



WINETRADERS' ITALY

Our goal is to revolutionise the perception of Italian wines by introducing high quality, single estate wines to the UK market



PRICE LIST Spring 2011

What's New

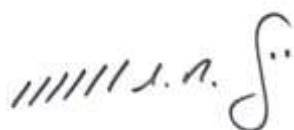
The uncertainty hanging in the air along with the fireworks that ushered in 2011 will be with us for some time. A wary consumer and a strong Euro have weakened demand for classic European wines but Italy appears to be bucking the trend. For the first time ever Italy is now in third position (behind Australia, Californian and France) and continues to perform ahead of the market with 12% growth in value - by far the highest of any European country. Naysayers will no doubt point to the continued popularity of Pinot Grigio but at some point even the gloomy must give credit where it's due: Italy is slowly but steadily increasing its market share.

That's the good news. The faltering economy and sterling's unprecedented volatility have created the most challenging conditions that we've ever seen. It's a bit like judging how the 2003s will age: when the economy will finally return to its pre-crisis buoyancy is anyone's guess. In the meantime, we've decided it's business as usual. This list is evidence of exactly that and represents our belief in the enduring popularity of Italian wines.

We commissioned Candy Granger to create a series of original watercolours that capture Italy's spirit with bright swathes of colour. Plenty of scenes will be familiar to you as they've all been captured on the estates with which we've worked for more than a decade. And if the list looks smarter than ever the range is more eclectic than ever. This list sees a number of new additions including our own label, Terra Firma, and the historic estate of Saladini Pilastrì. Happily, these wines are produced by Italians using Italian grape varieties rather than bulk wines from the local coop given a quick lick of paint by a flying winemaker. Needless to say, neither the faltering economy nor consumer apathy has dimmed our enthusiasm for all things Italian.

I must draw your attention to Ferrandes from Pantelleria whose unacidified Passito remains quite the most unctuous, racy glass of Moscato the world's ever seen. Vincenzo Cianfagna's speciality is Tintilia, a grape that I am sure no one has ever imported before and that always reminds me of things unspeakably ancient. And then there's Terenzuola. High in the Apuanian Alps lurks a patch of gnarled Vermentino that delivers a mineral hit to rival Cotat's Sancerre. Don't miss it; there are few wines this thrilling left in our winemaking-by-numbers world.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support.






Michael Palij M.W.

WINETRADERS' ITALY



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Bellbird Spring

www.bellbirdspring.co.nz

No, your eyes do not deceive you, we are representing a New Zealand winery. Not just any winery, mind, but Bellbird Spring, the result of the vision of an old friend of mine, Guy Porter. We met on the Diploma course in 1991 and cut our teeth on the kind of wines that today one can only dream about drinking. I went on to do an MW and Guy studied winemaking at what was then Roseworthy. When he left I made one of those promises that you do when emotions are running high: I told him that if he ever made his own wine, I'd import it.

A man of my word, and here we are, 20 years later. I've been to see him twice and it's clear that all his classical training in the UK has not been forgotten. I'm no New World expert but I can't think of many wineries in the Southern hemisphere that never either chaptalise or, more surprisingly, acidify. His vineyards in Waipara are cut off from the sea and back onto the Mount Donald hills. Winter here is damn cold, harvests are late, and frost damage is a way of life. All the 'Block' series are hand-harvested and fermented with natural yeasts in old French oak. Guy's wines are as artisanal as anything on our list and there's more than just a hint of the Walter Massa about him.

Mouthfeel is a word that Guy uses again and again and it's the wines' European structure that I find so appealing. The Home Block White captures this beautifully and is a field blend of Riesling, Muscat, Gewürz and Pinot Gris. Yields were less than 4 t/ha and Guy chose not to inoculate even when the yeast fell asleep on the job. There's a spoonful of residual with firm acidity to balance and the understated fruit character we prize in Alsace. I wouldn't be surprised if this ages for a decade. The Pinot Noir is just as elegant. There's a little (20%) new oak but it's the concentrated fruit from his cherished Dijon clones that really sets this apart. We blind tasted his Pinot in a flight Kiwi Pinot Who's Who and it showed well - not the biggest but certainly the most complete in this price range. Finally, there's his work-a-day Pruners Reward. The Porter family resemblance is clear but it's machine harvested from rented vineyards and is pitched at a more friendly price.

Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Home Block White	2008	75	6	BB-HBW-08	17.00
Pruners Reward Sauvignon Blanc	2009	75	12	BB-PRB-09	14.00
Block 8 Pinot Gris	2009	75	6	BB-BPG-09	17.00
Block 8 Sauvignon Blanc	2009	75	6	BB-BSB-09	17.00
Block 8 Pinot Noir	2009	75	6	BB-BPN-09	21.00



BOTTER

Varietal & Regional Wines

www.vinibotter.it

These are reliable house wines for all tastes. Prosecco 'Spago' is so very Italian - a flanged cork, pressured at just 2.4 bar, helps it just sneak under the sparkling wine tax band - brilliant! Both reliable and affordable, Botter wines are an excellent choice on all occasions.

Wine	Label	Year	cl	Case	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Prosecco IGT Veneto Frizzante 'Spago'	Cipriano	NV	75	6	BO-PRO-NV	9.00
Pinot Grigio IGT	La Casada	2009	75	6	BO-PGS-09	8.00
Pinot Grigio Rosé IGT	La Casada	2009	75	6	BO-PGR-09	8.00
Primitivo IGT	La Casada	2009	75	6	BO-PRB-09	8.00

Key to Wines/Oils
White wine
Red wine
Rosé wine
Sparkling wine
Sweet wine
Spirits
Olive oil



Terra Firma

After more than a decade representing some of Italy's finest producers we decided to have a go ourselves! Terra Firma is our first 'own label' project - the label has been designed exclusively for Winetraders and I now spend a week in both Sicily and Tuscany early each year tasting my way through dozens of tanks of base wine to decide on a final blend that, in my mind, captures the best of Italy. **Nero d'Avola** from its original home near Pachino can often be a little soupy so we've enlivened it with about 40% fruit sourced high in the mountains near Palermo; the wine is ripe and full-bodied but it still has a lively lick of acidity. It's enticing, plummy but elevated above the ranks of the bland and merely wet by genuine character. The **Inzolia** is a bright, zesty white with delicate, peachy fruit. It does everything that Pinot Grigio can do but with considerably more charisma. New for 2010 is our **Chianti**. It's sourced from vineyards just outside the Classico zone and is a traditional mix of Sangiovese, Caniolo and Colorino. 18 months in botte has softened it to perfection.

Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Inzolia IGT Sicilia	2009	75	6	TF-INB-09	7.00
Nero d'Avola IGT Sicilia	2009	75	6	TF-NAB-09	7.00
Chianti Riserva DOCG	2007	75	6	TF-CHB-07	9.50



Veneto



• Belluno

• Bassano del Grappa

• Vicenza

• Verona

• Venezia

• Padua

• Rovigo

Redolent of both wealth and history and sporting a blissful mélange of Palladian, Mediaeval and Renaissance influences, the Veneto manages to combine modern industrial sprawl with architectural chic.

The Veneto has made the most of its viticultural heritage and was the first Italian region to explore the emerging markets of the Far East. It now produces more wine - and more DOC wine - than any other region. Not all of it is of merit, however, and many question how a narrow band of vineyards that run east-west along the foothills of the Dolomites manages to produce such colossal volumes.

Terroir nevertheless continues to shape the wines from small, quality producers that we represent. Soave and Valpolicella originate from contiguous vineyards but come from soils that could not be more different. New regions such as the Colli Berici are making a name for themselves with international varieties and Stefano Inama's Carmenère is a sure sign of this volcanic region's potential. Giovanna Tantini certainly understands the glacial moraines on which her Bardolino vineyards are planted and it's no wonder that her wines are the DOC's most lauded. Marinella Camerani has not let the string of awards she's won go to her head - her Valpolicella is as poised as ever. Far to the east, Carlo Zucchetto's Prosecco is a dry and complex version of Italy's favourite bubbly.

La di Motte

www.ladimotte.it

No more rants about Pinot Grigio, the necessary evil. Instead, more about the extremely good wines made by La di Motte which is now both Azienda Agricola and DOC. With the financial muscle of the Botter empire behind it La di Motte wants for nothing. It's a large estate by Italian standards - more than 100 hectares - planted with the usual mix of Venetian varieties but what's unusual is the programme of continuous replanting. New clones and high densities are unusual in a DOC known for the generosity of her vineyards.

More than 80% of the vineyards now on high-density Cordone Speronato, the Italian variant of Single Guyot that works so well on the broad swathe of alluvial bench that characterises the Piave DOC. Wines such as the 2009 **Pinot Grigio** show that it's paying dividends. There's a concentrated backbone of nutty, varietal character with citrus notes and a salty edge.

Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Pinot Grigio DOC Piave	2009	75	6	BO-PGV-09	11.00

Zucchetto

www.zucchetto.com

Aeons ago the river Piave carved an elegant escarpment from the limestone foothills of the Alps and the best Prosecco is cultivated on these steep, south-facing slopes. Unlike Champagne, Prosecco is fermented in tank and was traditionally vinified leaving a hint of residual sugar. A century ago life here was hard; sparkling wine was a great luxury and sweet sparkling wine was the height of a fashion that was creeping slowly eastwards from Asti.

Tastes have changed but even today sugar levels regularly top 10 grams per litre. The majority of Prosecco sold is not of DOCG status and is produced from vineyards grown on the plains to the south. Paolo Zucchetto and his son, Carlo, farm just 5.5 ha of vineyards (Prosecco is also the name of the grape) in the heart of the Valdobbiadene DOCG and also have holdings in the prestigious Cartizze zone. The **Extra Dry** is the sweeter of the two (we're in Italy) but I prefer the **Puro Fol** sourced from a single vineyard and fermented almost to dryness. There's an engaging nose of melon and quince and a sophisticated twist of austerity on the finish.

Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Prosecco di Valdobbiadene 'Extra Dry' DOCG	2009	75	6	ZU-PED-09	14.00
Prosecco di Valdobbiadene 'Puro Fol' DOCG	2009	75	6	ZU-PPF-09	14.00

Corte Sant'Alda

www.cortesantalda.it

We have had the pleasure of working with Marinella Camerani for more than a decade. During this time her hard work and determination have ensured the wines' steady refinement and a string of accolades for Marinella. Corte Sant'Alda has emerged from Valpolicella's backwaters to take centre stage amongst the region's most celebrated producers. The estate's quiet transformation is mirrored in Marinella herself who, whilst still unassuming, now speaks with the quiet confidence of one who has spent years living on nothing but the courage of her convictions. No one is more deserving of success.

The estate suffered a savage hail-storm in both 2005 and 2007 which necessitated a round of significant price increases. It's proof of the attachment everyone feels for Marinella that sales actually grew last year after the release of what are unquestionably her finest wines to date. The 2009 '**Ca Fiui**' is sourced from parcels of young vines trained either on Gobelet or on Single Guyot. Fermentation for all the wines is in upright wooden tini and all are hand-plunged. It's a concentrated and vibrant Valpolicella with bright, red cherry character.

The harvest is entirely by hand and Marinella is one of the few remaining producers to continue the ancient practice of air-drying all the grapes used in the **Amarone** and the **Recioto**. Air conditioners are both quicker and more reliable as they preclude the possibility of rot spreading through the grapes. Leaving the bunches to dry naturally takes time and the grapes need to be scrupulously healthy if the risk of rot is to be avoided. All 35 tons of fruit used in Marinella's passito have had the rotten berries removed. One by one. It's no wonder only Marinella persists with this absurdly time-consuming process but the slow desiccation results in complexity rather than just concentration.

Her 2008 **Recioto** makes one wish the process was more widespread. I hadn't thought it possible to make a red wine that sports 15% alcohol and 90 grams per litre residual sugar without recourse to fortification. Extraordinary stuff and the only wine that could make her indomitable 2006 **Amarone** seem effete. At 15.5% it's gorgeously off-dry in the Amandorlato style but with the acidity and tannins that so many lack. Balance is a word that applies as much to the wines as it does to Marinella's subtle interpretation of this region's classic terroir. In 2008 Gambero Rosso crowned her 'Winemaker of the Year', a fitting accolade for a woman whose vision and determination have established this estate at the forefront of Italian winemaking.

Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Valpolicella DOC 'Ca Fiui'	2009	75	12	CA-VFB-09	15.00
Valpolicella Superiore DOC Ripasso	2007	75	12	CA-VSB-07	21.00
Amarone della Valpolicella DOC	2006	75	12	CA-AMB-06	55.00
Recioto della Valpolicella DOC	2008	50	6	CA-VRB-08	35.00



Giovanna Tantini

www.giovannatantini.it

A lawyer by training and a winemaker by choice, Giovanna wants - like so many of our principals - to prove to the world that it is possible to make great wine in unfashionable appellations. With the help of Federico Curtaz and Attilio Pagli, two of Italy's leading consultants, she is well on her way to restoring Bardolino's somewhat tarnished reputation. A native of the region, Giovanna was as surprised as anyone when Bardolino Superiore was promoted to DOCG status. It is a sprawling appellation with little to distinguish 'Classico' and 'Superiore' from the straight Bardolino.

Giovanna's choices - including high density planting, new clones, and very low yields - are far more relevant. Her wines are concentrated but still light with redcurrant and cinnamon on the **Bardolino**. As good as it is, however, I prefer the **Chiaretto**. In 2008 Giovanna dragged me around what appeared to be every square metre of the estate showing exactly how she'd coaxed her beloved Corvina to a perfect state of maturity so that she would not be required to macerate on the skins to obtain the colour. In my book it's Italy's finest rosato, with a dash of colour and sublime purity.

Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Bardolino DOC	2008	75	6	TN-BAB-08	12.50
Bardolino Chiaretto DOC	2009	75	6	TN-BCB-09	12.50



Inama

www.inamaaziendaagricola.it

The last few years have seen this estate become as recognized for its reds as it had been for its whites. 2006 **Bradisismo**, a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Carmenère, reflects Stefano's new approach to vinification. With the grapes harvested at optimal maturity a cool fermentation is all that's required to extract the necessary polyphenols whilst more complex aromatics are preserved. Stef now uses this technique for all his reds including the cocoa and soy sauce-tinged 2007 **Carmenère Più**.

The whites continue to define the Soave terroir. 2008 **Soave Classico** and **Vigneti di Foscario** are both excellent if slightly more forward and destined to mature more quickly than the 2006s. The 2009 **Vulcaia Sauvignon** is a magnificent creature with a captivating nose of yellow plum, hints of pineapple, and a mineral edge all wrapped up in a crisp and blissfully oak-free package. The 2008 **Vulcaia Fumé** is the wine of the vintage - I'm not usually seduced by its obvious charms but it all seems to have gelled particularly well in 2008 and the 30% new French oak is just what the tropical, waxy fruit requires.

Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Soave Classico DOC	2009	75	6	IN-SCB-09	13.00
Soave Classico DOC 'Vigneti di Foscario'	2008	75	6	IN-SFB-08	18.00
Soave Classico DOC 'Foscario' (magnum)	2008	150	3	IN-SFM-08	38.00
Soave Classico DOC 'Du Lot'	2007	75	6	IN-SDL-07	23.00
Sauvignon IGT Veneto 'Vulcaia'	2009	75	6	IN-VSB-09	15.00
Sauvignon IGT Veneto 'Vulcaia Fume'	2008	75	6	IN-VFB-08	28.00
Sauvignon IGT Veneto 'Vulcaia Fume' (magnum)	2004	150	3	IN-VFM-04	55.00
IGT Veneto 'Vulcaia Après' (sweet wine)	2007	37.5	12	IN-APR-07	18.00
IGT Veneto Rosso 'Carmenère Più'	2007	75	6	IN-CPB-07	15.00
IGT Veneto Rosso 'Bradisismo'	2006	75	6	IN-BRB-06	29.00
IGT Veneto Rosso 'Bradisismo' (magnum)	2006	150	3	IN-BRM-06	57.00
IGT Veneto Rosso 'Oracolo'	2003	75	6	IN-ORA-03	41.00
IGT Veneto Rosso 'Oratorio'	2006	75	6	IN-ORB-06	37.50



Piemonte



Piemonte is synonymous with the singular pleasures of Nebbiolo, a grape that moulds Pinot's elegance to Cabernet's sturdy frame. The subtle perfume, the formidable tannins, and the scorching acidity offer the wine lover a chance to swear allegiance to the grape in its most intractable form. Nebbiolo is the wine lover's rite of passage, reserved for those who have cut their teeth on the discreet charms of Bordeaux and Rioja, those who have proved their worth and who are ready for a relationship destined to try their patience.

But Piemonte offers so much more than just Barolo and Barbaresco. Cortese's citrus tang, Dolcetto's moreish black fruit and Barbera's rustic charms are all part of a viticultural mosaic that covers every inch of Piemonte's mountainous countenance. Viticulture falls into two broad bands running, for the most part, east-west. The northern belt follows the curve of the Alps from the Ligurian border in the south around to Lombardy in the east whilst the southern strip comprises the broad foothills between the River Po and the Ligurian Alps.

Mascarello

www.mascarello1881.com

The Mascarello family have produced wine in the Langhe since 1881. That makes them elder statesmen in the Piemontese winemaking fraternity and they bring much-needed constancy to a region obsessed with the latest fashions. New French oak and rotary fermenters may be all the rage but the Mascarellos prefer to stick with the traditional vinification that has stood them in good stead for more than a century. These are wines that are made in the vineyard. Manual weeding, rigorous crop thinning and an exceptionally late harvest all combine to create raw material of the very highest quality. I visited the estate during the 2004 harvest and was struck by the scrupulous care taken during the harvest. Each bunch was carefully placed in a series of stacking trays that brought the grapes to the winery in pristine condition; they looked better than most table grapes! The skins were hard and covered with a healthy bloom and were wondrously sweet. It seemed a shame to ferment them.

Winemaking here is a simple, almost primitive affair. The Mascarellos believe in long macerations and extended maturation in large oak casks known as botte. Such traditional techniques imbue the wines with a velvety subtlety in their youth and the capacity to acquire weight and complexity as they age. A vertical tasting of older vintages of **Barolo Monprivato**, their top wine, proved beyond doubt Nebbiolo's extraordinary capacity to age. Even lighter vintages such as 1979 and 1984 remained on glorious form whilst the heavy hitters such as 1970, 1978 and 1982 appeared to be indestructible. Mauro Mascarello is now in his 60s but he continues to rule the roost. Giuseppe, his son, shows the same quiet determination to preserve the status quo which is, in my book, a very good thing.

The 2004s Baroli, across the board, superb. It's one of the greatest vintages Piemonte has ever witnessed and, with the current climatic trends, these vintages will become in increasingly short supply. The wines will unquestionably repay long-term cellaring. The 2008 **Dolcetto 'Bricco'** is a triumph - silky tannins and plenty of alcohol are irresistible in this grape. The 2005 **Barbera 'Scudetto'** is a stylish and elegant version with the acidity nicely balancing the fruit. The **Langhe Nebbiolo** 2008 has proven to be just as good as the outrageously drinkable 2007. Better than most producers' Barolo, it's finely aromatic and just tannic enough to provide a faithful introduction to this grape.

Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Dolcetto d'Alba DOC 'Bricco'	2008	75	12	MA-DAB-08	15.00
Barbera d'Alba DOC 'Scudetto'	2005	75	12	MA-BAB-05	22.00
Langhe Nebbiolo DOC	2008	75	12	MA-LNB-08	23.00
Barolo DOCG 'Monprivato'	2003	75	6	MA-BRM-03	62.50
Barolo DOCG 'Monprivato'	2004	75	6	MA-BMB-04	75.00
Barolo DOCG 'Ca di Morrissio'	2001	75	6	MA-BCM-01	275.00



Bovio

www.boviogianfranco.it

Gianfranco Bovio was, hitherto, as famous for his restaurant 'Belvedere' in La Morra as he was for his wines. Never was there a more apt name for a restaurant; perched on the top of the La Morra escarpment it enjoyed commanding views over the entire DOCG and on more than one occasion an impromptu geography lesson merged with a plate of carne crudo! Such was the popularity of Belvedere that Gianfranco was able to sell 50% of his production through the restaurant - the remainder was whisked away to America. In 2008 Gianfranco decided to retire from the on-trade and sold Belvedere thus releasing the other 50% of his production. I wasted no time in getting my hands on these traditional and great-value wines. Although Beppe Ca'Viola lends Walter Porasso, the regisseur, a hand from time to time tradition remains the order of the day. The **Dolcetto's** just brilliant and a snip at this price with lush berry fruit wrapped in spicy notes of pepper and bay. The estate's vineyards are principally in La Morra and that gives the **Barolo** a floral, red currant liveliness that makes for delicious early drinking. Bovio have significant holdings in the Crus of Gattera and Arborina (please ask for details of these wines) but the one we keep in stock is sourced from Rocchettevino. The soil is the classic white marl of La Morra but it's very high and therefore does extremely well in the recent, hot vintages. It's a classic, botte-matured example at a keen price; for those of you concerned with the recent escalation in prices from Piemonte this should come as a welcome respite.

Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Dolcetto d'Alba DOC	2006	75	12	BV-DAB-06	9.00
Barolo DOCG 'Rocchettevino'	2005	75	6	BV-BRB-05	30.00



Pecchenino

www.pecchenino.it

Attilio Pecchenino immediately impressed us with his dedication to Dolcetto. In most of the Langhe Nebbiolo takes pride of place in the best sites (those facing south or east, those at the top of the hill, and those with the highest levels of limestone in the soil). Barbera comes next, and Dolcetto is relegated to the poorest sites with the least chance of ripening. As a result of such prejudice Dolcetto has long been considered a poor cousin. Tired with the high prices and attention reserved for Barolo and Barbaresco a few producers experimented with planting Dolcetto in those sites formerly reserved for Nebbiolo. Not surprisingly, results improved dramatically and in 2005 - largely through the efforts of this estate - Dogliani was awarded DOCG status.

The 2008 **San Luigi** is a joy to drink now with the fresh acidity and ripe black cherry fruit that makes it ideal with salami and osso bucco. It's a superb introduction to the potential of the grape. The silky 2007 **Siri d'Jermu** remains my favourite; there's no oak but with significantly more concentration.

Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Dolcetto di Dogliani 'San Luigi' DOC	2008	75	12	PC-DSL-08	14.00
Dogliani 'Siri d'Jermu' DOCG	2007	75	12	PC-DSJ-07	17.00



Marco Porello

www.porellovinini.it

The gentle, sandy hills of the Roero lie immediately north of the Tanaro and therefore are on the wrong side of the tracks as far as Barolo and Barbaresco are concerned. I poked around this region a few times and was thoroughly underwhelmed until I met the talented, young Marco Porello. Familiar with every inch of his vineyards, Marco is 'un vero uomo della terra' with complete conviction in the quality of his native Roero. The 2009 **Arneis** is grown in the sandy soils near Vezza and shows zesty citrus notes of Seville orange and grapefruit underpinned with stony acidity. The **Barbera** 2009 is bright, cherry-scented as good value as ever whilst the 2008 Nebbiolo sees this wine back on fine form with a finely-judged blend of dusty tannins and fresh acidity.

Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Roero Arneis DOC 'Camestri'	2009	75	12	PO-RAB-09	11.00
Barbera d'Alba DOC 'Mommiano'	2009	75	12	PO-BMB-09	10.00
Nebbiolo d'Alba DOC	2008	75	12	PO-NAB-08	11.00
Vino da Tavola 'Birbet' (Sweet, sparkling red)	NV	75	12	PO-BIB-NV	10.00



La Zerba

www.la-zerba.it

Most Gavi is expensive and seldom worth the money; Paola and Luigi Lorenzi fly in the face of this unfortunate tradition by coaxing plenty of personality from their ten hectares of Cortese. Tassarolo is the highest commune in the DOCG and La Zerba's vineyards are perched on a south-facing outcropping of iron-rich soil that looks south to the often snow-capped Ligurian Alps. The combination of low yields and a protracted harvest over a three-week window encourage complexity and the result is a classic Gavi: light in alcohol, delicately floral with a hint of candied fruit all carried along on a wave of breezy acidity. There are two versions, we've opted for the '**Terrarossa**' cuvée sourced from a plot of 30 year-old vines but both are a delight.

Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Gavi di Tassarolo DOCG 'Terrarossa'	2009	75	12	ZR-GTB-09	12.00

Walter Massa

Walter and I first met years ago when I was having dinner with the Lorenzi family from La Zerba. We were in a smart restaurant, minding our own business, when he approached our table and, politely but insistently, asked if we would mind if he offered us a couple of bottles of his wine with our dinner. He's not shy, our Walter, but it was all done with good grace mingled with a hint of frustration bordering on the desperate.

Five generations of Massas have laboured tirelessly to keep the Timorasso flame alight; it's not difficult to see the origins of Walter's frustration. Here on the steep hills just east of Tortona grow the last few hectares of Timorasso in the world. An ancient variety with tiny yields and immense concentration, it ought to be served by the glass in every restaurant with even the slightest aspirations to a decent wine list. But it isn't and Walter, no fool, knows why and why he must, literally, shove a glass in the hand of everyone he meets. The 2008 **Timorasso 'Derthona'** is initially shy in the glass but develops red apple, apricot and tangerine with time. Extended lees contact gives it a creamy mouthfeel often mistaken for oak (there is none) and the acidity will keep it developing in bottle for ages. Last year Walter opened a 1979 Timorasso and it was in rude health.

The **Barbera 'Monleale'** 2004 is beginning to show the stuffing which has made this so successful in competitions around the world. Barbera's sappy acidity is there but it's foiled by notes of black fruit, a pleasantly gamey touch, and a whiff of new oak. Last year I was struck by the complexity and balance of Walter's **Croatina 'Pertichetta'** (another local grape he champions) and so this, too, has found its way onto the list.

Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Colli Tortonesi Timorasso DOC 'Derthona'	2008	75	6	MW-DEB-08	16.00
Colli Tortonesi Barbera DOC 'Monleale'	2004	75	6	MW-BMB-04	16.00
Colli Tortonesi Croatina DOC 'Pertichetta'	2005	75	6	MW-CPB-05	16.00



Liguria



Liguria's sweeping crescent stretches from the French Riviera round to the marble quarries of northern Tuscany and includes in its embrace some of Europe's most valuable real estate. Mountains rise dramatically from the sea in an area which, according to the Italian geological survey, officially contains no flat land. Terraces dominate and some, like those in Cinque Terre, are so improbable as to have earned World Heritage status. Liguria's rare combination of altitude and maritime influence create the ideal microclimate for the production of aromatic whites including Vermentino and Pigato. The lion's share is quaffed in the cafe's of Genoa and Portofino with plates of anchovies, sea bass or the ubiquitous pesto. Although famed for its whites Liguria is also the last outpost of Rossese, a red grape prized for its light body and aromas of red currant and strawberry. The sacrifices necessary to work this small corner of paradise deter all but the hardest vignerons and production today for the entire region is less than some coops in the south.

Terre Bianche

8 ha stretched across wildly steep terraces at 400 metres are what Filippo Rondelli calls home. A few kms from the French border in the heart of the Rossese di Dolceacqua DOC the estate of Terre Bianche has been the standard bearer for this wine for more than a century. The abundant rainfall and clay/limestone soil imbue this remote corner of Italy with a natural propensity for delicate, aromatic wines that run counter to the current vogue for alcohol and extraction. The salty tang in the mountain air is captured perfectly in his trio of Ligurian classics. The Rossese is very fine with red fruit and a herbal twist. The Pigato is spicier and bigger, almost, with a lemon sorbet and fennel note. The Vermentino keeps an underlying oiliness but a fresh citrus tang separates it from the sturdier wines of Terenzuola. These are expensive but they're the offspring of a most difficult labour and worth the price.

Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Riviera Ligure di Ponente Pigato DOC	2009	75	6	TB-PIB-09	16.00
Riviera Ligure di Ponente Vermentino DOC	2009	75	6	TB-VEB-09	16.00
Rossese di Dolceacqua DOC	2009	75	6	TB-ROB-09	17.00



Emilia Romagna



Famed for Ferraris and Lamborghinis, Prosciutto and Parmigiano and infamous for staggering quantities of utterly appalling Lambrusco, this flat, industrial region just north of the Apennines is usually swallowed in one gulp on the way south to more exotic destinations. The statistics hardly make one want to linger - the maximum permitted yield for Lambrusco has just been increased to 18 tonnes per hectare! Apart from Lambrusco and a few patches of Sangiovese there really is precious little else of viticultural note. But - and there is always a 'but' - a handful of producers are attempting to make decent Lambrusco. It does sound oxymoronic but after a few days and a few hundred truly dreadful examples I uncovered a tiny producer still fermenting an old clone of Lambrusco di Castelvetro in bottle. It was a revelation: bone dry and ready to tackle the fattiest cuisine in Christendom.

Vittorio Graziano

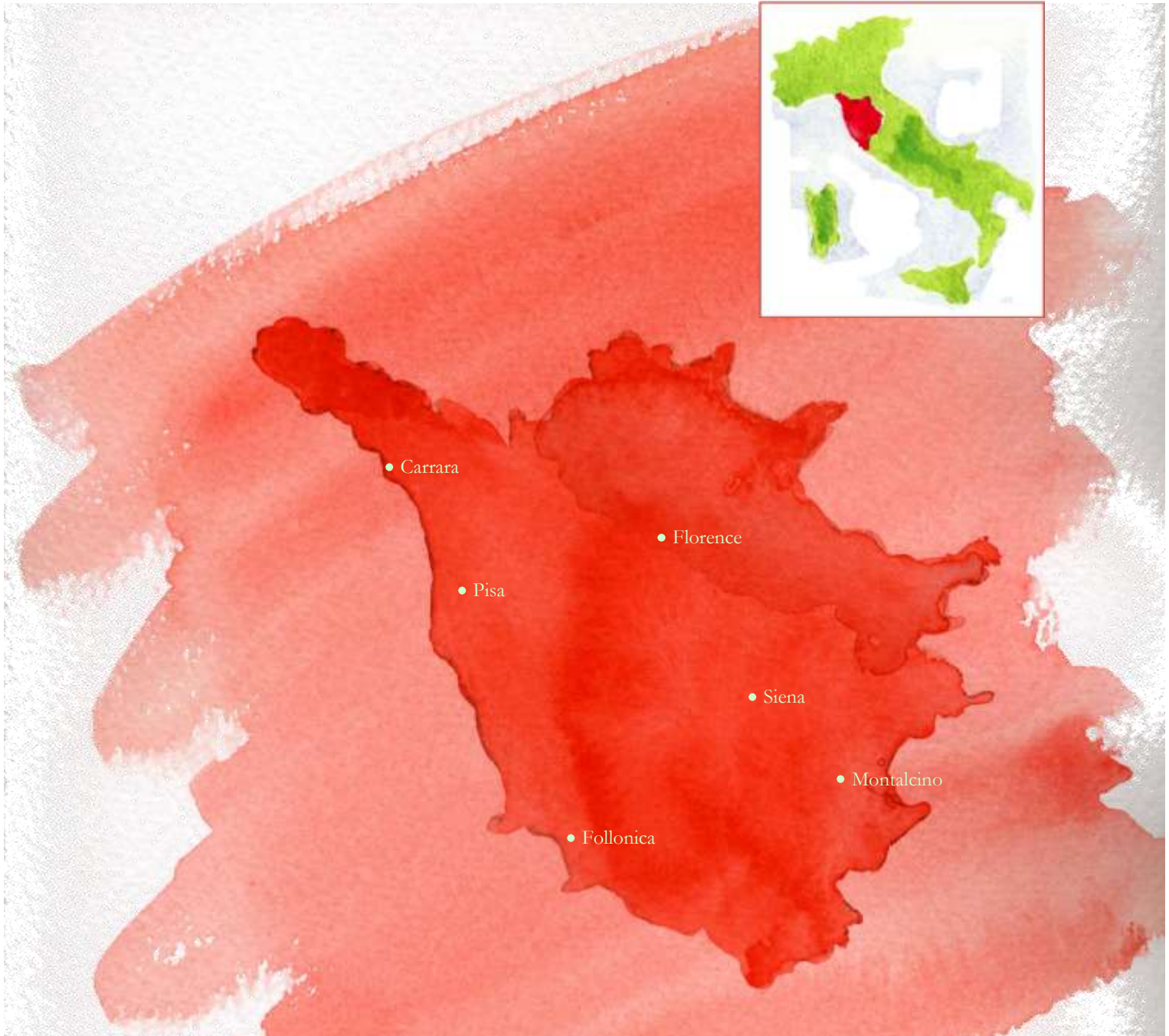
There's a saying in our office that runs along the lines of 'if they're not mad, we don't want them'. Whilst that's patently not true there is a streak of iconoclasm that is writ large on estates like that run by Vittorio Graziano. Deciding to make decent **Lambrusco**, in itself, speaks of a desire to swim against the tide and Vittorio has revived an old clone and replanted his vineyards at 5,500 vines per hectare. If this were not enough, he hand harvests, ferments the base wine to dryness, and then adds yeast and sugar in the best, traditional method.

In the cold, ramshackle cellars of his small winery south of Modena the wine then ferments in bottle and remains on its lees for more than a year before it is manually remuaged and degorged. I remember first trying this wine and not quite believing that anything with the dreaded L-word on the label could be this utterly glorious and frothy. Enjoy it with a plate of typically antipasto and wait for the fireworks.

Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Lambrusco IGT di Modena 'Fontana dei Boschi' (sparkling, red)	2006	75	12	GR-LAB-06	15.00



Toscana



With vineyards originally planted by the Etruscans almost 3,000 years ago and with a number of producers having already celebrated a 500th anniversary, Tuscany can rightly claim to be the birthplace of European viticulture. The gently rolling hills, dotted with vineyards and olive groves, are a kind of earthly paradise, an immense garden in which time appears to have paused to stop and wonder.

It is home to a host of Italy's most celebrated wines: among them are Chianti, Brunello, Vernaccia and Morellino. It is the birthplace of 'Sassicaia' a wine whose first appearance in 1968 marked the beginning of Italy's winemaking renaissance. Tuscany's strongest suit is Sangiovese, a potentially tannic and acidic grape that, through low yields and good site selection, can be coaxed into producing reds whose concentration and longevity rival the best of the Rhône. As usual, our estates reflect tradition rather than fashion but those distinctions are now losing their relevance as producers increasingly adapt technology to blend old and new. What's more important is that the quality of Tuscany's wines now justifies the prices. That's not something which one could have said about Tuscany even a decade ago.

Ormanni

www.ormanni.it

One inevitably falls in love here. If not with the wines, then with the view. There is the sepia countryside with manicured vineyards and neat rows of cypress trees and, of course, the irresistible Paola Brini, the umpteenth generation of her family to assume the reins. Legend has it that the Medicis and the Ormannis had a bit of a row in the 15th century and the Ormannis were 'encouraged' to pack their belongings and leave town. It was a big estate to leave behind. More than 600 ha cultivated with wheat, olives and of course, vines. The Brini family purchased it in 1850 and raised the Ormanni flag once again after a hiatus of more than 300 years.

Tradition here runs deep and although the wines are fermented in steel the ancient cellars under the castle are still very much in use for maturation in cement, botte and a few barriques of which only 30% is renewed each year. Only traditional grapes such as Sangiovese and Canaiolo are used in the Chianti.

The **Chianti Classico** sees no oak of any kind (a year in cement) whilst the **Riserva** is aged in barrique and botte. There is an honest, satisfyingly artisan feel to these wines that have guaranteed their popularity over the years. This is classic Chianti and the relatively low altitude (still 350 metres but 150 metres lower than, for example, Panzano) gives a generosity that Sangiovese grown in higher climes often lacks. The fruit is ripe and alcohols are high whilst the tannins are just robust enough to be food friendly. Bistecca Fiorentina served up the road at Il Pestello just wouldn't taste the same were it not washed down with copious amounts of Ormanni Chianti Classico Riserva.

Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Chianti Classico DOCG	2006	75	12	OR-CCB-06	14.00
Chianti Classico Riserva DOCG	2004	75	12	OR-CCR-04	22.00

Castello di Bossi

www.castellodibossi.it

Marco Bacci and his trio of estates have, in the space of twenty years, positioned themselves at the vanguard of Tuscan viticulture. The considerable investment has been put to very good use and impressive reviews from pretty much everywhere indicate that I am not alone in thinking that these are noteworthy wines. Their appeal is broad: Americans are impressed by the power, Italians by the reliance on traditional varieties, and Europeans by the undeniable elegance.

It is well-known that dogs resemble their owners but perhaps less well-known that wines reflect their winemakers. It comes as no surprise to those who have met Marco that his wines display a generous dollop of suave sophistication. Behind the man, and his wines, is more than just chic refinement; there's fanatical attention to detail supported by technical savvy. Every aspect is evaluated to achieve maximum quality. From the choice of rootstock (up to six in one vineyard) to the hand-selection of staves at the tonnellerie, nothing is left to chance.

The 2006 **Chianti** is only the fourth vintage in which Marco felt that the quality of Sangiovese was such that it warranted a mono-varietal wine. For me it's the best Chianti they've made. Sinewy, decadent and mixing sun-dried tomato, smoke, blackberries and liquorice it is already beguiling. The 2005 **Berardo** was declassified and so we have jumped straight to the 2006 which is at least as impressive as the 2004 but still a little young. For those who can't get enough of the superlative 2004 then help is at hand with last few cases of **Corbaia**. Corbaia is a blend of 60% Sangiovese and 40% Cabernet aged in 80% new French barriques. It's my favourite wine from the estate and it captures the essence of the super-Tuscan: a marriage of France and Italy with the elegance of the former setting off the power of the latter.

Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Chianti Classico DOCG	2007	75	12	CB-CCB-07	18.00
Chianti Classico Riserva DOCG 'Berardo'	2006	75	6	CB-CRB-06	27.50
IGT Toscana 'Corbaia' (Sangiovese/Cabernet)	2004	75	6	CB-COB-04	41.00



Terre di Talamo

www.castellodibossi.it

The Maremma rose to prominence in the 1960s when Sassicaia brought the area's potential to the wine world's notice. In fact, wine had been produced on the hills surrounding the Maremma for centuries but Sassicaia was the first to experiment with Bordelais varietals (and the first to plant vines on the recently drained coastal plain).

Some 150 kms farther south the vineyards surrounding Scansano predate the more fashionable DOCs of Bolgheri and Val di Cornia by many centuries. Terre di Talamo is located in the heart of the Morellino DOCG on a south and east-facing hill with direct maritime exposure. Compared with Chianti or Brunello the days are cooler, nights warmer, and Sangiovese ripens that bit quicker. Vintage variation is less acute and the tannins are softer. The 2007 **Morellino** is a fantastic effort that reflects the vineyards' coming of age and ideal conditions at harvest. Silky and sun-kissed it sports blackberry and cherry on the nose with a hint of oak and forgiving tannins. It's one of the best-value wines on the list.

Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Morellino di Scansano DOC 'Tempo'	2007	75	12	TT-MSB-07	14.00

Renieri

www.castellodibossi.it

Marco Bacci's hand is also behind this rising star. He purchased the estate in 2001 and soon planted more than 100 hectares of which approximately 30 are Sangiovese and the remainder includes parcels of Petit Verdot, Cabernet, Merlot and Syrah. The estate's greatest natural asset is, however, the exposure: it faces due east and the grapes, planted on steep slopes, profit from the heat. The new winery was completed in 2003 and uses gravity feed coupled with the sophisticated equipment one would expect of an estate turning out wines of this quality.



The **Rosso** is a seriously impressive maiden outing made from the oldest vines and boasts a complex, creamy nose with mulberry, Morello cherry and sotto bosco notes. Our allocation of the 2003 **Brunello** appeared to evaporate but those fortunate enough to buy some have secured a particularly authoritative and seductive example. For those who missed the 2003, I am pleased to report that the 2004 is even better. Buy this wine - it is utter genius with huge levels of extract and structure. Scented, complex, layered, tight: this will develop over the next decade into one of the DOCG's finest wines. Do not miss it.

Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Rosso di Montalcino DOC	2008	75	12	RE-RMB-08	18.00
Brunello di Montalcino DOCG	2004	75	6	RE-BMB-04	49.50

La Pieve

This is our seventh vintage from the unassuming Simone Tognetti and his impossibly good-value Chianti. I still remember stumbling across him one spring morning and trying hard not to appear excited. I'm sure no one needs reminding of just how much truly dreadful Chianti pours out of Italy each year; finding an honest producer making decent Chianti isn't easy. With its intense colour and pronounced aromas of black cherry and truffle this **Chianti** is a real find.

The secret lies in the extraordinary exposure of the 16 ha vineyards: an almost perfect amphitheatre at 500 metres above sea level. The geography guarantees ripeness and alcohol whilst the altitude preserves the acidity. The blend is a traditional Tuscan mix of Sangiovese (90%), Canaiolo (5%) and Colorino (5%) fermented in stainless and aged in cement. The **Fortebraccio** is essentially a Riserva that sees a brief spell in old oak.

Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Chianti DOCG	2008	75	12	PV-CHB-08	10.00
Chianti DOCG 'Fortebraccio'	2008	75	6	PV-CFB-08	12.00

Terenzuola

www.terenzuola.it

The best way to make a small fortune in the wine trade is to start with a large one. I don't know who said this but they may well have been speaking about either of our Tuscan Marcos, Bacci or Nicolini. The latter farms more than 20 ha of basil which helps fuel the world's insatiable demand for pesto and also allows Marco II to indulge his passion for sports cars and for fine wine. Having established that we had something in common I still remember my first journey (in the 911, of course) up the switchbacks to arrive at the plot of gnarled Vermentino that marks the entrance to the winery. At the moment it's more building site than country home but Marco's roots are here in the hills above La Spezia and he's a determined supporter of its potential. It's not a million miles up the coast from Carrara and the soil here is particularly stony, unrewarding, and calcareous. The 2009 **Colli di Luni** is new for this year and is delicious accompanying almost anything with fins. Don't let the modest price fool you, this is a thrilling wine with high alcohol and a striking minerality.

Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Vermentino Colli di Luni DOC	2009	75	12	TZ-VCL-09	12.50



La Fiorita

www.fattorialafiorita.it

Great Italian Wines That Begin With B: Barolo, Barbaresco, and Brunello. In each, the skyrocketing land values, lofty reputations, and fulsome press reviews have led to exorbitant prices. Of this I am sure but of other things I am less convinced. Are these the world's greatest reds or has a degree of mass-hysteria crept into the journalists' collective psyche? If they are that good what, exactly, should we expect for our money? And where are the library stocks of older vintages that prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that these wines have the balance, the structure and the concentration necessary to sail gracefully off into the cellar?

Although I will admit to not having tasted every old vintage from every estate I represent I have, over the years, been fortunate to share many venerable bottles of Barolo, Barbaresco and Brunello. In all honesty the overwhelming majority are volatile and oxidized with too little fruit and too many tannins. Many argue that improvements in hygiene, reduced time in wood and advances in winemaking technology have all contributed to the renaissance of the Bs. But have they? In my tastings many continue to be resolutely oaky. Others have insufficient acidity. In other words, they are still unbalanced. Of La Fiorita I have no such reservations. Roberto Cipresso is a Tuscan native and a consummate winemaker, not a lumberjack. Oak always plays a supporting role and older vintages from the various estates at which Roberto has worked over the years bear witness to the wisdom of his approach. This **Brunello** can be bought and cellared with confidence for at least a decade. At this price, so it should but of how many Brunellos can one make that assertion?

La Fiorita provides the justification for this DOCG's lofty reputation. It's Chianti with an extra gear: more black fruit, jammy concentration, and silky tannins. There is a wealth of complexity on the nose and opulence on the palate synonymous with great red wine. Quality has always been easier to recognize than to define.

Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Brunello di Montalcino DOCG	2005	75	6	LF-BMB-05	45.00
Brunello di Montalcino Riserva DOCG	2004	75	6	LF-BMR-04	50.00



Marche



Huddled immediately south of the vast urban and industrial sprawl of Emilia-Romagna, the Marche forms a natural boundary between the heady reds of the deep south and the elegant whites of the north. It offers both and does so from one of the most visually stunning regions in Italy. The high Apennines tumble gently down to the Adriatic and between the two lie some of Italy's least-known and best-value wines.

The north of the region is concerned with just a single variety, Verdicchio, which in its villainous amphora-shaped bottle has done its best to deter a generation of consumers from ever going near Italian white wine again. Most comes from the vast Castelli di Jesi DOC but just inland Matelica produces a more compelling version. To the south the overlapping DOCs of Rosso Piceno and Falerio exploit the ubiquitous duo of Sangiovese and Trebbiano. Estates like La Monacesca and Saladini Pilastrini both produce reasonably priced, appealing examples of the region's potential.

La Monacesca

www.monacesca.it

Aldo Cifola runs this 16ha estate with quiet determination and a confidence that comes not from arrogance but from watching sales boom and the awards roll in. He assumed the reins in 1985 after his father, Casimiro, retired and Aldo quickly set about improving what was already a winning formula. His top wine, **Mirum**, has now scooped the Tre Bicchieri award (Italy's wine Oscars) on four separate occasions.

No rocket science here: just low yielding, late harvest, old vine Verdicchio sourced from a marvellous parcel high in the Apennines. The cold nights and hot days in the Matelica valley deliver a rare balance of lively acidity and high alcohol reminiscent of Burgundy. None of the white wines sees any oak as Aldo believes that barrel ageing is superfluous if the quality of fruit is sufficient. The 2008 **Verdicchio** shows guava, Braeburn apple and an ethereal herbal note. The **Mirum** has more fruit but also more of the grip conferred by the mineral-rich soils of Matelica with superb natural acidity. Aldo and I recently tasted vintages back to 1993 and I was left in no doubt as to this wine's astonishing longevity. Without exception the wines were vigorous, fresh and still acquiring complexity. **Mirum** offers extraordinary value.



Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Verdicchio di Matelica DOC	2008	75	6	LM-VEB-08	12.00
Verdicchio di Matelica Riserva DOC 'Mirum'	2007	75	6	LM-MIB-07	18.50

Saladini Pilastrì

www.saladinipilastrì.it

Just north of the Abruzzo nestled in the rolling hills behind the walled city of Ascoli Piceno lies the estate of Saladini Pilastrì. They are one of the oldest families in the Marche and their 200 hectares includes the usual viticultural suspects (Trebiano, Sangiovese and Montepulciano) as well as a few Rhône rangers including Viognier and Syrah. All the vineyards are farmed organically which is no hardship given the hot, dry summers. The **Falerio** is almost too good to be true: lively and full of fruit with more character than one has a right to expect at this price. It's lissom and affordable and looks to Trebbiano for inspiration but draws in local talent in the form of Pecorino (just like the cheese) and Passerina. Floral on the nose with apple and a faint herbal note the initial delicacy hides surprising body with healthy acidity and a bitter almond finish. It's ideal with white meats or fish, and pasta. The **Rosso Piceno** is 90% Sangiovese and 10% Montepulciano and collects its thoughts in large old oak for a few months prior to bottling. This is more than just quaffing wine *par excellence*, it seriously over-delivers and takes the battle straight to the heart of Tuscany.

Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Falerio DOC	2009	75	12	SP-FAB-09	7.50
Rosso Piceno DOC	2008	75	12	SP-RPB-08	8.00

Abruzzo



A rambling viticultural backwater, the Abruzzo is sparsely populated, extremely beautiful, and home to just two varieties: Trebbiano and Montepulciano. The former rarely distinguishes itself but Montepulciano, on the other hand, is capable of true greatness. The problem here, and throughout the South, is that the culture of co-operative winemaking and staggering yields rob the wines of any concentration. Things are changing, however, and Elena Nicodemi is firmly committed to improving the standard.

Fattoria Nicodemi



The Nicodemi estate was founded in the early 20th century by Elena Nicodemi's grandfather, Carlo. Bruno, his son, assumed the reins in the early 1960s and, helped by a second income from his medical practice, set about producing the best wines of the Abruzzo. A major replanting programme followed by a new cellar established Nicodemi as one of the region's few producers who placed quality above quantity. Bruno passed away unexpectedly in 1998 and the estate faltered whilst Elena and her brother, Alessandro, decided just what they wanted to do.

Fortunately, Elena decided to turn her back on a promising career as an architect and returned to the homestead with a clarity of purpose I've seldom seen. Aply assisted by the talents of Federico Curtaz and Paolo Caciorgna these are shining examples of just what can be done with Italy's native varieties. The **Trebbiano** is hugely expressive with ripe stone fruit, floral notes, and masses of mouth-watering acidity. The **Montepulciano** sports sufficient acidity and tannins to tame the bramble and black cherry fruit and it's marvellous with kid, lamb, rabbit and game birds.

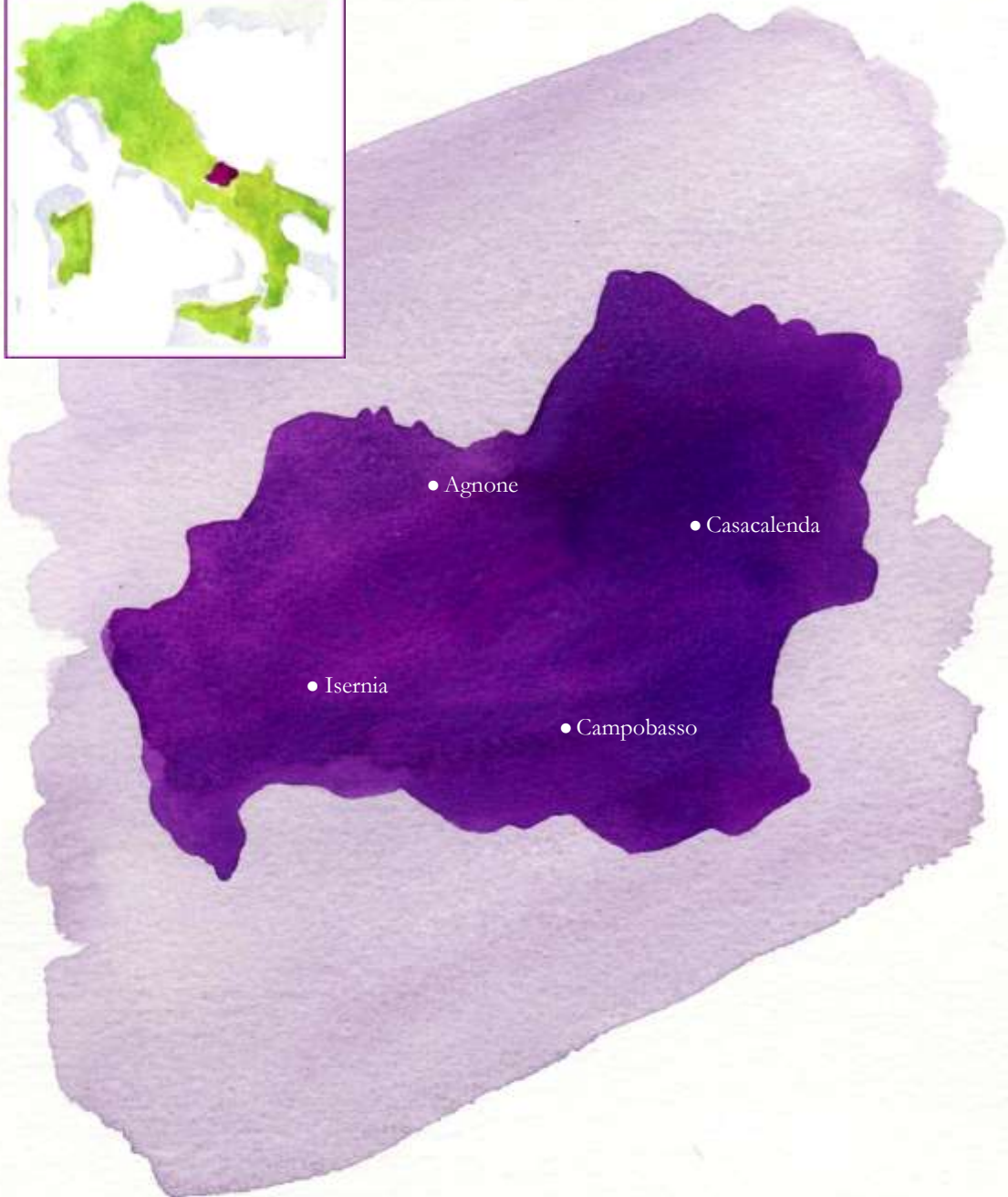
Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Trebbiano d'Abruzzo DOC	2009	75	12	NI-TDA-09	10.00
Montepulciano d'Abruzzo DOC	2008	75	12	NI-MDA-08	11.00
Olio Extra Vergine di Oliva	NV	50	6	NI-OIL-NV	10.00

Terrana

Terrana is Elena Nicodemi's second label and something for which we had been clamouring for many a moon. She's done an excellent job - the packing doesn't take itself too seriously and both are faithful versions that do not allow the winemaking to drown the fruit. They're an excellent pair and decidedly good value with sufficient varietal definition to place them firmly in the Abruzzo.

Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Trebbiano d'Abruzzo DOC	2009	75	12	TR-TRB-09	8.00
Montepulciano d'Abruzzo DOC	2009	75	12	TR-MAB-09	9.00

Molise



Most people have never been to Molise or, at least, never knowingly. Italians blast along its eastern flank in a sprint to Puglia's tawdry litorale and tourists are unaware of its very existence. Until 1963 Molise was part of the Abruzzo and, although its independence is heartening confirmation that self-determination remains a quality highly prized, one wonders if the Abruzzo paused to rue its loss. Molise is tiny (although it is just bigger than Valle d'Aosta) and shepherds still roam the sun-bleached hills. Time appears to have stopped in many parts of Italy but in Molise it is in danger of going backwards. Molise's 550 square miles of rugged hills remains undiscovered and unspoilt. Abandoned medieval hamlets and derelict vineyards dot the countryside; sheep gaze across a panorama unchanged for centuries. Fortunately, time also appears to have forgotten Tintila, a viticultural relic from Roman Empire that has survived unscathed.

Cianfagna

www.cianfagna.com

A long story, Cianfagna, so stay tuned. It's Vinitaly 2008 and I'm half-dead after endless meetings, tastings, dinners and the inevitable chaos with too many people and too few hotel rooms. Monday is always the last day of the fair and it's also the quietest, the day I usually reserve for catching up with producers. Paola Brini and her husband, Francesco, are treating me to my fifteenth espresso of the day when onto the stand wanders a man who could best be described as being in some distress.

Vincenzo Cianfagna, as it turns out, had decided to pack Vinitaly into the week before his wedding and was, not surprisingly, never in the right place according to everyone who had been bothered to offer an opinion. As you can imagine, Francesco and I immediately offered our sympathies for having such an unsympathetic bride-to-be and Paola began to berate him anew for exhibiting such exquisite lack of judgement. So, instead of just one couple rowing there were now two, and I, in an inspired fit of peacekeeping, suggested that we have a glass of wine.

In no time at all Vincenzo had produced a bottle of his **Tintilia** and I was in love. Not with the bride-to-be I hasten to add but with this, most bizarre of grape varieties. Originally from Spain, there are fewer than 100 hectares still cultivated. A great shame as this vibrant, aromatic, and profoundly artisanal wine is another example of why I'll never tire of Italy. Since you ask, the wedding went off without a hitch, they are happily married and our first order was dispatched the day they arrived home from their honeymoon.

Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Tintilia del Molise DOC 'Sartor'	2008	75	6	CI-TSB-08	23.00



Campania



Despite Campania's southern latitude it is home to some of Italy's most enduring whites: wines with complexity, freshness and a whiff of exotic fruit. The secret lies in the soil; the volcanic detritus of Mount Vesuvius is rich in minerals and ideally suited to the cultivation of white grapes. With 2,000 years to adapt to both soil and climate grapes such as Fiano and Greco mature gracefully well into October and yet seldom achieve more than 12.5% alcohol. Instead, they cling tenaciously to the acidity whilst gently gaining complexity as they mature.

The reds can be equally impressive. Less than fifty kilometres inland from Naples one finds the dilapidated hamlet of Taurasi, home to one of the south's most aristocratic grapes, Aglianico. Although the town itself is unremarkable the grape is captivating and manages to combine the structure of Nebbiolo with the perfume of Mourvèdre.

Terredora

www.terredora.net

Terredora owes its existence to an acrimonious split within Campania's first wine family, Mastroberardino. In 1996 the two brothers parted company; one retained the winery and the name whilst the other kept the vineyards. Lucio Mastroberardino now controls more than 125 hectares of Campania's finest vineyards located at the confluence of the south's leading DOCGs: Fiano d'Avellino, Greco di Tufo and Taurasi.

Terredora is strictly Azienda Agricola, which is to say that they would never consider producing any wine from grapes which they themselves did not grow. In the last two years they have scooped a trophy at the IWC and been short-listed for the Winemaker of the Year award. Not bad in their first decade.

What first attracted me when I visited in 1998 has proved to be a winning formula: superb grapes and minimalist winemaking. The winery is simplicity itself - lots of stainless steel and very little oak, a combination that encourages individuality in the wines. The **Lacryma Christi**, made from 100% Coda di Volpe, is a good example. All the fruit is sourced from a single vineyard on the slopes of Vesuvius where the mineral-rich soil delivers a nervy edge with citrus fruit unencumbered by oak. The **Falanghina** (the IWC Trophy winner) offers more weight with pear and red apple. The unctuous quince, pear and melon characteristics of the **Greco di Tufo** have ensured its popularity and it remains the estate's most popular wine despite the fact that it is not its cheapest. The **Fiano** may be expensive but it develops well in bottle for up to five years and picks up a spicy, nutty dimension with age.



The deep purple colour, soft tannins and exuberant nose of broom, violets and damsons of the **Aglianico** recommend it to anyone searching for an 'all-rounder'. It's affordable, exquisitely balanced and quickly makes friends with sausage or charcuterie. The **Taurasi** looks like better value than ever from the superb 2004 vintage. Keep until 2020.

Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Lacryma Christi del Vesuvio DOC	2009	75	6	TE-LCB-09	12.00
Falanghina IGT	2009	75	6	TE-FAL-09	12.50
Greco di Tufo DOCG 'Loggia della Serra'	2009	75	6	TE-GTB-09	13.50
Fiano d'Avellino DOCG 'Terre di Dora'	2009	75	12	TE-FAB-09	15.00
Aglianico IGT	2008	75	12	TE-AGB-08	11.00
Taurasi DOCG	2004	75	6	TE-TAU-04	22.00

Basilicata



Basilicata was last viewed as the centre of the universe when Frederick II ruled the roost in the 13th century. Since then it's been gently snoozing whilst the rest of the world got to grips with passing fancies like the internal combustion engine and semiconductors. In wine terms Basilicata is, like the Abruzzo, a one-horse region with just one DOCG of note: Aglianico del Vulture. I'd heard about it but I suppose I had been brainwashed by the good folk next door in Campania into believing that Taurasi was the real home of the south's most aristocratic red. Archaeology suggests otherwise. Aglianico was introduced into Magnae Graecia but it soon fled to higher ground away from the iron-rich soils of Puglia. Monte Vulture is the highest point inland from the Puglian coast and Aglianico settled here before it wandered west into the similarly volcanic soils of Campania. The pine trees in amongst the vineyards serve as a useful reminder that one's almost a kilometre above sea level.

Macarico

www.macaricovini.it

It's difficult to meet the sixth generation of a family-owned winery and not make a connection between the person, the history, and the wine. When I visited Basilicata for two weeks in late 2009 I visited more than 20 wineries and in so doing got the measure of this ancient DOCG. Like everywhere in Italy there's a tug-of-war between tradition and innovation and it's pretty easy to tell where loyalties lie. The door to Rino Botte's winery is a door set in the hillside which does a good job of setting out his stall. Inside there's a labyrinthine basalt cellar complete with an ancient 'lagar' hewn from the side of Monte Vulture that continues the theme. But there's also stainless steel. And new oak. And although Rino Botte is part of the fabric of Basilicata and his family have made wine in Barile for generations his adoption of technology is a slow and deliberate process designed not to enhance, rather than eradicate, the region's potential. His 5 ha of vineyards nestle under the shadow of Mount Vulture and the combination of extremely late harvests (first week of November) and high density plantings (9600 vines per ha) result in what I consider to be the DOC's finest wine: Aglianico del Vulture 'Macarcio' DOC. The name of the estate - and Rino's best vineyard - derives from the Greek meaning 'he who is blessed' and there's no doubting our good fortune to have discovered this estate. The 'Rosso del Volcano' is a little something that Rino has blended especially for us. It's a perfect introduction to the grape, to the region, and to Rino Botte.

Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Aglianico del Vulture DOC	2006	75	6	MC-MAC-06	18.00
Aglianico del Vulture 'Rosso del Volcano' DOC	2007	75	6	MC-RVC-07	11.00



Puglia



Flat as a billiard table and sun-scorched throughout the long summer, Puglia is as close as Italy gets to California's Central Valley or to Australia's Riverina. If you're a grape grower, the living is easy. Rain falls obediently during the winter months, there is an abundance of ancient, unirrigated vineyards, and land values are a tenth of what they are in the industrial north. Perhaps because it's just so easy to grow grapes here the quality remains resolutely low.

In 2006 I spent three weeks visiting just about every Puglian winery from the boutique cellars of wealthy industrialists to the sprawling refineries of the cantine sociale. Precious little was of interest. Boutique producers were more concerned with growing Cabernet and Chardonnay than on resurrecting Puglia's native varietals and the leviathan cooperatives were faithfully churning out the truly undrinkable. The bright spot in all of this was Lisa Gilbee, an Australian who first worked with Stefano Inama before falling in love with the deep south.

Morella

www.morellavini.it

An Australian by birth and a Roseworthy graduate, work originally took Lisa Gilbee to Puglia but it was love that made her stay. Lisa and her husband, Gaetano, now dry-farm 7 hectares of 75 year old, unirrigated, bush-trained Primitivo a few kilometres south-west of Manduria. The age of the vines, the iron-rich soils and the cooling breeze from the Med all temper the sweltering Puglian summer and although it tips the scales at more than 15% the **Old Vine** cuvée sacrifices nothing in terms of complexity or acidity.

The Gobelet training dictates a manual harvest and the grapes are not crushed prior to their introduction to small, shallow fermenters where the must stays on the skins for a week at 30°C with frequent hand-plunging. About 65% of the press wine from a traditional basket press is added back before ageing in 50% new, 300L French oak for 15 months. The wine is raked, usually four times, but neither fined nor filtered. The 2007 is her strongest effort to date with masses of prune and blackcurrant on the nose.

Last year Lisa released a 'baby' Primitivo and we snapped it up immediately. The fruit for the **Stella Morella** is bought-in rather than sourced from their own vineyards but Lisa chooses carefully and vinifies in much the same way as the Grand Vin.

Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Primitivo di Manduria DOC 'Stella Morella'	2008	75	6	MO-SMB-08	12.00
Primitivo IGT Puglia 'Old Vines'	2007	75	6	MO-OVP-07	36.00



Calabria



Travelling south from Naples into Calabria one is struck not only by the stark beauty of the landscape but also by the obvious and deepening poverty. Calabria appears to have derived little benefit from the flood of financial assistance pouring into the south and it was one of the principal sources of the Italian diaspora in the 20th century. Diligence, however, is next to Godliness, and if one risks leaving the autostrada Calabria quickly reveals a deserted and curiously coniferous interior. Vineyards and citrus groves give way to a desolate and windswept interior where life continues much as it always has. More than 90% of the production here is red and only 2% is DOC but there are wonderful wines here tucked away in these valleys that time forgot.

Viola

www.cantineviola.it

Don't be fooled by the unassuming and unremarkable label: this is one of Italy's most remarkable dessert wines. Luigi Viola, a retired school teacher, decided that, rather than sit at home and collect his pension, he would revive the ancient tradition of Moscato del Saraceno that was in danger of extinction. High in the Pollino National Park Moscato, Malvasia and Guarnaccia are grown and harvested by hand. Each bunch is air-dried and then vinified separately before blending and ageing in stainless steel. This is a dessert wine of rare complexity.

Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Moscato Passito di Saracena IGT	2008	50	6	CV-MOS-08	42.50



Sicilia



Sicily's boisterous spirit is evident the moment one steps onto this sun-drenched island. Three thousand years of foreign occupation, volcanic eruptions, and relentless sun have distilled the spirit of Italy into one, super-concentrated essence called Sicily. All the creativity, climatic variation, and abundance of local grape varieties give the Mediterranean's largest island a plethora of styles. Sicily boasts everything from dirt cheap to jaw-droppingly expensive, from racy white to block-buster red. Shiny stainless steel rubs shoulders with clay amphorae and quality varies from the truly dismal to the utterly profound.

Sicily's viticultural variety alone would make it a must-see destination but there's so much more. Greek temples, Byzantine cathedrals, Michelin-starred restaurants all rub shoulders with an easy nonchalance that makes Sicily truly addictive. And if one could tire of its gastronomic and architectural splendours then the warmth of its people would have you on the next plane back. Here, friendships run deep and a man's word is his bond and despite the EU the dusty world of *The Leopard* seems to lurk just around the corner. Sicily makes me glad to be alive.

Ferrandes

The mythical island of Pantelleria remains virtually undiscovered despite lying just 100 kms and a short flight south of Sicilia. It's tiny and a Vespa is all one needs for discovering its truly global variety of geological phenomena: hot springs, thermal caves, and salt flats are all here and free for the exploring. So, too, are Pantelleria's ancient vineyards and the tradition of drying grapes dates back more than 3,000 years so it's no surprise that Muscat, the world's oldest cultivar, holds sway. Zibibbo, as it is known locally, is of the Alexandria branch of the Muscat family which, although of dowdy disposition, copes better with drought than the more prestigious Muscat Blancs à Petits Grains.

Viticulture on the island is a patchy affair and controlled largely by mainland concerns who view a Passito di Pantelleria as an essential component of a balanced Sicilian portfolio rather than a wine in its own right. The result is a horde of syrupy and often volatile examples where producers mistake sugar for quality. The history of the island's wines, however, is not that of a Sicilian satellite and Pantelleria has never looked elsewhere for viticultural inspiration.

Salvatore and his wife, Dominica, live in an idyllic damuso on the island's north-eastern corner and together farm two hectares of Zibibbo and a parcel of olive trees. The vines are planted with an average density of 2500 vines per ha in shallow troughs that protect them from the Scirocco. Vineyards near the sea can be harvested in late August whilst those higher up may not be picked until the end of September. Contrary to most producers - and this is the key - the yields are tiny (less than 40 hl/ha before drying) and the wine is only made in cool vintages where the grapes begin to dry on the vine with plenty of natural acidity. Only perfect bunches are selected for additional desiccation on straw mats. Salvatore may joke that on Pantelleria a couple of weeks are equivalent to several months in the Veneto but the reality is that he jealously guards the natural acidity - his **Passito** is never acidified so the grapes dry briefly and lose a maximum of an additional 10% of water. Fermentation is in steel and the final wine balances 14.5% ABV with 150 g/l residual sugar. It is aged for a minimum of 2 years in bottle before release. Our annual allocation is 120 half bottles. Concentrated but still brisk with candied apple, cinnamon and orange peel it's drier than I'd imagined and finer, too, with a freshness on the finish that balances the sugar and the alcohol. This is a classic vino da meditazione and one that is ideal with chocolate, hard cheese, panna cotta or tiramisù.

Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Passito di Pantelleria DOC	2005	37.5	12	FE-PPB-05	26.00

Sardegna



Equidistant from France, Spain and Italy, Sardinian language, culture and grapes are a legacy of Europe's changing political landscape across the centuries. Today, when driving through Sardinia's rugged hills it's clear that this island has conceded little to progress in the past 2,000 years. Its sparse, arid interior retains the Mediterranean's eternal blend of vineyards and olive groves stretching to the horizon. All is not as it seems, however, and in recent years nearly 75% of Sardegna's vineyards were grubbed up through EU-funded schemes.

We may never know what was lost in terms of ancient vineyards and varieties but few are holding a candle as the diggers pass by. The overproduction that characterized centuries of grape growing here proved hard to break and perhaps we are better off without the limitless expanse of high-yielding vineyards that discredited this island. On the other hand, I fear we may have lost the baby with the bathwater. Sardegna could always boast examples of both estates and cooperatives which were fiercely proud of the island's potential and perhaps the EU called time too early. Perhaps not, old habits die hard. In the meantime please take a look at Dettori, a new breed of winemaker rewriting the rule book.

Dettori

www.tenuredettori.it

Sardegna's north-west corner is home to both the ancient territory of Romangia and Alessandro Dettori, Sardegna's own, soft-spoken Keeper of the Cannonau. Slight, perceptive, and imbued with impish wit it is clear from the outset that Alessandro Dettori breaks the mould of the peasant farmer. Alessandro is a paradox: he is both philosopher and winemaker, a man whose cultured exterior appears to be at odds with his staunch defence of Sardinian tradition.

Alessandro farms thirty hectares of extremely old Grenache and Vermentino adroitly employing just enough modern technology to maximize the expression of Sardinia's ancient viticulture. The scorching sun and distressing yields (less than 300 grams per plant) ensure an exceptional degree of ripeness before the grapes, picked by hand in October, are transported by refrigerated truck to a small winery where they ferment exclusively in cement.

The **Dettori Bianco** 2007 is sourced from a parcel of vines planted in 1958. It spends four days on the skins with the stalks without temperature control, added yeasts, SO₂, fining, filtration, or oak. Cloudy and medium gold, its masculine style, fine flavours and stunning length mark this as one of the finest white wines on this list. The Moscato is made in a similar style but the long-suffering yeast admit defeat long before all the sugar is transformed to alcohol. It's not a proper dessert wine but, like Bellbird Spring, occupies a useful middle ground.

We have shipped three versions of Cannonau. The **Tenores** has the jammy, succulent berry fruit of Châteauneuf. The **Tuderi** is sourced from a neighbouring vineyard and is in every way a sibling to the Vermentino with identical vinification (the Tuderi spends eight days on the skins). Everyone must try Alessandro's 2005 **Dettori** at least once. Sourced from a tiny parcel of unirrigated, Cannonau planted in 1887, it spends 12-15 days on the skins before fermentation and maturation in cement. Dettori does not see a stick of wood; wood could scarcely begin to tame the monstrous 17.5% ABV that it carries with such ease.

This year I couldn't resist adding the **Chimbanta** to our list. Monica isn't high in anyone's list of 'must-try' varietals but Alessandro has created a remarkable, mulberry-scented account that is a delight to drink. As always, neither grape nor terroir is in itself a guarantee of either greatness or mediocrity.

Wine	Vintage	cl	Pack Size	Order Code	£ per bottle (inc VAT)
Vermentino IGT Romangia 'Dettori'	2007	75	6	DE-DBB-07	24.00
Moscato IGT Romangia 'Moscadeddu'	2007	75	6	DE-MOS-07	42.00
Cannonau IGT Romangia 'Dettori'	2005	75	6	DE-DRB-05	42.00
Cannonau IGT Romangia 'Tenores'	2005	75	6	DE-TEN-05	24.00
Cannonau IGT Romangia 'Tuderi'	2006	75	6	DE-TUB-06	24.00
Monica IGT Romangia 'Chimbanta'	2006	75	6	DE-CHI-06	24.00





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