



AS SEEN IN
Wine Spectator



A NOBLE CAUSE

Vino Nobile di Montepulciano

It does not require much knowledge of the Italian language to realize that “Vino Nobile di Montepulciano” denotes something special—literally, a noble wine from Montepulciano, the Renaissance Tuscan town that is the center of production for this revered red wine, first mentioned by Tito Livio in *Ab Urbe Condita* in the 1st century. In recognition of its pedigree, Vino Nobile di Montepulciano was awarded Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita (DOCG) status in 1980, becoming Italy’s first wine region recognized for superior quality.

For all the regalness the name conveys, *Vino Nobile di Montepulciano* can also be a source of confusion for wine lovers. The wine has nothing to do with the Italian grape Montepulciano, and everything to do with Tuscan superstar Sangiovese. “My heart is beating for Sangiovese,” says Federico Carletti, president of the Consorzio del *Vino Nobile di Montepulciano*. “We believe it is one of the best grape varieties in the world, and that we have the *terroir* and ambition to make a distinctive wine with it here in the hills surrounding Montepulciano.”

Given the passion for Sangiovese, known locally as Prugnolo Gentile, it’s clear why this grape is at the heart of *Vino Nobile di Montepulciano*, representing a minimum of 70% of the final wine. In most cases, Sangiovese is skillfully blended with traditional red Tuscan grapes such as soft and fruity Canaiolo Nero, dark and tannic Colorino or violet-scented Mammolo. International red varieties, such as Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah, may also be included.

The region of *Vino Nobile di Montepulciano* shares its affinity for Sangiovese with its Tuscan siblings Chianti Classico and Brunello di Montalcino, to form the leading Tuscan trio. In recent years, moreover, thanks to the winegrowers’ commitment and the Consortium’s efforts, *Vino Nobile di Montepulciano* has shown still better character, offering wines of winning personality that appeal to savvy wine lovers who appreciate their combination of tradition, balance and elegance. “The trademark Sangiovese acidity is here, but generally lower than Chianti. We also have stone and clay *terroir*, adding complexity and vibrancy. Well-balanced, with ripe tannins, that is *Vino Nobile di Montepulciano*—always full of identity and character,” explains Carletti.

While the story and reputation of *Vino Nobile di Montepulciano* spans centuries, the most exciting chapter is being written right now, with a commitment to traditional wine made better using modern techniques. Numbering only about 75, the winemakers of this tight-knit region are taking every step to ensure top quality. Viticultural research has identified the finest clones of Sangiovese,



Workers harvest grapes by hand in the vineyards surrounding the Renaissance town of Montepulciano, perched on a hilltop reaching over 2,000 feet in elevation.

Vino Nobile di Montepulciano AT A GLANCE

APPELLATION NAME: *Vino Nobile di Montepulciano Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita (DOCG)*

GRAPE VARIETIES: *Sangiovese in a minimum of 70%, with a maximum 30% of other approved red grapes*

TOTAL AREA OF TERRITORY: 40,772 acres

TOTAL VINO NOBILE VINEYARDS: 3,210 acres

TERRAIN: *Hills ranging in altitude from 250 to 600 meters above sea level*

AGING REQUIREMENTS: *Minimum two years of aging beginning on January 1 of the year following the harvest*

RISERVA AGING REQUIREMENTS: *Minimum three years of aging and six months of bottle-aging, beginning on January 1 of the year following the harvest*

pairing them with the perfect rootstocks for each vineyard site. Precision vineyard management, including techniques such as green harvesting, delivers richer, riper fruit, and the wines often spend their compulsory two years of aging in a combination of French oak and traditional Slavonian oak barrels, permitting the distinctive fruit to shine. “In the past 20 years, global taste gravitated to more modern wine, often with big body and big color. Now, people are coming to appreciate more classic wines, well-crafted and finely balanced,” says Carletti.

Pinot Noir is often credited with being particular about where it grows, but consider that great Sangiovese comes almost exclusively from Tuscany. It is a grape that demands extreme sacrifice, performing best with low yields and capturing different flavors in each vineyard, even each row of a vineyard. For the winemakers of *Vino Nobile di Montepulciano*, Sangiovese is a noble cause, the best way to express their region for the world. True to its local name, Prugnolo Gentile, this grape displays gentleness and finesse, bursting with the scents of Tuscany and delivering flavors of plums and cherries, licorice and leather.

While *Vino Nobile di Montepulciano* offers a compelling taste of Tuscany on its own, this wine is at its best with food, the way Italians enjoy it. In addition to pairing well with all sorts of Italian specialties, this versatile wine can stand up to steak, while its medium body and lively acidity also make it a perfect partner with summer barbecue fare. “Whether you are an expert in wine or a casual drinker, you cannot have a glass of *Vino Nobile di Montepulciano* at the table and not fall in love,” says Carletti. And with the excellent 2007 and 2008 vintages now arriving in the United States, there’s never been a better opportunity to sample this taste of Tuscan nobility.



CONSORZIO
DEL VINO NOBILE
DI MONTEPULCIANO



A CAMPAIGN FINANCED ACCORDING TO EC REGULATIONS N. 1234/07

