Winemaker: Antonio Lamona
Generation: 2nd

La Quercia

Montepulciano d'Abruzzo D.O.C.

This Montepulciano is a great example of what can happen when you match low-yield expertise with a prolific grape variety, and constantly cut, cut, cut back the vines. With ripe, dark plum and a hint of smoke, this stunning affordable from Abruzzo is both an amazing value and a true crowd pleaser. Satisfying, yet unoaked, the mid-palate is followed by a juicy, slightly dry, food-friendly finish. Farmed organically and picked by hand. 90 PTS / Best Buy Wine Enthusiast

WINEMAKER BIOGRAPHY

Having started as an enologist in both Puglia and Abruzzo, Antonio Lamona today channels all his energies and expertise into La Quercia. Together with three lifelong friends, he oversees this gorgeous, rustic estate in the tiny Adriatic town where sea, sun and wind abound.

ENOLOGIST

Antonio Lamona

TASTING NOTES

Color	Deep red with purple hues
Nose	Dark plum, earth, and a hint of smoke
Palate	Medium-bodied, with ripe, dark fruit and fresh herbs
Finish	Well-balanced, slightly dry

VINEYARD & VINIFICATION

	12
Vineyard Location	Montepulciano d'Abruzzo DOC, Abruzzo
Vineyard Size	11 ha
Varietals List	100% Montepulciano
Farming Practices	Organically farmed (non-certified), including dry-farmed; grapes picked by hand
Elevation	210 m
Soils	Medio impasto and argilloso (clay)
Maturation Summary	In Steel for 6 months and Bottled for 6 months
In Steel	6 months
Alcohol	13.0 %
Acidity	5.8 g/liter
Residual Sugar	6.5 g/liter
Annual Production	150,000 bottles

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LA QUERCIA

A “true blue,” grizzled farmer-type, winemaker Antonio Lamona is both utterly likeable and totally invested in his wines. Although his father also grew grapes, Antonio is the first in the family to bottle his own and, beginning in the late sixties, began cultivating vines that are entirely organic. As Antonio says, “I would rather forgo an entire vintage than put man-made pesticides in my soil.” Located just 3 km uphill from the Adriatic and a morning’s drive from the 9,000-foot Gran Sasso, Antonio’s farm is entirely self-sustaining: they produce their own salami, bread, vegetables, olive oil, and cheese. True, you won’t find a “discoteca” within a hundred miles of the place, but in terms of sheer, natural beauty and down-to-earth hospitality, there’s no better place to see.

One of La Quercia’s most remarkable qualities is their consistency. Regardless of what may be happening elsewhere in Italy, Antonio’s estate remains steadfast in terms of both style and quality from one vintage to the next. This, in part, is thanks to their unique location. The town of Morro d’Oro, in the small, coastal province of Teramo, is protected on one side by the Adriatic Sea (constant breezes ensure they have virtually no mold or pest issues), and on its flank by the Apennine Mountains. These natural barriers form a beautiful “pocket” with 300 days of sun per year and comparatively few climate variations. In addition, the Colli Apruntini IGP is actually analogous with the Colline Teramane (‘Hills of Teramo’) DOCG, meaning that La Quercia’s everyday vines are grown alongside some of the very best in Abruzzo.

With 46 non-contiguous hectares spread about town, La Quercia is a touch larger than most estates in the Small Vineyards portfolio – but they still embody the spirit of our company from stem to stern. One reason is that, when it comes to picking by hand and personally escorting the wines from soil to bottle, Antonio is far from alone. While he remains the winemaker and enologist, ownership of La Quercia is shared with three of his lifelong friends - Elisabetta Di Berardino, Fabio Pedicone and Luca Moretti. So, when it comes to “all hands on deck”, La Quercia has four families lending assistance!

REGION

ABRUZZO

Although winemaking in Abruzzo dates all the way back to the Etruscans in the sixth century BC, like many regions in Italy, it experienced a slump following WWII, when a marked decline in population led to a parallel decrease in the wine industry. In the 1980’s, however, Abruzzo began experiencing a renaissance - beginning with the creation of larger co-operatives and then expanding to include more boutique, family-owned estates. Today, fueled by the popularity of their mainstay Montepulciano grape, a new generation of quality-over-quantity winemakers are breathing additional life into the region.

Home to some of Italy’s wildest and most rugged terrain, Abruzzo stretches from the heart of the Apennines in central Italy to the Adriatic Sea, with two-thirds of the region covered by mountains. Eventually, this landscape of steep peaks (including the Gran Sasso, one of Italy’s highest at 9,554 feet) cascades down into a range of wide hills and the azure Adriatic coast. With more national parks and forests than any other region, Abruzzo has been called “the lungs” of Italy. Less frequented by foreign tourists, it also remains “old-school” or “untouched” in the best of ways when compared to popular destinations like Tuscany. The people are humble and warm-hearted, the local cuisine layered and fulfilling, and the summertime beaches populated mostly by their fellow Italians.

Abruzzo is made up of four different winemaking provinces, with the bulk of production occurring in Chieti, where 75% of the region’s vineyards are located. The remaining 25% are scattered throughout the (largely coastal) provinces of Pescara, Teramo, and L'Aquila. Fortuitously, the nearby mountains play a huge role in keeping inclement weather from the west at bay and in cooling down vineyards at night. Combined with 300 days of sun and constant, heat-mitigating breezes off the Adriatic, this results in a mild overall climate that remains highly amenable to viticulture and also more consistent year-round than most locales in Italy.

MONTEPULCIANO D’ABRUZZO DOC

Created in 1968, this DOC covers a relatively broad area, stretching from Abruzzo’s coastline to about 20 miles inland. The wines come from an array of low hills, plains, and coastal areas, with the most acclaimed produced at higher altitudes. Overall, the Adriatic Sea helps warm vineyards during the day, then grapes are cooled at night by cold mountain breezes from the Apennines. These large swings in temperature extend the growing season and help develop the tannic and acidic structure of the Montepluciano grape. Wines from this DOC are generally dry, with enough soft, ripe fruit to be drinkable when young, yet tannic enough to have cellar potential. While other varietals are certainly planted in Abruzzo, the easy-growing Montepulciano has long dominated the landscape, making this DOC one of the region’s most important by far.

Both Rosso and Riserva wines from this appellation must contain a minimum of 85% Montepulciano (with a short list of approved red grapes eligible for blending), and basic reds must register at no less than 12% alcohol. Riserva DOCs must be aged a minimum of 2 years, including at least 9 months in the barrel, and be a minimum 12.5% alcohol. Vines cannot be planted any higher than 500 to 600 meters, depending upon the vineyard’s exact location.