Winemaker: Antonio Lamona
Generation: 2nd

La Quercia

Santapupa Montonico Superiore DOC

While production levels remain low in Abruzzo and the grape is more commonly associated with Calabria, Montonico has a 400-year history in the hills south of Teramo and is slowly staging a comeback. In the hands of expert winemaker Antonio Lamona, we get to experience this white powerhouse in all its delicious simplicity: warm citrus and an ample weight to rival Pecorino's, along with a freshness and zip that recalls Verdicchio. Enjoy with grilled seafood, mushroom risotto, and fresh, grassy cheeses. Only 200 cases imported!

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	Light yellow
Nose	Fresh citrus zest and blossom, with a hint of tropicals
Palate	Driven by warm citrus, balanced acidity, and ample viscosity
Finish	Clean, food-friendly

VINEYARD & VINIFICATION

	12
Vineyard Location	Abruzzo DOC, Abruzzo
Vineyard Size	1.5 ha
Varietals List	100% Montonico
Farming Practices	Organically farmed (non-certified), including dry-farmed; grapes picked by hand
Elevation	400 m
Soils	Calcareous clay
Maturation Summary	In Steel for 6 months and Bottled for 6 months
In Steel	6 months
Alcohol	11.5 %
Acidity	6.2 g/liter
Residual Sugar	1.5 g/liter
Annual Production	6,600 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.

ABRUZZO DOC

Established in 2010, the Abruzzo DOC spans a long corridor between the Apennine Mountains and Adriatic Sea, where the majority of vines grow on hillsides and flourish in mesoclimates largely protected from extreme weather. Generally speaking, vineyards benefit from both abundant sunshine and generous rainfall, though it tends to be warmer and drier along the coast, with a more continental climate further inland. Geographically, the DOC covers the lion's share of the coastal provinces of Teramo, Pescara, and Chieti, with pockets of land in the Provincia di Aquila also included. Given the mountainous nature of Abruzzo's interior (and the fact that 30% of all Abruzzo land is protected by 4 national parks) this DOC effectively covers the majority of prime real estate for vines.

Accounting for roughly two-thirds of all production, the DOC's main focus is Montepulciano, and reds must by law contain at least 80% of this grape.Trebbiano d'Abruzzo is the second most prevalent planting, but is only one of a half-dozen native white varieties permitted on labels. When the name is listed, a white wine must contain 85% or more of: Cococciola, Malvasia, Montonico, Passerina, Pecorino, or Trebbiano. Beyond these, Chardonnay, Gewurtraminer, Moscato, Riesling and Sauvignon Blanc are permitted for blending, sometimes in Vino Bianco Abruzzo DOC, which must also contain at least 50% Trebbiano. In 2022, the Superiore designation was created for (native varietal) Abruzzo DOC wines, with slightly higher minimum alcohol levels and more stringent production rules overall.