Winemaker: Paolo Piera
Generation: 1st

AUGUSTIMPORTS
WINES · SPIRITS · INNOVATIONS

Roma DOC Rosso

From the volcanic hills just SE of Rome known as Castelli Romani comes this friendly blend of Montepulciano and Sangiovese. With its smooth plum and cherry fruit, medium tannins, and pleasant touch of rusticity towards the end, it's the perfect companion to a traditional bowl of Italian pasta or stew. And, while the reputation of Roman wines has suffered on and off over the ages, this one stands as a fantastic example of the region's emerging potential... 2 glasses awarded to the 2020 vintage by Gambero Rosso in 2023.

WINEMAKER BIOGRAPHY

Situated in the town of Marino, in the heart of the lush and rolling hills of Castell Romani just south of Rome, the Grotto d'Oro co-operative has created a line of fine wines known as Vinea Domini. Sustainably farmed in volcanic soils, they are designed not for the scores of tourists who visit the capitol every year, but instead "for the Roman people", true reflections of their place and time.

ENOLOGIST

Paolo Piera

TASTING NOTES

Color	Ruby
Nose	Cherry, plum, and a hint of smoked meat
Palate	Polished fruit with medium tannins and a pleasant rusticity towards the end
Finish	Well-balanced, driven by the Montepulciano

VINEYARD & VINIFICATION

	12
Vineyard Location	Roma DOC, Lazio
Vineyard Size	10 ha
Varietals List	60% Montepulciano 40% Sangiovese
Farming Practices	Sustainably farmed, dry-farmed, non-certified vegan
Elevation	250 m
Soils	Mostly volcanic, with some sandstone and marl
Maturation Summary	In small barrels for 6 months, in Steel 3 months and bottled 3 months
In Steel	3 months
Alcohol	13.0 %
Acidity	5.30 g/liter
Residual Sugar	7 g/liter
Annual Production	15,000 bottles

AUGUSTIMPORTS
WINES · SPIRITS · INNOVATIONS

VINEA DOMINI

Long before Rome was built, people settled in what is today known as Castelli Romani (trans: "Roman Castles"), or the hills just south of the current-day Italian capitol. With its higher elevation and commanding vistas of both sea and the surrounding flatlands, this area was safer and more easily defended. Not to mention, its prehistoric, volcanic soils were (and remain) extremely fertile. Nowadays, in addition to the vineyards and farms spread across some 14 towns, scores of wealthy Romans have summer homes in the Roma DOC, with a pair of lakes affording respite from the seasonal heat. Everywhere, olive groves, citrus trees, palms, and Lazio's iconic stone pines (with their "horizontal" canopies) meet the eye, creating a lush and beautiful, pastoral landscape.

In the heart of this zone and in the wake of WWII, the Grotto d'Oro Cooperative Society was founded - initially operating out of a destroyed building and uniting 41 farmers in the town of Marino. Nearly 80 years later, the group consists of 150 growers and encompasses roughly a thousand hectares of vines. While they admittedly produce larger quantities of certain affordables which remain very popular in Rome, the co-op recently (2017) created a new line, Vinea Domini, designed to feature quality over quantity and shine a spotlight on native varieties such as Cesanese and Malvasia Putinata. For this project, 15 farmers and 75 hectares were singled out for quality, with a smaller subset contributing grapes to each wine. A separate enologist, Paolo Piera, was also brought on board at that time to oversee operations for Vinea Domini. A native of Lazio, Paolo studied enology in Bordeaux, then returned to his home region to consult. Well-known in Italy as a lecturer for the Federatin of Italian Sommeliers (FISAR), his overall style is one of fresh, clean wines which put the emphasis squarely on the fruit - more than appropriate for the warm, maritime climes and vines of Castelli Romani!

REGION

LAZIO

Long known for its affordable—and often unremarkable—wines designed largely for the everyday table in Rome, Lazio has slowly begun to increase its reputation with an increased spotlight on smaller production and a host of native varieties. First inhabited and farmed by the Etruscans, the region was of course most famous for the Romans themselves, who brought with them a vast trade network and countless improvements in agriculture. Ironically, however - and despite their well-chronicled passion for wine - the Romans never made a name for themselves when it came to the actual quality of their juice. This lack of reputation lasted well into the 20th century, in part due to the effects of WWII, which left great swathes of Roman vineyards in shambles. It took many years for producers to return to the area in earnest... and the advent of international varieties like Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot in the 1980s left Lazio with a bit of an identity crisis. In recent decades, however, the tide has shifted as more producers shift toward quality over quantity, and local grapes such as Malvasia and Cesanese begin to capture more attention.

Today, Lazio has just 3 DOCGs: Cannelino di Frascati, Frascati Superiore--both white wines--and Cesanese del Piglio, the only red amongst them. Of its 27 DOCs, the majority also focus on whites, such as Colli Albani, Est! Est!! Est!!!, Orvieto (whose borders spill from Umbria into Lazio) and Frascati. Trebbiano and 2 biotypes of Malvasia – Malvasia di Candia and Malvasia Putinata (trans: “freckled”)—are the most widely represented, with an emphasis on high acidity to cut through the richness of Roman cuisine. As for reds, noteworthy grapes include Aleatico (grown near Viterbo), Montepulciano (Castelli Romani), Nero Buona (near Latina), and Sangiovese. High in the Apennine foothills east of the capitol city is where most of the quality Cesanese is produced. 2 additional designations– Cesanese di Affile and Cesanese di Olevano Romano--are located a stone’s throw both from one another and the nearby Piglio DOCG.

ROMA DOC

A relatively new DOC, this appellation was established in 2011 and today covers 14 villages and towns in the hilly zone known as Castelli Romani (trans: the hills or “castles” of Rome) adjacent to and just south of the Italian capitol. With only 300 hectares planted and home to just 3 dozen producers (including several co-ops), the Roma DOC remains small but was much anticipated, both because of its historical importance (it was from settlements in these hills that Rome was eventually built) and its potential to raise the visibility and reputation of wines from Lazio.

Pre-historically, this entire sun-drenched area was volcanic, so today its soil remains rich in potassium and phosphorus, encouraging pronounced aromatics and freshness in the whites, and ripe polyphenols in the reds. (Vines can also be quite prolific, so winemakers interested in quality need to be discerning.) These hills span a variety of altitudes – from 280-950 meters – and often boast a view of both Rome and the sea. The local flora includes majestic Mediterranean stone pines, and of course a high concentration of olive and citrus groves.

To date, the majority of both whites and reds from this DOC tend to be blends, with 50% Malvasia Puntinata required for a Roma Bianco, and at least 35% added of one or more of the following: Bellone, Bombino Bianco, Greco, and Trebbiano. Similarly, Rosso’s must contain at least 50% Montepulciano, with another 35% coming from any combination of Cab Franc, Cab Sauvignon, Cesanese, and Syrah. Basic reds must be aged for 7 months before release, and Riserva’s for 2 years. Passito, sweet wines, and spumante are also allowed under