Winemaker: Stefano Graidi
Generation: 4th

TERRE DI SERRAPETRONA

Collequanto Serrapetrona DOC

Located on the edge of a mountainous national park and on the same parallel as Montalcino, this fascinating small estate is one of only 7 in the world to work with the rare Vernaccia Nera grape. Prehistorically, this entire region was underwater, so its calcareous soils combine with altitude and constant winds to ensure a bold tannic and acidic structure... although much like Sangiovese, this cherry-and-earth-driven grape is quite malleable. Here, we see it expressed in one of its most elevated forms, with an opulent display of tannin and spice.

WINEMAKER BIOGRAPHY

One of only 7 producers to work with the vibrant, rare, high altitude grape know as Vernaccia Nera, Terre di Serrapetrona is perched in the windy, subalpine interior of the Marche region. Owner-winemaker Stefano Graidi and his crew are true blue Small Vineyards producers, devoted to preserving and exploring multiple expresssions of this fascinating variety.

ENOLOGIST

Sandro Giuliodori

TASTING NOTES

Color	Ruby
Nose	Marasca cherry and dark summer earth with hints of clove and black pepper
Palate	Lush, medium-full body, with dark cherry and earth repeating
Finish	Complex weave of tannins and spice

VINEYARD & VINIFICATION

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Vineyard Location	Serrapetrona DOC, Marche
Vineyard Size	3 ha
Varietals List	100% Vernaccia Nera
Farming Practices	Sustainable, including dry-farmed, grapes picked by hand; indigenous yeasts
Elevation	500-600 m
Soils	Calcareous clay with marine fossils
Maturation Summary	In Steel for 18 months and Bottled for 1 month
In Steel	18 months
Alcohol	13.5 %
Acidity	5.4 g/liter
Residual Sugar	3.9 g/liter
Annual Production	13,000 bottles

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TERRE DI SERRAPETRONA

TERRE DI SERRAPETRONA

Located high in the foothills of the Sibillini Mountains National Park in the province of Macerata, Terre di Serrapetrona is devoted to the Marche's exotic rare bird, Vernaccia Nera. Of the 21 hectares they have under vine, 17 are Vernaccia Nera, which they translate into multiple tiers of wine, including their stunning "Collequanto", a dolce DOCG, and a spicy, charismatic Rose Brut. For most of their bigger reds, a small percentage of the grapes undergo a drying process. "Here in Serrapetrona," says owner-winemaker Stefano Graidi, "appassimento is not a trend but a historic tradition and a necessity – the thick, tannic skins of Vernaccia Nera grown at altitude leave us with little choice." Committed to preserving and developing this historic grape (believed to have been grown in these hills since "Roman land division times"), Stefano and his small crew do virtually everything on their farm by hand and are in a constant state of experimentation. (Named "Vernaccianera" Secca Vernaccia di Serrapetrona DOCG, they even have what may be the world's only "triple fermentation" sparkling wine!)

In terms of climate, this area is high, dry, and very windy, with confluent breezes emanating from both mountain and Adriatic Sea. All vines are planted between 500-600 meters, so diurnal swings can be dramatic, and late October harvests are not unusual. The gorgeous slopes tend to be steep and verdant, with mostly marly-calcareous and white clay soils. (This whole area was prehistorically under water.) Most vines were planted around the year 2000, with only 2 hectares of new plantings to date.

REGION

MARCHE

Ancient Romans loved the wine from Picenum - what is now the Marche - and there are artifacts such as amphorae dating the region's wine production back to the Iron Age. The regional capital, Ancona, was a major port town during Roman Empire, and one of the so-called "seven roads to Rome", the Via Flaminia, connected the two cities. In the centuries since, the Marche has receded from the limelight, home to quiet, towering cliffs, stunning coastlines, sandy Adriatic beaches, and a peaceful, hilly landscape dotted with medieval towns, castles and monasteries. Wholly deserving of our attention, this region remains off the beaten track, one of Italy's last "untouched" wine destinations.

Sandwiched between the Apennines and the Adriatic Sea, the Marche is home a vast array of terroirs. The western region, which boarders the mountain range, tends to have calcareous and limestone soils, along with greater day-night temperature fluctuations during the growing season. To the east, vineyards stretch right up to the chalky coastline - including the famed rosso district that lies in the shadow of Mount Cònero. These areas tend host a continental and Mediterranean climate, respectively.

Overall, the area devoted to vineyards in the Marche remains modest compared to other Italian regions. Today there are 20,000 hectares of vineyards, spanning 4 provinces (Ancona, Ascoli Piceno, Macerata, and Pesaro), home to 15 DOCs and 5 DOCGs. The lion's share of the Marche's wines are white, with the crisp and refreshing Verdicchio occupying center stage. Reds tend to be based upon Sangiovese and Montepulciano, the indigenous black grape varietal that thrives in the dry, maritime climate and limestone-rich soils of the coast.

SERRAPETRONA DOC

One of the Marche's tiniest growing zones, the Serrapetrona DOC is centered squarely on the exceedingly rare Vernaccia Nera grape. This vibrant red variety has been genetically traced back to Garnacha, but high in the windswept, subalpine hills of the region's interior, has evolved into its own biotype. (Think also of Cannonau from Sardegna.) The designation was created in 2004, at which time Vernaccia di Serrepetrona was also promoted to DOCG. Red wines under the general DOC must contain at least 85% of their prized variety, with still and sparkling renditions both permitted. As only 7 producers work with Vernaccia Nera, and less than 50 combined hectares under currently under vine, the wines are rarely seen outside the zone, let alone exported.

High altitude (usually 500-600 meters) is typical in the towns of Serrapetrona, Belforte del Chienti, and San Severino Marchi - as are marly-calcareous clay soils, both encouraging the firm acidic structure of the wines. Not unlike other late-ripeners in subalpine circumstances, Vernaccia Nera tends to be harvested in mid-October. Wines tend to offer dramatic hues, spicy aromatics, dark fruit, and dry, earth-driven tannins.