

Tiberio

ARCHIVIO MONTEPULCIANO D'ABRUZZO - 2020

REGION: ITALY - ABRUZZO



TIBERIO

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Montepulciano d'Abruzzo

AGRICOLA TIBERIO - C.DA LA VOTA - CUGNOLI

TIBERIO

The story of Azienda Agricola Tiberio rings more like a new world tale than one from the old world of the ancient lands beneath the Majella and Gran Sasso mountains in Abruzzo. At 1150 feet/350 meters, twenty three miles inland from the seaside city of Pescara near the hillside town of Cugnoli, Riccardo Tiberio found an old plot of Trebbiano Abruzzese vines roughly 50 years old so impressive that he decided to change his and his family's destiny. Over a decade ago, Cristiana and Antonio, daughter and son of Riccardo, took over reins of Tiberio. Cristiana, a chemistry specialist who also teaches college sommelier and enology classes, handles winemaking and is the global brand ambassador. Antonio leads grapegrowing and viticulture. The dynamic team have established Tiberio, and Abruzzo, in the forefront of leading-edge wine making and renown in this central part of Italy. Today, Tiberio farms 74 acres/30 hectares of vines.

THE WINE

Vineyard Profile

Archivio is a single vineyard Montepulciano d'Abruzzo DOP coming from a specific 3 acre/1.2 hectare portion of our historical 6.2 acre/2.5 hectare vineyard, planted to 67 year old Montepulciano vines. It is from this vineyard that over the years we identified, selected and then propagated massal selections of Montepulciano vines with which we have planted all our Montepulciano vineyards.

The Archivio plot is a special portion of this larger vineyard as its the only plot on the whole property with a strong clay presence in the subsoil (limestone soil – subsoil with presence of clay and iron oxide). The Montepulciano that grows in the Archivio vineyard has different characteristics and so do the wines that are made with it. We identified four different Montepulciano biotypes that look and behave differently from other known Montepulciano biotypes and clones. It represents our estates's historical Montepulciano vines library, or archive (hence the wine's name: "archivio" in Italian translates to archive). The four biotypes have been named after our estate's dogs, who are as much a part of our family's history as the wines we make.

Differences between the four biotypes are many. They can be generalized in: one biotype is characterized by smaller round berries with thicker skins that reach full physiologic polyphenol ripeness with greater ease, Tione98; a second biotype that has grapes with thin skins (and therefore a lower skin to pulp ratio with more juice) and higher acidity levels, Quarmari15; a third by a much longer bunch and it is the latest ripening of the four, Diana18 (do keep in mind Montepulciano is a late ripening variety as it is); and a fourth biotype characterized by a very round leaf instead of the more typical multilobed, jagged leaf and by seeds that only rarely turn completely brown (therefore delivering a much more tannic wine that is nonetheless more often than not nobly tannic despite the seeds not turning colour fully) Otto19 .

Spontaneous fermentation with natural, vineyard-specific yeasts only reaches higher temperatures, indicating how this specific yeast population is adapted to a specific environment, and able to work at higher temperatures and lead to deeper natural extraction of polyphenols.

The resulting wine is at once fresh and elegant but also quite powerful, with darker color, aromas and flavors, and greater density than our other Montepulcianos. This profile is fully expressive of the wine's specific terroir. For these reasons, and unlike all our other wines, the Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Archivio is partly aged in oak (barriques, 30% new). The use of the barriques is not out of a desire to make an oak-aged wine, but rather a consequence of the wine's specific characteristics and need for a greater amount of oxygenation.

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THE
SORTING
TABLE

- Vineyard Area: 3 acres/1.2 Ha
- Altitude: 1247 feet/380 meters
- Soil: Limestone, clay subsoil with iron oxides
- Vine Age: 67 years
- Vine Training System: Pergola Abruzzese – Canopy training system
- Yield: 45 Hl/Ha

Harvest Notes

- Hand harvested mid-October
- Spontaneous fermentation in temperature controlled stainless steel tanks with only native yeasts for 30 days
- Malolactic fermentation in stainless steel
- Aged 12 months in 30% new barriques, 70% stainless steel vessels
- Unfined and unfiltered
- Aged 12 months in bottle before release

Winemaker's Notes

Purple-tinted dark ruby red. An elegant, profoundly aromatic and powerful wine. Red cherries, smoky dark fruit highlighted by spices. Rose, violet and licorice flavors. The wine is vibrant, fresh and invitingly smooth.

Technical Information

- 100% Montepulciano d'Abruzzo massal selection from 4 different biotypes
- Alcohol: 14.5%
- Total Acidity: 6.12 g/l
- pH: 3.50
- Residual Sugar: 0.8 g/l
- Extract: 35.6

REVIEWS

Archivio Montepulciano d'Abruzzo – 2020

94+ Points - Terroir Sense - Ian D'Agata, June, 2024

Bright deep ruby. Aromas of raspberry nectar, blackberry, espresso, minerals and sandalwood. Penetrating, linear and youthfully imploded, with raspberry and dark red cherry fruit flavours of noteworthy energy and focus. Harmonious acidity and suave but noteworthy tannins provide backbone to the ripe, creamy fruit flavours. Finishes long with superb inner-mouth tension, but patience will be required to have it develop fully in a good cellar. 2027 – 2031

Family-owned estate, Tiberio specializes in wines made from authentic Abruzzo native grape varieties. At 350 meters above sea level, twenty-three miles inland from the sea near the lovely medieval hillside town of Cugnoli, Riccardo Tiberio found a very old plot of Trebbiano Abruzzese vines, which, despite the variety's name, is a rarity in Abruzzo. A high-quality variety has nothing in common with other Trebbianos, the 60 years old vines must have been a great sight for Riccardo, who then and there decided to change his and his family's destiny by quitting his job as an export manager starting his own winery in 2000. Today the winery is run by son Antonio (viticulture) and daughter Cristiana (winemaking) and it makes some of Italy's best white, pink and red wines.

94+ Points - Vinous, September, 2024

Intense, the 2020 Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Archivio seduces with its pungent aromatic display, blending cedar shavings with balsamic spices, cooling smoke, plum sauce and grilled herbs. Soothingly round and supple, this floods the palate with ripe wild berry fruits and hints of blood orange. A web of fine-grained tannins mounts toward the close. It finishes with staining length and structure, leaving sour cherry and inner sage to linger on and on. Patience will be required yet also rewarded. 2025 – 2030

Cristiana Tiberio's current releases are simply fantastic. They range from the "entry-level" 2022 Montepulciano d'Abruzzo, which can outclass many of the region's best wines at a fraction of the price, to the spell-binding 2020 Colle Vota and stimulating 2021 Trebbiano d'Abruzzo Fonte Canale (reviewed in my recent vertical retrospective). In 2023, Tiberio handled the conditions of the vintage very well, turning out a mineral-intense Pecorino and a Trebbiano d'Abruzzo that may be one of the most exciting young renditions of this bottling I've yet tasted. However, during my July visit in 2024, Cristiana and Antonio Tiberio were coping with a strange phenomenon. The vines had stopped producing after the pergola vineyards suffered from a combination of extremely dry conditions and cold air mass swept through the region in late April. As a result, canopies were extremely small, and clusters and berries were tiny. Cristiana Tiberio explained that she would not harvest the fruit from her older vines in an attempt to help them maintain their health for the upcoming seasons. The damage is sporadic, but she assured me that no amount of rain could fix the problems at this time. That said, there will be wine from 2024 but in much lower quantities and not from her older vines. While obviously grief-stricken over the situation, Cristiana Tiberio explained, "We have suffered and overcome worse conditions when we first started out."

GENERAL INFO

Country	Italy
Region	Abruzzo
Appellation(s)	Abruzzo
Proprietors	Riccardo, Cristiana, Antonio Tiberio (father, daughter, son)
Founded	2000
Winemaker	Cristiana Tiberio
Annual Production	8,300 9L cases
Farming (Sustainable, organic, biodynamic)	Sustainable