

Tiberio

COLLE VOTA MONTEPULCIANO D'ABRUZZO - 2020

REGION: ITALY - ABRUZZO



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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.

REVIEWS

Colle Vota Montepulciano d'Abruzzo – 2020

95 Points - Terroir Sense - Ian D'Agata, June, 2024

Good deep, bright red. Knockout aromas and flavours of dark fruits, violet, licorice, menthol and flint. Dense but seamless, with wonderfully precise broad, palate-staining red fruit and mineral flavours. Offers a texture of liquid velvet but also boasts a light touch that is very Colle Vota. The long aftertaste features fine-grained tannins, wonderful class and depth. 2026 – 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.

96+ Points - Vinous, September, 2024

The 2020 Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Colle Vota is a spice box on the nose, with wilted violets and hints of spiced-orange, white smoke, clove and dried black cherries. It's pleasantly sweet upon entry, with a cool-toned feel and lavender-laced wild berry fruits that gain in tension and complexity as a flinty-mineral concentration forms toward the close. This resonates like liquid velvet, leaving sweet tannins offset by hints of sour citrus, finishing long and potent. The balance within is otherworldly. This elegant and harmonious Colle Vota will pay dividends in the cellar, and I wouldn't be surprised if it warrants a high score down the road. 2026 – 2036

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.”

94 Points - Decanter, November, 2024

From a vineyard of ~20-year-old vines, this Montepulciano d'Abruzzo is full of definition: warm, earthy hedgerow berries and energetic dark cherries are outlined by dried herbs and a hint of chocolate on a lifted, poised and sapid palate. Superb! 2025 – 2029

97 Points - Vinous, June, 2026

The 2020 Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Colle Vota is simply stunning. An airy bouquet of sweet lavender and dusty violet gives way to smoky grilled sage and mentholated blackberries. It's graceful and serene, with inner florals and radiant wild berry fruits over crunchy minerality. Vibrant acidity maintains fantastic energy even as the 2020 reveals its tannic structure, finishing firm and long with a tart blackberry twang. This is drinking beautifully today but has the balance to continue maturing for a decade or more. 2027 – 2038

The Tiberio vineyards look fantastic after the struggles of the 2024 vintage. While several vines did not recover, most of the ancient Trebbiano Abruzzese and Montepulciano vines are thriving thanks to a balanced and slightly rainy 2026 season. Spirits are high. On this trip, I toured all of the parcels planted with massal selections, as well as a new parcel planted entirely to trees. The idea behind this is to create a forest that will bring balance to the vineyards. As for the new releases, Tiberio's Cerasuolo d'Abruzzo is once again a standout in the category. I also tasted every vintage of the Colle Vota, from 2014 to the newly minted 2022. Its aging potential is commendable, and the 2014 is still fresh as a daisy. Tiberio plans to release mixed six-packs of this wine in the near future, with two bottles each of 2018, 2019 and 2021. The 2023 Bianco Fonte Canale, now in bottle, no longer bears the name Trebbiano d'Abruzzo. After years of research and genetic testing, Cristiana Tiberio no longer believes that the DOC accurately represents her wine. Whereas most Trebbiano d'Abruzzo is a blend of Trebbiano Toscano and other varieties, the Fonte Canale is genetically confirmed to be 100% varietal Trebbiano Abruzzese. The 2023 is one of the best renditions of Fonte Canale I've ever tasted.