



Winemaker: Stefano Tofanelli
Generation: 2nd



Umanu White

From the wilds of Corsica comes this expressive white blend that weaves together the warm citrus of Vermentinu (aka Vermentino) and the round, slightly exotic fruit of Biancu Gentile - one of the island's native varieties once thought to be lost to the ages and now staging a comeback. Low in alcohol but big in terms of aromatics and flavor, this highly quaffable beach wine features layers of warm lemon grove, honeydew melon, wildflowers, and minerality. The palate is bright and balanced, with a dry finish that begs for some herbed goat cheese or a chilled scampi.

WINEMAKER BIOGRAPHY

Uniting some 60 vigneroni on near the NE corner of the rugged, beautiful, and windswept island of Corsica, co-operative Groupe Uval oversees a wide range of price points and styles, and also vinifies wine for a number of small, independent estates. Although white and red wines can be had, roughly 70% of the group's production culminates in rosé!

ENOLOGIST

Stefano Tofanelli



TASTING NOTES

- Color** Very light with straw highlights
- Nose** Expressive, with lemon grove, honeydew, and wildflower blossoms
- Palate** Fresh and bright, with nice balance of fruit and minerality
- Finish** Dry, featuring warm lemon peel



VINEYARD & VINIFICATION

- Vineyard Location** Île de Beauté IGP, Corsica
- Vineyard Size** 45 ha
- Varietals List** 70% Vermentinu
30% Biancu Gentile
- Farming Practices** Non-certified organic; HVE certified; dry-farmed
- Elevation** 220 m
- Soils** Calcareous clay and limestone
- Maturation Summary** In Steel for 3 months and Bottled for 3 months
- In Steel** 3 months
- Alcohol** 12.0 %
- Acidity** 5.8 g/liter
- Residual Sugar** 0.5 g/liter
- Annual Production** 450 bottles





REGION

CORSICA

With a vein of mountains at its center and over a thousand kilometers of dramatic coastline, Corsica is one of Europe's most beguiling – and breathtaking – destinations for wine and travel. Dubbed the “Ile de Beauté” (Isle of Beauty) by the French, this Mediterranean paradise is home to breathtaking cliffs, languid azure beaches, and ancient villages tucked high into craggy peaks. Although it is situated just above Sardinia and lies closer to Tuscany as the crow flies, Corsica is located 110 miles SE of Provence and has officially belonged to France since 1769. Historically, the island was annexed to the city-state of Genoa and used to provide additional farms for its population. Today, the culinary and enological influences of both countries can still be felt, although Corsicans remain fiercely independent in spirit (not unlike the Sicilians), and grape varieties have evolved differently on the island, developing their own unique set of characteristics. Even red wines, for example, can exhibit high levels of minerality, with wild herbal and floral components often adding to the fresh and vibrant fruit. Corsica's climate is simultaneously maritime and continental, heavily influenced both by the sea and also by the mountains which dominate its interior. While a huge array of micro-climates exist, all of Corsica enjoys constant winds – including the cooling Mistral from France and the hot Sirocco from across the Mediterranean – coupled with mild overall winters (frost is rare) and warm, dry summers.

In the island's north, where calcareous clay and limestone soils prevail, primary grape varieties include Vermentinu (Vermentino) and Niellucciu (Sangiovese). In the south, with its granite-driven terroir, the most prominent grape is Sciaccarellu (derived from Mammolo). Other long-standing white varieties on the island include Bianco Gentile, Genovese, and Riminese, along with red grapes Aléatico and Grenache. While Corsica has seen its share of (postwar) large production – and international varieties such as Chardonnay and Pinot Noir are also planted – in recent decades there has been a palpable shift toward indigenous grapes, artisanal sensibilities, and quality over quantity. Today, there are 9 AOCs spanning the island's coastal perimeter – including the well-known Patrimonio and Cap Corse sub-regions – and a single IGT which accounts for nearly two-thirds of production. Roughly 135 estates and 4 co-operatives (with an additional 150 farmers) exist today, with some 55% of the island's total output consisting of rosés.

ÎLE DE BEAUTÉ IGP

Accounting for nearly two-thirds of Corsica's production, this all-encompassing IGP canvasses the whole island (both Haute-Corse et de la Corse-du-Sud) and, in addition to indigenous varieties, permits a lengthy list of grapes that have migrated from Italy, Spain, and mainland France over the centuries. Among them are local heroes Niellucciu (Sangiovese), Sciaccarellu (Mammolo), and Vermentinu, with grapes as diverse as Barbarossa, Carignan, Chardonnay and Tempranillo also allowed, whether as monovarietals or in blends. While much of the island lies above 400 meters (and most AOP vines grow between 500 and 700 meters), the majority of wines bearing this IGP are produced in the gently sloping, low-lying plains along the east coast of Corsica below Bastia, where alluvial sands, calcareous clay, and limestone prevail (versus the schist, shale, and volcanic soils seen elsewhere). Throughout the island, dry, hot summer days are mitigated by breezes originating from all points, from the European Tramontana to the Saharan Scirocco. While countless microclimates abound, a broader terroir known for its wild, aromatic vegetation helps to set Corsican wines apart: the scrub known as the maquis – which includes fig, lavender and myrtle – covers much of the island

GROUPE UVAL

Reminding us of Sicilians' take on life and their relationship to Italy, most Corsican's view themselves as Corsican first and French second (or in some cases, not at all!) Fiercely proud, independent, and devoted to preserving the wild natural landscape of their island, the vigneron of Groupe Uval take their hands-on trade seriously, each maintaining an average of 15 hectares in the community of Borgo, just south of Bastia. Up there, soils tend to be a mix of clay and limestone, perfect for supporting the clean, fresh, at times herbacious style of the local wines. As elsewhere on the island, emphasis is placed on native varieties such as Biancu Gentile, Vermentinu, Nielluciu (Sangiovese), and Sciaccarellu (Mammolo). That said, the enologist who helped create the co-operative back in 1975, Bordeaux-trained Alain Mazoyer, was also one of the pioneering planters of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir on the island, and both international varieties are also represented.

Matching the island itself, with its ties to both France and Italy, the co-operative employs a Tuscan enologist to make their wines these days – Stefano Tofanelli, born in Montepulciano and with degrees in both agronomy and enology from the University of Florence. Always interested in lesser-known grape varieties, he has been a consultant both at home and abroad for years... and doubtless feels right at home on an island where vines have evolved quite differently for centuries!

With the "Umanu" (Corsican for "Human") series, we get pure, unoaked, and quaffable expressions of Corsican grapes, complex in terms of their aromas but simple in their approach. Like the producers, they are down-to-earth, joyful, and just a little bit wild! We also love their affordable price point, which can be hard to find (coupled with quality) on Corsica. As with most islands, overhead is always higher and transportation to the mainland expensive. Fortunately, this little series, built for backpacking and trips to the beach, comes in under \$20 on the shelf, making the foray as painless as it is delicious.