



Winemaker: Olimpia Roberti
Generation: 2nd



Vino Nobile di Montepulciano DOCG

Loaded with dark cherry and (slightly dusty) tannins, this bold and balanced Nobile pays homage to Montepulciano's distinct clone of Sangiovese: Prugnolo Gentile. With its loose clusters and small berries that lead to both a great concentration of flavor and full-bodied structure, it has long rivaled the prowess of Montalcino's Sangiovese Grosso, but at 2/3 the price. Here, winemaker Olimpia Roberti has chosen the path of quality over quantity, with low yields, low sulfite levels, and an elegant, old-fashioned take on a true Tuscan classic.

WINEMAKER BIOGRAPHY

Forsaking a career as an eighth-generation attorney, winemaker Olimpia Roberti has recently turned all her attentions to the family's 15-hectare estate in the Tuscan town of Montepulciano. Although their first official bottling came in 2006, Olimpia has a natural-born sensibility when it comes to making old-school Vino Nobile... and more than enough tenacity to get the job done!

ENOLOGIST

Lorenzo Landi



TASTING NOTES

- Color** Pie cherry with brick undertones
- Nose** Dark cherry, cherry cordial, white blossoms, and dusty road
- Palate** Very smooth, balanced, and integrated; the wine's considerable tannins are firm yet soft
- Finish** Long and measured



VINEYARD & VINIFICATION

- Vineyard Location** Vino Nobile DOCG, Tuscany
- Vineyard Size** 4 ha
- Varietals List** 90% Sangiovese (Prugnolo Gentile)
5% Colorino
5% Canaiolo
- Farming Practices** Non-certified organic; dry-farmed; grapes picked by hand
- Elevation** 350 m
- Soils** Sandy clay
- Maturation Summary** In Slovenian barrels for 24 months and bottled for 12 months
- Alcohol** 14.0 %
- Acidity** 5.2 g/liter
- Residual Sugar** 0.9 g/liter



REGION

TUSCANY

One of the most recognizable regions in the world, Tuscany has an enological history dating back to the era of the Etruscans. Like Piedmont, Tuscany's daily life is interwoven with its food and wine... In sum, vino is a daily facet of the Tuscan lifestyle. With winding roads, sculpted cypresses, and romantic hilltop towns, Tuscany's beauty is legendary, and for many, Florence - once the epicenter of the Renaissance - provides a cultural heartbeat. That said, while the rolling hills of Colli Fiorentini help form a baseline in the minds of many Americans, the region is also home to Italy's Apennine mountain range (stretching from north to south), the wild, southern Maremma district, and a gorgeous, rugged coastline. In the end, Tuscany is topographically quite diverse, and wine zones range from warm and coastal to surprisingly high, continental, and cool.

As one of Italy's most prolific and historic wine regions, it's no wonder Tuscany has so many dedicated and regulated wines. There are currently 42 DOC's and 11 DOCG's. The latter include, of course, Chianti, Chianti Classico, Brunello di Montalcino and Vino Nobile, all predicated on the single red grape that dominates Tuscan production: Sangiovese. Roughly two-thirds of the vines in Tuscany are devoted to this noble varietal, which also happens to be Italy's most planted grape overall. Beyond this, winemakers have been increasingly supplementing vineyards with Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon (both with a 300+ year history in the region). For better or worse, white varieties generally take a distant back seat to the reds, with Trebbiano Toscano being the most widely planted and Vernaccia and Vermentino enjoying more prestige.

VINO NOBILE DOCG

Long one of Tuscany's most important designations, Vino Nobile achieved DOC status in 1966 and was elevated to DOCG (alongside Brunello) in 1980. The territory spans the hills around the town of Montepulciano, where a specific biotype of Sangiovese, Prugnolo Gentile, offers up layers of dark cherry and dusty earth. With about 1100 hectares under vine and only some 80 producers, it is roughly half the size of nearby Montalcino. While Vino Nobile technically need only contain 70% Sangiovese, many DOCG's are monovarietal, and the list of other permitted grapes (ie Canaiolo, Colorino, Mammolo, Merlot) is fairly short. Vineyard elevations range from 250 to 600 meters, with soil types that include calcareous clay (yielding wines of fuller body and earthier, more concentrated fruit) and a sandy clay mix (often producing slightly lighter wines and adding a layer of berry and floral aromas). The climate leans toward continental, with influence coming from the nearby Apennines as opposed to the sea, which lies some 50 miles to the west. Ageing requirements for Vino Nobile are as follows: a minimum of 2 years, including either 12 months in the barrel and 6 months in bottle or 18 months in the barrel; for Riserva, a minimum 3 years, including 12 months in barrel and 6 months in bottle. (Note also that a new "Pieve" level - above Riserva - has also recently been proposed for the DOCG.)



LE BERTILLE

Making wine in honor of her father, Severio, who passed some years ago, Olimpia Roberti and her enologist, Lorenzo Landi, have set about making a series of highly traditional wines in the storied town of Montepulciano. Located at the foot of the hill, just 2 km below the village proper, her family's vines grow at an average of 350 meters in a mix of sand and clay. "The soil is originally Pliocene," she says, "and in particular has been derived from ancient sands." Headly enough for you? Well, that intellect comes as no surprise, as Olimpia originally started a career as an eighth-generation attorney before falling permanently in in love with the vine... and now she applies both that savvy and a solid work ethic to her new, artisanal trade!

Cultivating two clones of Sangiovese (both the local strain Prugnolo Gentile alongside Sangiovese F9), the Roberti family has dense plantings - 6500 vines per hectare - and an exposition that ranges from NE to SW. From stem to stern, virtually everything about Le Bertille's Vino Nobile in particular is exceedingly traditional. The tannins are bold and dusty, the acidic structure formidable, and the fruit - while bursting with delicious dark cherry - is always kept in check. In addition, Olimpia prides herself on maintaining lower sulfite levels (coming in at 80 ppm versus the 150 permitted under the DOCG). "If grapes get overripe," she says, "more sulfites are required, so picking on time and by hand are both key." Lastly, while it is certainly more affordable and convenient to use steel for fermentation (and many modern wineries do), Olimpia prefers to go the old-school route and ferment her Vino Nobile in conical-shaped vats of Slovenian oak. This is a considerably more expensive and labor intensive option, but in the end it lends greater structure and ageability to the wine. A fine tribute, we feel, both to her father who started Le Bertille and to the rich, historical precedent set forth in Montepulciano!