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WINE TRAVEL FOOD

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30 YEARS

THE GUIDE

OF SUCCESS

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THE FLAVOR OF THE SEA

William Pregentelli collaborated

# UMANI RONCHI

## Conero Reborn

*The Conero is called a mountain although technically, by a few meters, it doesn't reach the altitude for that description. It is the point at which the Adriatic Riviera seems to hiccup and break the long low, sandy strip that goes from Trieste in the north to the Gargano peninsula in the south. To its back is one of Italy's oldest DOC territories, Rosso Conero. This is where the Umani Ronchi winery reigns.*

After a few years in the shadows, the DOC Rosso Conero returns to the list of Tre Bicchieri wines, thanks to Umani Ronchi and his Riserva Campo San Giorgio '11. "The first vintage produced was the 2009," Michele Bernetti, winery owner, told us, "but Campo San Giorgio is a project that started about fifteen years ago when we planted a new montepulciano vineyard in the plot that gives its name to the wine." Rosso Conero DOC and Conero DOCG are the most northern montepulciano-based denomina-

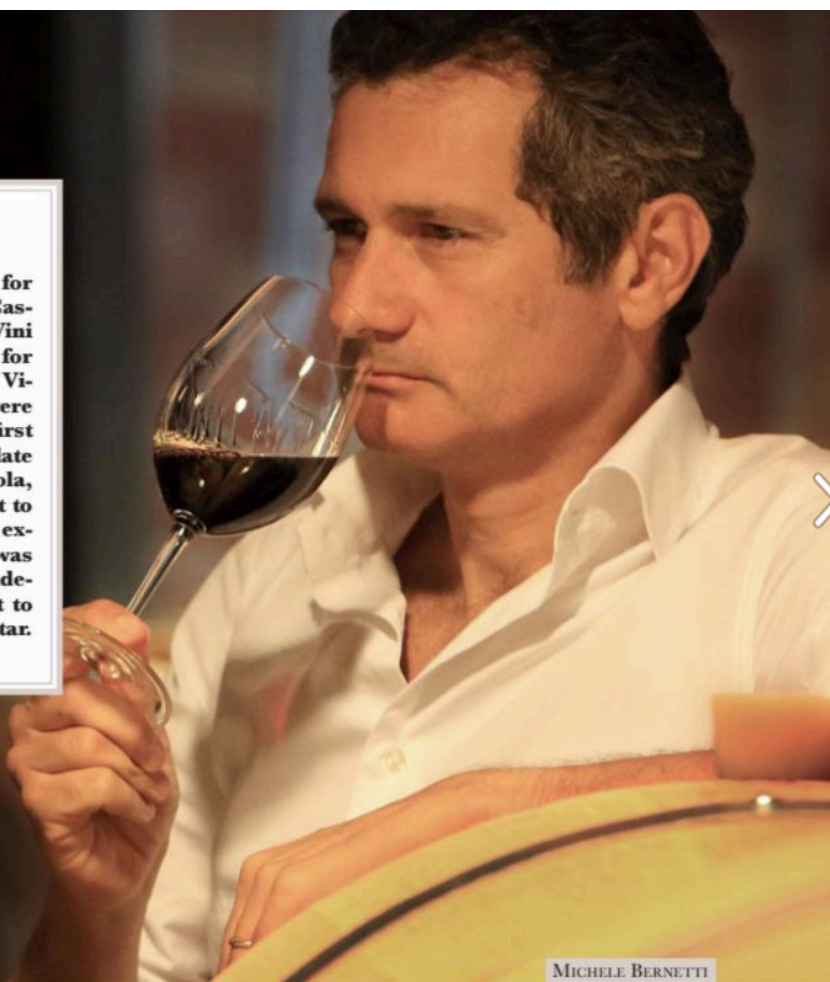
tions. The DOC was established in 1967 (the DOCG came in 2004 for the Riserva version), during a period in which most of Marche's vineyards were planted with sangiovese. "In order to marry the power of montepulciano grapes with the potential of this terroir to yield elegant wines," Bernetti explained, "we planted a vineyard with a high density of plants per hectare, using a kind of alberello or gobelet training method balanced by a vertical foliage framework." The first two vintages had already captured our attention, but it was this

### IL PELAGO BORDOLESE MARCHIGIANO

Among the winery's many successes, Pelago deserves mention. "It was born in 1994. We owners wanted to produce a Bordeaux-style wine. Giacomo Tachis, who in that period worked with our winery, suggested that we use montepulciano, and a high percentage of it, 45%. In 1997, Pelago won the award for the Best Red Wine at London's International Wine Challenge. "Then, in 2006, it won Tre Bicchieri, a kind of seal of value on that wine. With the 2012 vintage, which will go on the market in December, we will have done eighteen harvests, a sort of maturity. That's why we're launching a newly designed label, more classic and composed, suited for a wine that has reached adulthood."

## VECCHIE VIGNE VERDICCHIO DELL'ANNO 2012

Among the winery's achievements is the prize for White of the Year, bestowed on Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Cl. Sup. Vecchie Vigne '09 in the 2012 Vini d'Italia guide. "2009 was a normal year, ideal for making a great wine," Michele told us. "Vecchie Vigne was a project that was a few years old. We were experimenting different approaches. In 2001, the first production year, we brought it in almost like a late harvest. Over the years, together with Beppe Caviola, we decided to lighten it, make it fresher, leaving it to the grapes of this vineyard planted in the 1970s to express themselves. The White of the Year award was the culmination of that approach. Our joy was indescribable. Phone calls poured in. Among the first to compliment us was Ampelio Bucci, a Verdicchio star. Of course, it was a great honor."



MICHELE BERNETTI



UMANI RONCHI |  
OSIMO (AN) |  
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2011 that squared the circle, that was a perfect synthesis of character and finesse that, according to the 2017 Vini d'Italia guide, 'established new levels of elegance and minerality that Montepulciano del Conero can achieve.' But Umani Ronchi isn't only Conero. Over seventy years, the winery has grown exponentially. Today it produces about three million bottles and exports 70% of its production to over 60 countries. Add to the 70 hectares cultivated around Osimo, 110 hectares in the Verdicchio area, between Cupramontana, the heart of the winery, and Montecarotto, plus another 35 hectares in Abruzzo. It was a Verdicchio, Casal di Serra '99, that led the list of the 16 Tre Bicchieri granted in this thirtieth anniversary of Vini d'Italia. "It was an important accomplishment, not only for the prestige of the award, but above all because our Verdicchio is one of the least expensive wines in the guide,"

commented Michele. "That recognition was assigned to a wine of which 100,000 bottles are released. It proves the overall quality of our vineyards and our grapes."

The past is laden with laurels, but the future looks brilliant, too. Conversion to organic, begun in 2001 with the Abruzzo vineyard ("It's not a fashion, but an ethical act in behalf of our territory and our collaborators," said Bernetti), is moving ahead. In 2015, certification arrived for about 50% of the verdicchio vineyards. The other half will be certified within the next two years. "Looking at tomorrow," stated Bernetti, "I see an even more solid business, not only from the financial point of view, but above all in terms of structure, planning and teamwork. I hope that the real value of our wines and our denomination will be recognized even more. We have had success, but we can and must do more."