



WINE



# VERDICCHIO – VERY CUTE FOR SEAFOOD



Wine production in Italy dates back thousands of years, and as a major producer and consumer, the country is making a strong comeback with tighter regulation, technical specialization and quality control. Umani Ronchi in Central Italy is one distinguished winery that is among those leading the charge, writes Andy Ng.

**U**nder the ownership of the Bianchi-Bernetti family for almost fifty years, the Umani Ronchi winery - located on the east coast provinces of Le Marche and Abruzzo - has never let up on quality. In co-operation with viticulture experts at the University of Ancona, it is actively translating some of the serious research work into the most advanced techniques in agronomy and vineyard care.

I caught up with Michele Bernetti, the third-generation owner of Umani Ronchi, at a recent vertical tasting of its Verdicchio white wines at Fishteria in Wan Chai.

“We enjoy the full benefits of copious sunshine and mild temperatures of the Mediterranean climate,” Michele explains. “Together with our hilly terrain, we are able to make the most of the terroir and the indigenous grape varieties.”

Another distinctive feature at Umani Ronchi, he says, is that most of their wines are produced from single vineyards. It is a practice that has succeeded in elevating the image of Le Marche in Italy and around the world, and dovetails with his motto: Great wines, not big wines!

He also discloses that they have recently started to convert 50% of their acreage to organic farming, marking a new trail-blazing direction that the winery is heading.

At the seafood dinner, guests were treated to a welcoming drink in the Villa Bianchi Verdicchio de Jesi DOC Classico 2014 which embodies the classic attributes of freshness and elegance with an

almond finish. It washed down the oysters perfectly!

For the subsequent dishes of Mixed Seafood Carpaccio of scallop, prawn and sea urchin, plus Clams and Calamari, and Lobster Risotto, Michele picked the 1997, 2002 and 2013 vintages of the Verdicchio Castelli Jesi DOC Classico Superiore Casal di Serra. The exposure to its own yeasts for about 5 months yields a distinctly rich, elegant and complex wine that pairs well with the delicate seafood combo.

For the final dish of Tuna Steak Tagliata, the Verdicchio Castelli Jesi DOC Classico Superiore Vecchie Vigne was chosen, featuring the vintages of 2007, 2011 and 2013, made from perfectly ripened grapes of the ‘Casal di Serra’ vineyard.

To complement the dessert of Lemon Cream with wild berry and almond, the sweeter Maximo Marche Bianco IGT 2012 was the choice finale. It is a pure Sauvignon Blanc cultivated in the highest area of the Villa Bianchi estate.

The next time you go for a seafood extravaganza, remember the name Verdicchio. With its high acidity and nutty flavor, plus a hint of honey, you wouldn’t find a better pairing.

For information on wines from Le Marche and Abruzzo, or other parts of Italy and other countries, contact Sino Vantage at

[www.sinovantagewines.com](http://www.sinovantagewines.com)

(852) 2581 9101

