

IMPORTED BY
OLIVER MCCRUM WINES
WWW.OMWINES.COM

VALLEVÒ WINERY

ROCCA SAN GIOVANNI * ABRUZZO

Some years ago I helped a group of Italian winemakers tour Sonoma County wineries. The following year I was at Vinitaly, the huge Italian wine trade fair, and I went to say hello to one of the winemakers at his booth; his name was Gianni Pasquale, and he was the Technical Director for a small co-operative winery in the Abruzzo region, near Chieti. We talked for a bit, and then he asked if I'd like to taste his wines. I must admit I felt slightly embarrassed; I knew roughly how little they cost, and I assumed they'd be pretty dire. But it would have been rude to refuse.

They poured the wines, and I started tasting, mentally composing a white lie to explain why I couldn't buy them. Then I realized that they were in fact exactly right- very flavorful, honest, well-made wines at a perfect price. In a sense this is an importer's highest achievement; it's pretty easy to find good wine at \$50 a bottle, but very difficult at less than \$10. I recommend all three of these wines wholeheartedly.

Trebbiano d'Abruzzo

I'm not sure why I didn't bring in this perfect everyday white when I first started importing the Montepulciano; I certainly should have. The wine is pale straw in color, with aromas of almond, citrus and a hint of herbs. It is bone dry and finishes with a very attractive hint of apple-skin. This is a knockout everyday bottle of white wine, flavorful enough to stand up to a range of dishes but bright enough to make a good dry aperitif.



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Cerasuolo di Montepulciano

This rosé, typically named 'Cerasuolo,' is a shocking value given the prices of some of the well-known rosés from southern France. (The Montepulciano grapes are crushed, the skins macerated for 12 hours or so, then the wine is vinified off the skins like a white.) Good solid deep pink color; aroma and flavor of strawberry, with some herbal notes; lively and fresh on the palate but flavorful enough to stand up to all sorts of food. Grilled chicken or salmon come to mind.

Montepulciano d'Abruzzo

Montepulciano makes some famous top-end big reds here in the Abruzzo, but the variety also makes amazingly good inexpensive red wine, far better than comparable Sangiovese. Aromas and flavors of black plum, black cherry, herbs, and black olives surround a wonderful meaty texture, with enough chewiness to make the wine stand up to food. This is the ideal 'spaghetti red,' at a price that will bring a smile to your face every time you open a bottle.

