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Wines Of The Week: Unexpectedly Age-Worthy Bottles



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Food & Drink

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Aging wine is an awfully tricky business. In addition to issues of proper storage—adequate humidity, constant temperature in the mid-50s Fahrenheit, no direct sunlight, and more—there are serious questions of when to open a bottle after you’ve spent all of that time waiting for it to reach its proper state of maturity.

And even that—the concept of “proper maturity”—is by its very nature fraught with an inherent sense of uncertainty: All of us, after all, tend to prefer wines at different stages of evolution, so there really is no indisputably perfect moment to pop the cork from a bottle.

But the one constant that I see all the time is collectors allowing preconceived notions to guide what they age...or, perhaps more accurately, what they don’t age. Because while of course great-vintage Bordeaux, Burgundy, Champagne, Ribera del Duero, and more often find a place of pride in cellars around the world, laying there for years to evolve, there are many wines out there that, though deserving of a few years maturity, are rarely if ever given the chance, simply because of how they are perceived.

My Wines of the Week today, then, confound expectations within their categories when it comes to aging.

[...]

My red Wine of the Week is also one that isn’t often associated with aging: Montepulciano d’Abruzzo. Personally, I love these wines when they’re still fresh, and often alongside casual meals: It’s one of the greatest partners for a well-made pizza in the Italian-wine canon. And truthfully, most Montepulciano d’Abruzzo doesn’t have the structure to age terribly long. It’s usually a wine that provides all the pleasure you could want soon after it’s been released.

But the Binomio Montepulciano d’Abruzzo Riserva 2013 is different. The expected fruit—lots of lovely black cherry, plum, and blackberry—is joined by complex notes of leather, tobacco, chocolate, and violets, and the balance is so beautifully calibrated with this generous wine that I cannot wait to see the heights it achieves in the next seven or eight years.

Both of these wines represent excellent value and offer lots of enjoyment right now—if you don’t want to age them, or if you don’t have a cellar or wine refrigerator to do so, open them up without any hesitation whatsoever—but also the potential for even greater pleasure with a bit of evolution. It’s unexpected, to be sure, but that’s the joy of wines like these that go against accepted wisdom so deliciously.

Binomio Montepulciano d’Abruzzo Riserva 2013

Aromatically rich, with chocolate and blackberry alongside leather, tobacco, and spice. On the palate, this is plush and generous, and while the tannins clearly give it another seven to eight years of evolution, it’s hard to resist right now, with its generous, violet-flecked flavors of black cherry, plum, and blackberry, framed with spice and a hint of cedar. Drink now or hold through 2025. SRP: \$50



These vines contribute to a Montepulciano d’Abruzzo of surprising aging potential. The Binomio Riserva 2013, while excellent now, can easily mature through 2025 (Credit: Binomio). BINOMIO