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89

Pecorino Colline Pescaresi 2017 13% \$16

I've been tasting more and more Pecorinos – and many good ones – in the last three or four years. They're a great addition to the white offerings of Abruzzo, which can be a little tiring when Trebbiano is the only option.

This one from La Valentina has a delightfully rounded palate. In fact, it's almost rapturously rounded for Pecorino; they can be pretty pithy and lean. The flavors balance nicely between savory spice and citrusy fruit as well as offering almond-toned touches. There's excellent acidic lightness from the attack to the ever-so-mildly pithy finish. It's a dynamo of a flavorful and harmonious wine, and I'd easily drink it on a regular basis. Moreover, this is wildly, wildly good deal at just \$16 retail.

Drink: 2018-20

P. S. I absolutely adored this zippy white with Trader Joe's Tadka Dal! There was a brilliantly savory harmony, and the dual - but distinctly different - spiciness of fiery pepper seed tones versus cracked white peppercorns nicely canceled out.

88

Montepulciano d'Abruzzo 2015 13% \$14

Smooth as satin, this full-bodied, boldly fruited red is very approachable. It has matured beautifully to this point, and it's drinking very well with its volumes of black plum skin, figs and raisins. There is ample acidic lift coupled with succulent juiciness to keep the hand headed back to the glass. There's a wee bit of pithy tannin as the solidly concentrated flavors glide into a medium finish. This over-delivers for the price point!

Drink: 2018-20

90

Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Spelt 2015 13.5% \$21

This wine has a surprisingly strong impression of new oak when it is first opened, despite only 20% of the wine seeing oak, only a portion of which was new. Going back to it several hours later, the wine had shed its oak-driven tones, morphing into fruity and minerally ones. It's packed with roasted plums, strawberry preserves and plenty of irony-earthly resonance. There's also a sweet balsamic note on the moderate finish.

Drink: 2018-21