

Crushed Grape Chronicles

Adventures in Wine Exploration
the stories behind the vines

La Valentina – Organic wines of place in the rolling hills of Pescara

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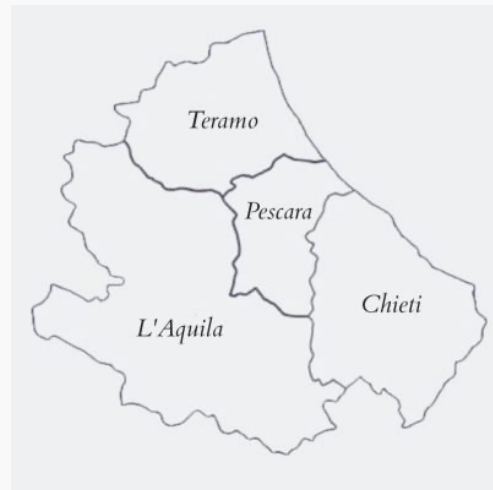
La Valentina – Organic wines of place in the rolling hills of Pescara



View from La Valentina in the Pescara region of Abruzzo Italy

Italy – Abruzzo – Pescara – Spoltore

On the Eastern Coast of Italy within the Abruzzo region of Pescara, not far from the ocean and the city of Pescara, you will find Spoltore and the La Valentina/Binomio winery.



Looking toward Gran Sasso, lost in the clouds from La Valentina Pescara Abruzzo Italy

La Valentina

The winery sits overlooking the vineyards of Montepulciano, Trebbiano, and Pecorino, the primary grapes of the Abruzzo region of Italy. From the deck overlooking the vineyard, you can see Majella Mountain to the southwest. In early June, there was still a bit of snow on this peak that reaches 2,700 meters (or 9,000 feet). Look Northwest on a clear day, and you can see the Gran Sasso Massif sitting 2,900 meters above sea level, the highest peak in the Apennine Mountains and the highest mountain in Europe south of the Alps.

“Three-quarters of the region is occupied by mountains. We have a flat area only on the coast. Consider that here we are 200 meters above sea level, and we are more or less 10 miles from the coast.” Sabatino Properzios, one of the owners of La Valentina, tells us as we look over the vineyard.

Between the mountains and the winery lay an undulating patchwork of vineyards, grains, and orchards in colors from deep greens to yellow and tan.



View of the Maejella from La Valentina Pescara Bruzzo Italy

The Vineyards of La Valentina and Binomio

All of La Valentina's vineyards sit within Pescara Province.

“La Valentina is located in Spoltore. This is the village where we are (right now). All our vineyards are in Pescara Province. Largely shared in 2 areas. One that is more coastal, Spoltore, Loreto, and Civitella, that are villages just behind that hill (points south of the winery).”

As we look down from the winery, we take in the original vineyard planted in 1990 by the Properzios, Sabatino, his brothers Roberto and Andrea, and their father.

To the southwest, they have another vineyard in San Valentino just behind Majella on the western side. This allows them different terroir and microclimates, one coastal and the other mountain, the regions evenly splitting their 40 hectares of vines.

“All the vineyards are completely organic, 100%. All the grapes are harvested by hand.”

They strive here for character and a sense of place in the wines, cherishing the old vines. The youngest vines here are 12 years old, the oldest 51. Vines are replaced with cuttings from the same vineyard to maintain their genetic selection.

The soils here are primarily clay & limestone with alluvial influences from the Pescara River, and vineyards are primarily southwest facing. Sabatino encourages us to look at not just the soil or the aspect but all the conditions that create the unique terroir of this place.



La Valentina vineyard planted in the Pergola Abruzzese style in Spoltore Italy

The Pergola systems of La Valentina

As you look down at the vineyard, you can see the two types of trellising, traditional Pergola Abruzzese and an adapted Pergola system.

“This is a sort of modified Pergola Abruzzese because it is a mix of Pergola Abruzzese and Pergola Trentina. We use this system because we have more plants on the row. But the larger distance between the rows is the same as with the other systems. Everything is done to have a higher density per hectare. This is the target... it's all harvested by hand. It's all worked with the same machine that you use with the other system. Because the distance (between rows) is the same.”

Pergola Trentina is known for its sloped canopy, while the Abruzzese style is flat. It's a bit shocking to see the difference in the planting density. The older Abruzzese-style plantings seem to have so much more elbow room. The newer style plantings in the modified Pergola Abruzzese/Trentina are 1600 to 2000 plants per hectare.



Modified Pergola Abruzzese/Trentina in the Spoltore Vineyard of La Valentina in Abruzzo Italy

The wines of La Valentina and Binomio

After taking in the view, we head into the tasting room with Sabatino to taste a selection of their wines.

We began with 2 wines from their Spelt line. Spelt is a wheat farrow that Spoltore is known for. Their idea was to link the name of these wines with the land.





Wines of La Valentina in Pescara Abruzzo Italy

Spelt Trebbiano 2020

This is their current release. It comes from 40-year-old vines grown at 300 meters. There is no skin contact, and the wine spends 6 months on the lees in Stainless Steel before being racked into concrete for a year. The wine is unfined and unfiltered.

Pale gold with notes of warm herbs, Meyer lemon, and a note of chamomile on the nose, it was light and elegant on the palate with soft lemon notes.

Spelt Cerasuolo d'Abruzzo 2022

100% Montepulciano, this wine spends 10-12 hours on the skin. After fermentation, it spends 3-4 months in stainless steel sur lee before bottling.

The nose is filled with tart fruit, blackberry, and mulberry with dusty notes. On the palate, the fruit notes are ripe with raspberry and strawberry.

We moved into red wines and tasted their Linea Classica entry-level line.

Linea Classica Montepulciano d'Abruzzo 2021

Dusty and musky with brambly notes and mulberry, this wine ages 18 months before release. The rim here was magenta.

I got mixed peppers, ground black pepper, black currant, and subtle green notes on the palate. It felt light on my palate with the first sip, and then the tannins kicked in and were decidedly sticky, like licking suede.

Linea Classica Cerasuola d'Abruzzo 2022

This wine was brighter on the nose, created for fresh consumption. The strawberry notes were more prominent. This wine does not see sur lees aging.

Spelt Montepulciano d'Abruzzo 2019

This wine does 20-25 days of maceration on the skins and then 18 months in large-format oak. It ages for a year in a bottle before release.

This wine had backbone. There were notes of muddled mint, eucalyptus, and concentrated currant notes. There was a bit of vegetal notes, smoke, and savory spice. There was a bit of funk, like saddle sweat, that was not unappealing.

I was surprised by the higher acid on the palate, and the tannins here were heavier and stickier. The wine itself had more red and orange tones.



Montepulciano wines of La Valentina and Biomio in Pescara Italy

Binomio Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Riserva 2019

He and his friend, Stefano Inama of Inama Azienda Agricola, purchased the San Valentino vineyard in Citeriore to produce a great Montepulciano d'Abruzzo together. The vineyard is just 4.2 hectares but was planted in the 1970s near the Majella National Park and sits at about 350 meters asl.

This Montepulciano is of the Africa clone, so called because the bunches are in the shape of the continent of Africa.

Due to its age, the vineyard is low-yield and typically harvests at the end of October. It spends 20-5 days on the skins in Stainless Steel and 18 months in a 60/40 mix of new and used barriques. This wine ages 2 years in bottle before release.

I found notes of savory cooked berries, blackberries, spices, leather, tobacco, and earth.

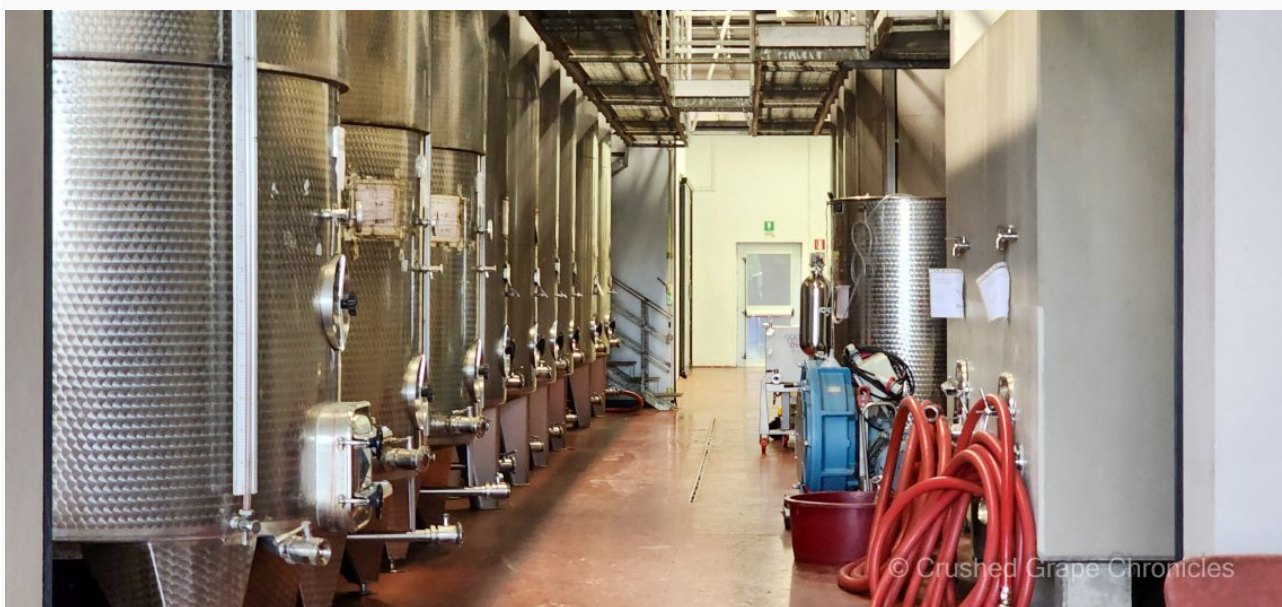
Bellovedere Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Riserva 2019

Our final wine was the Bellovedere Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Riserva 2019 from La Valentina. This was great to compare with the Binomio. You could see the difference in terroir, the Binomio from the mountainous area, the Bellovedere just 10 kilometers from the sea. This vineyard is in the Terre dei Vestini. This wine is only produced in good years when the grapes are fully mature.

Fermentation is completed in Slovenian oak for 1 month, then it ages 18 months in a combination of barriques, tonneaux, concrete, and some in the same casks it fermented in. The wine is then blended and bottled according to the moon cycle. It is unfined and unfiltered and ages in bottle 1 year before release.

This wine was smooth with notes of sea breeze. The nose was sweet and warm with notes of curry spices, black plum, violet, and a bit of mocha.

With all those complex notes on the nose, I was surprised at the clarity on the palate. All the notes were integrated, and then there was a bit of sapidity.



Following our tasting, we visited the cellar, where they have quite an array of vessels, stainless steel, concrete, a variety of sizes of oak as well as terra cotta amphora.

The wine from amphora is new and will be released in January 2024. This is a Montepulciano that spends 4 months in amphora on the skins. They then rack the wine and return it to the amphora to age.



Where to find La Valentina Wines

Sabatino is a gracious host, and the wines and views are wonderful. These are wines worthy of searching for.

La Valentina and **Binomio** Wines are imported into the US by **Dalla Terra**.

Several of these wines are available online through Wine.com. *(disclosure *If you use the affiliate link on our page, we may receive a commission, so in case you choose to do this, we say thank you in advance!)*

We visited La Valentina on a Press Trip organized by IEEM who coordinated with **Vini d'Abruzzo** to give an in-depth look at this region and its wines.

More on Abruzzo by Crushed Grape Chronicles

- [**Abruzzo on Italys East Coast and Montepulciano**](#)
- [**Unwind and Savor Sparkling Spumante on Italy's Gorgeous Trabocchi Coast in Abruzzo**](#)
- [**A Virtual Escape to Abruzzo with Wine and Regional Pairings**](#)
- **Pecorino d'Abruzzo - complexity and variety with one grape**



Sabatino Properzios at Fattoria La Valentina in Spoltore.