



Vini San Valentino

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Loreto

Meandering Through A Corner of Le Marche: Pesaro e Urbino

From coastal Pesaro – Rossini's birthplace – to hilltop Urbino – the "ideal Renaissance city" – the Pesaro e Urbino province in Le Marche is verdant with nature, music, history, faith, food, and wine.

The province of Pesaro e Urbino encompasses the northern third of Le Marche. It's bordered on the north by Emilia-Romagna and the independent republic of San Marino, on the west by Toscana and Umbria, and on the east by the Adriatic.

If you love Italy, this morsel of Le Marche definitely has something to capture your affection. Consider my discoveries as an a la carte menu from which to choose rather than a fixed itinerary.

Pesaro's Favorite Son

My travels to this area were based in the pleasant family seaside resort of Pesaro which flies the coveted bandiera blu (blue flag) for the quality of its coastal waters. The late Luciano Pavarotti owned a beach villa here which is now available for rental.

Because it's the provincial capital, a modern city grew up around the centro storico. Piazza del Popolo sits atop what once was the Roman

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Emilia-Romagna continued from page 1

a bottle of Ca' de Medici Lambrusco (\$8) is plump, rich and refreshing, just what you would want as an aperitivo or as an accompaniment to a platter of prosciutto. If you're curious about how elevated the wine can become in the right hands, try the Vecchia Modena Lambrusco di Sorbara from Cleto Chiarli, or their Vigneto Enrico Cialdini (both around \$18); alternately, sample the fine Lambruscos of Cantine Ceci, which retail in the \$20 range.



Umberto Cesari



Chiarli

The Albana grape reaches its greatest glory in the passito style, with the grapes dried in the traditional wooden boxes, or on grates in barns. Delicately sweet, with good balancing acidity and overtones of almond and quince, it shines after dinner with cheeses and roasted chestnuts. Excellent versions are available from Campodelsole (\$25) and Tre Monti (\$30) in half-liter bottles.

Tasting in The Region

The wine trail in Romagna is filled with pleasant detours and delightful surprises. If time and transportation permit, make sure to pay a visit to Castelluccio, located on a hilltop in Modigliana. Run by the talented winemaker Claudio Fiore, this estate gained fame in the 1970s when the owner hired Claudio's father Vittorio, a noted enologist, to oversee and improve production. Vittorio Fiore began aging the single vineyard wines of Castelluccio in French barriques, a technique previously unheard of in the region. Up to that point Sangiovese di Romagna had been a poor relation to its Tuscan cousin, but under Fiore's leadership the wines soon gained international acclaim.

Claudio began our tasting by inquiring, in an offhand manner, if we were interested in sampling a local expression of Sauvignon Blanc. The wine – Ronco del Re (\$35), an IGT Forli – turned out to be absolutely riveting. It had intense, focused citrus flavors underlined by layers of minerals, and was complex and singular. The reds

were distinctive as well, particularly the single vineyard Sangiovese Ronco delle Genestre (\$45) and the Massicone (a 50/50 blend of Sangiovese and Cabernet). The Fiore family also makes another label from a nearby estate called Balia di Zola.

Old World meets New World at the small estate of San Valentino, a few miles from Rimini. Here the situation is much the same as at Castelluccio: Roberto Mascarin took over from his father Giovanni in 1997 and brought the winery to a new level of innovation. The core of his production is Sangiovese, including the entry-level Scabi (\$15) and the Terra di Covignano (\$20), a Riserva. Mascarin is making his international reputation on a series of elegant and concentrated blends including Eclissi di Sole (\$25, half Sangiovese with 20% each of Merlot and Cabernet Franc, along with 10% Syrah), the spectacular Luna Nuova (\$35, an 80/20 mix of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot) and a hefty single-varietal Syrah (\$95). These wines have become cult favorites in some of the top restaurants in California and New York, and it's easy to see why.

No visit to the region would be complete without a stop at the Enoteca Regionale Emilia-Romagna, dedicated since 1970 to promoting local wine culture. Located in the restored Castello Sforza in the village of Dozza, right on the border between Emilia and Romagna, the Enoteca represents 243 local wine estates. Over 1,000 wines are on display on a rotating basis, and the building features a wine bar where visitors may sample wines by the glass under the direction of trained sommeliers. Balsamic vinegars and spirits are also available.

DREAM OF ITALY

Volume 10, Issue 9

www.dreamofitaly.com

November 2011

The Wines of Emilia-Romagna

Most Americans think of Emilia-Romagna as a single region, while it is actually an uneasy union of two provinces joined together in 1945. The areas could not be more different. Emilia is sometimes referred to as the bread basket of Italy, the home of Parmigiano-Reggiano, Prosciutto di Parma and the balsamic vinegar of Modena; it is conservative and traditional in politics.

great white wines of Italy, and is known for its Sangiovese – full-bodied, spicy and distinctive.

Trying Them at Home



Lambrusco

Lambrusco doesn't get much respect from Americans, largely because they fail to put the wine in context. Refreshing, effervescent and off-dry, it is perfect on a hot day or as an accompaniment to a salami sandwich. It is not a "great" wine in the way that most people would define the term, but not every occasion in life calls for one.

Romagna is known for game and seafood, and leans toward intense regional feeling and socialism. Simply put, Romagna is the coffee and Emilia is the cream.

The contrast extends to wine as well. Emilia is the birthplace of Lambrusco, and has never really been taken seriously in the U.S. Romagna is the home of Albana di Romagna, one of the

We constantly hear that Lambrusco is improving, and that better examples are available for purchase. Strictly speaking, there's no need to splurge –

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Half of Emilia-Romagna is covered by plains.

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The ancient Via Emilia co

## Wineries

Contact these vineyards in advance to reserve a time to attend a tasting. Most don't list tasting prices on their websites, but expect to pay a small fee.

### Umberto Cesari

Via Stanzano, 1120  
Castel San Pietro Terme  
(39) 051 941896  
www.umbertocesari.it

Open Tuesday through Friday with options for tours, tasting and lunch at the vineyard.

### Ronchi di Castelluccio

Via Tramonto, 15  
Modigliana (Forlì-Cesena)  
(39) 0546 942486  
www.ronchidicastelluccio.it

### Vini San Valentino

Via Tomasetta, 13  
Frazione di San Martino in Ventti (Rimini)  
(39) 0541 752231  
www.vinsanvalentino.com  
Also offers accommodations at its agriturismo.

### Campodelsole

Via Cellaimo, 850  
Bertinoro  
(39) 0543 444562  
www.campodelsole.it

Tre Monti  
Via Lola 3, Loc. Bergullo  
Imola  
(39) 0542 657116  
www.tremonti.it

### Chiarli 1860

Via Manin, 15  
41122 Modena  
(39) 059 3163311  
www.chiarli.com

### Cantine Ceci

Via Provinciale, 99  
Torrile (Parma)  
(39) 0521 810252  
www.lambrusco.it

### Monte delle Vigne

Via Monticello, 13  
Ozzano Tarò  
(39) 0521 309704  
www.montedellevigne.it  
Open Monday through Saturday; must book tasting at least a week in advance.

### Tenuta La Viola

Via Colombarone, 888  
Bertinoro  
(39) 0543 445496  
www.tenutalaviola.it  
Open Monday through Friday.

## More Noteworthy Places

### Enoteca Regionale Emilia-Romagna

Piazza Rocca Sforzesca  
Dozza  
(39) 0542 678089  
www.enotecaemiliaromagna.it

### Romagna Terra del Sangiovese

Via A. Coast, 21/25  
Forlimpopoli  
(39) 0543 742059  
www.romagnaterradelsangiovese.it  
The wine store is open several hours per day; consult the website for the most current opening times.

### Wines of the Imola Hills

Via Boccaccio, 27  
Imola  
(39) 0542 25413  
www.stradaviniesapori.it

### Casa Artusi

Via A. Costa, 27/31  
Forlimpopoli  
www.casartusi.it  
(39) 0543 743138  
See the December 2010/  
January 2011 issue of *Dream of Italy*  
for more details.

### Emilia-Romagna Tourism Board

www.emiliaromagnaturismo.it

When exploring wineries in Emilia-Romagna, it's essential to plan your trip in advance. Large-scaled, commercial wine tourism of the type that you might find in the Napa Valley simply doesn't exist. Many estates are small, family-owned operations that only accept visitors by appointment; rather than tasting rooms, gift shops and group tours, you're likely to find yourself sitting around a table with the winemaker as you taste and discuss his products.

The food and wine are never far apart in Italy, and this is particularly true in Emilia-Romagna. Both art forms come together at *Casa Artusi*, the gastronomic center in Forlimpopoli. This special place was covered more in-depth in the December 2010/January 2011 issue of *Dream of Italy* but is worth mentioning again. Named for *Pellegrino Artusi*, the famed 19th-century author of *Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well*, the facility combines many different functions under one roof.

There is a library and small museum devoted to Artusi's life; a test kitchen where visitors can take cooking classes and learn to make specialties of the province; a full-service restaurant and *osteria*; and a wine cellar run by the *Enoteca Regionale*, offering a wine bar with tastings by the glass. Casa Artusi makes an excellent starting point for the exploration of cuisine and winemaking in a region where they are virtually inseparable.

— Mark Spivak

Mark Spivak is an authority on wine, food, spirits and culinary travel. His book, *Iconic Spirits: A Dozen Beverages That Changed the World and Forged the Cocktail Culture*, will be published in the fall of 2012 by Globe Pequot Press.

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