
MONTEMELINO
(Tuoro Sul Trasimeno, Umbria)

March 2021



From the cantina of Montemelino looking down the vineyard with the Lake Trasimeno in the distance.

I had booked a plane ticket last winter and was organizing a wine trip to Italy in the spring. Then, the pandemic hit hard, especially Italy. The trip had to be cancelled. I had already made an appointment with Sabina Cantarelli - the proprietor of her family farm *Montemelina* in Umbria. Both Sabina and I were saddened when we had to cancel our appointment. As the days passed, it was becoming clear that safe international travels were in the distant horizon. Sabina and I kept in touch through our emails. Sabina would joke and say: “*Brian, if you can somehow travel to our Montemelino, you can stay in our country room and isolate for weeks.*” I already knew of her wines. I could not pass on the opportunity to ship her wines to our shores.

Montemelino was started by Sabina’s mother Margaret Etten, a German expat, who moved to Italy in her twenties. She met her Italian husband Guido Cantartelli and her first vintage was 1961. For those of us who love wines, food and Italy, we often dream. Margaret simply did it. I have not met Margaret yet but, when I do, I am going to hug her. Today, it is their daughter Sabina, who runs the cantina with the same spirit. Her family farm has never seen industrial chemicals. The cantina looks down the Lake Trasimeno in the northern part of Umbria. As you can see from the photo above, it is a promised land. The vineyard surface is tiny 8 hectares and the rest of the family farm is dedicated to olive trees, fruits and vegetables to promote diversity.

Greghetto Bianco DOC Trasimeno 2019
SPECULATIE SKU: 109127 750ml 12 bottles/case
\$21.18 Wholesale/ \$27.50 Retail per bottle



This is a white wine made with the local varietal *Greghetto*. A hint of stone fruits with a mineral taste that recalls oyster shells. Not surprising, given the vineyard is a risen seabed from millions of years ago. Precise. Clean. Refreshing. Saline. A trattoria wine that I dreamt of having some on our portfolio. Organically grown grapes on the hills that look down the Lake Trasimeno. Hand-harvested grapes are pressed gently and fermented with ambient yeasts. Raised in neutral vats until the following spring/summer.

Grappolo Rosso DOC Trasimeno 2016
SPECULATIE SKU: 109023 750ml 12 bottles/case
\$21.16 Wholesale/ \$27.50 Retail per bottle



This is a red wine made with *Sangiovese* (60%) and *Trasimeno Gamay* (40%). *Trasimeno Gamay* is a confusing local dialect for *Grenache* and it has been planted in the lake Trasimeno area for centuries. Grapes are hand-harvested and fermented with ambient yeasts. The wine is vinified in concrete tanks and raised in neutral barrels for about eight months. Aging in bottles follows. A hint of morello cherries and raspberry with melting tannins due to long bottle aging. Medium body. This wine has that inimitable Italian sage-rosemary with attractive bitter orange taste. A lovely trattoria red with a sense of place and great tradition.



Umbria IGT Bianco 2019
SPECULATIE SKU: 109020 750ml 12 bottles/case
\$18.80 Wholesale/ \$24.50 Retail per bottle

A white made with *Trebbiano* and *Spoletino* with a small amount of *Grechetto*. 100% Italian soul. A burst of lemon zest bouquet, followed by a lingering grapefruit taste. Delicious. Fresh. Precise. From the family vineyards that are grown in harmony with nature. Minimal intervention in the cellar keeps this wine lively – like all of their wines. Gentle direct press juice is fermented with ambient yeasts and bottled in the following spring/summer when Sabina feels the wine is ready. A delicious Trattoria wine that needs no explanation. Simply open a bottle at a dinner table and chill. And if you have a friend who constantly analyses wines at a dinner table, you should bonk him with a bottle. Any bottle from *Montemelino* will do.



Ciliegiole Rosato Umbria IGT 2019
SPECULATIE SKU: 109064 750ml 12 bottles/case
\$21.16 Wholesale/ \$27.50 Retail per bottle

A rosato made with 100% *Ciliegiole* grapes. *Ciliegiole* is a varietal that was often blended into Chianti in the distant past when Chianti was, well, Chianti before the appellation expanded for commerce. Sabina decided to make rosato and not blend this lovely *Ciliegiole*. An honest Italian trattoria rosato. A hint of pomegranate taste. Fresh and crisp. A hint of almond-skin bitterness adds complexity. Harvest is manual and fermentation is with ambient yeasts. The natural thin-skin of *Ciliegiole* gives the rosato its beautiful colour. Thank heavens spring is just around the corner.

(All of our wines, whether they be trattoria wines, humble Muscadets or grand Chablis, are shipped in a reefer – a refrigerated container – for protection.)