

# A dozen of Italy's best hidden gems to savour

As the largest wine producing country in the world, Italy can be a minefield for the wine lover with its myriad of little known regions. To help you choose, we have selected unusual fizz, white, red and sweet gems to suit all tastes and budgets.

## Sparkling Lombardy: Ferghettina Franciacorta Brut NV

Italian fizz has made a name for itself, but many UK drinkers are missing out on one of Italy's best kept secrets, the prestigious Franciacorta fizz. Made by the same method and grapes as champagne, with a touch more ripeness, nuttiness and vinosity and the usual racy Italian zip. **£20, WoodWinters, Edinburgh, Bridge of Allan & Inverness, www.woodwinters.com**

## White Marche: La Calcinara Clochard Bianco 2017

Verdicchio with a just touch of chardonnay from Marche region on Italy's east coast, once the historic borderlands of the Papal States. Best known for its gutsy reds, this rich textured tangy mineral white is a real discovery. It is named Clochard, which means vagrant in French, as the vines lie outside Verdicchio Castelli DOC boundary – so it is labelled as a simple IGT rather than DOC. **£19.95, Swig, www.swig.co.uk**

## Sicily: Zibibbo Organic Vitese 2018 Colomba Bianca

From Sicily's dynamic Colomba Bianca cooperative, an enchanting muscat (known locally as zibibbo) with lifted floral blossom aromas, zesty tangy palate with very ripe citric fruits, but so bright and vibrant. Muscat is often used for sweet wines, but this is crisp and dry. **£11.69, Valvona & Crolla**

## Marche: Passerina Delle Marche 2018 Fazi Battaglia

You don't often see the passerina grape on labels, as this old Marche variety is often swallowed up into blends with



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pecorino or trebbiano. At its best grown on Marche's sunny hillside vineyards, it makes an enchantingly fresh apple and pear flavoured dry white with a distinctly spicy aftertaste. **£14.99, Valvona & Crolla**

## Lazio: Malvasia Puntinata 'Roma' 2018 Principe Pallavicini

Malvasia puntinata is one of many rare versions of the malvasia variety found in Italy. This unoaked version smells like a cross between floral riesling and grapey muscat with highly aromatic notes. **£14.49/£15.99, Henderson Wines; Valvona & Crolla; The Cave; Cornelius Wines**

## Rosé Abruzzo: Cerasuolo d'Abruzzo 2018 Fantini

This is the rosé version from the montepulciano grape produced amongst a sea of reds across four subzones in Abruzzo: the best from Teramo. It is enchantingly lively with light cherry fruits and vibrant acid bite. **£12.99, Valvona & Crolla**

## Red Sicily: Il Piccolo Vinding Monte Carrubo 2017

Syrah is not such an unusual grape, but it is in Sicily. This is made by legendary Danish winemaker Peter Vinding Diers who has landed in Sicily to explore its volcanic terroir, where he makes this very Rhône-like version of syrah with spice and pepper aromas and ripe smooth flavours. **£28.50, Swig, www.swig.co.uk**

## Veneto: Veneto Rosso 'Soraie' 2016 Cecilia Beretta

A fabulous bargain for

Amarone lovers. The Pasqua family use the same method partially drying grapes prior to fermentation to enhance aroma, glycerol, raisiny depth and flavours. Cherry fruited, silky smooth, juicy raisiny with hints of spice.

**£11.95, Corney & Barrow www.corneyandbarrow.com**

## Sicily: Nerello Mascalese Micina 2018 Fantini

Our tasters loved this meaty, earthy, blackfruited red with its hints of vanilla and burnt earth. Quite pricey, but this noble Sicilian grape grown around Etna has so much character and depth even at such a young age. Its ethereal notes reminded me a little of nebbiolo grape, so if you are a barolo fan try this Sicilian gem.

**£16.59, Valvona & Crolla**

## Lazio: Cesanese Rubillo 2017 Pallavicini

Incredible blackberry and mulberry aromas with a surprisingly light palate (ideal for summer drinking). Soft cherried fruits and velvet smooth initially with a hint of bitterness on the finish. **£14.99, Valvona & Crolla**

## Sweet Umbria: Orvieto Classico Superiore Muffa Nobile 'Calcaia' 2015 Barberani

This Umbrian dessert wine really does rival the best botrytis wines with its incredible aroma, smooth soft palate and clean dry finish. **£25 for 50 cl bt, The Wine Society, www.thewinesociety.com**

## Veneto: I Capitelli Anselmi

Winemaker Roberto Anselmi is based in the heart of Soave Classico, but refuses to use the name Soave. Capitelli refers to the chapels in the vineyards which have the best sun exposure. Honeyed apricot and pineapple flavours, rich spicy and sweet – but finishes long and dry like all the best sweet wines. ■

**£20 hf bt, Fine Wine Co Musselburgh; £25 hf bt, Great Western Wine**



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try. Sieve the flour into a mixing bowl and add sifted butter on top. Rub the flour to a breadcrumb-like texture with your fingertips until it resembles fine breadcrumbs. Add the egg and mix until a ball forms. Place on a flat surface and knead gently. Roll out and refrigerate for

15 minutes. Peel and core the apples and cut them to roughly the size of a walnut. Pan over a low heat for 10 minutes, until softened. Drain and pressed into a soft pulp. Add the egg and mix until a ball forms. Place on a flat surface and knead gently. Roll out and refrigerate for 15 minutes. Peel and core the apples and cut them to roughly the size of a walnut. Pan over a low heat for 10 minutes, until softened. Drain and pressed into a soft pulp. Add the egg and mix until a ball forms. Place on a flat surface and knead gently. Roll out and refrigerate for 15 minutes.

Preheat oven for 20-25 minutes, then remove the apples. Serve hot with a spoonful of jam.