



EMIDIO PEPE MONTEPULCIANO BRANELLA

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Emidio Pepe started with one hectare of Montepulciano vines, producing just 3,000 bottles whilst driving all over Europe with a fully laden Alfa Romeo, stopping at Italian restaurants to sell his wine. Today the estate has grown to 17 hectares, and a reputation as one of Italy's finest and most sought after wines, and a benchmark for what can be achieved in Abruzzo.

It could be argued that Emidio Pepe is responsible for waking up the world to the endless potential of the Abruzzo region, so clearly demonstrated over his lifetime. With 56 vintages under his belt, Pepe has stood undeterred by his beliefs that Montepulciano d'Abruzzo was capable of becoming an age-worthy fine wine. Although very little has changed since 1964, biodynamic certification was granted in 2006 - led by his daughter Sofia - who now oversees the winemaking at the estate. Prior to this, the estate was run completely organically.

Spontaneous fermentation, manual handling of the grapes, concrete tanks (never oak) no filtering and long term ageing are the norm. Together with the all-important pergola trained vines that allow the grapes to ripen in the shade, and to mature from the inside, away from the burning sun. It is only under the pergola that you can develop what Pepe calls the "velluto" - the velvet sensation in the mouth when you drink the wine.

The Montepulciano d'Abruzzo grapes are hand destemmed on a net on top of a wooden vat, two people will push the grapes back and forth until the berries will fall down and the stems will remain on the net

unbroken, this way only the elegant and juicy tannins of the skin will go into the must but not the bitter ones from the stems. The berries remain almost intact, to keep the yeasts which are on the skins and provoke the spontaneous fermentations.

Three red wines are made – a “standard” Montepulciano D’Abruzzo and two old vine single vineyard wines, one of which is the Branella. The vines that make up the Branella parcel were acquired by Emidio Pepe in 1981 but the vines themselves were already well established having been planted in 1966. The terroir here is deep with a high sand component and great water drainage. This results in a distinctly, fine floral personality

