

Montepeloso

“Montepeloso has achieved a level of success and a renown in the world of wine that no one could have imagined a short time ago . . .” Gambero Rosso

From the beginning, Suvereto’s challenge to Bolgheri—as Tuscany’s premier source of Super Tuscans—has come from just two adjacent estates: Tua Rita and Montepeloso.

The properties enjoy two of the best *terroirs* in Italy: Montepeloso on a gentle hillside of chalky gravel and clay, and Tua Rita in heavier clay below. Climatically warmer than interior Tuscany—and possessing a marked similarity to St. Emilion’s famed *Côtes*—this locale naturally limits yields and is capable of producing wines with great concentration and perfume.


Under the guidance of the original owners, Willi & Doris Neukom, Montepeloso established itself as one of Tuscany’s most exciting estates, earning 5 stars from Robert Parker.

A Momentous Change

In 1998, however, the estate was sold to Fabio Chiarelotto, a Swiss-Italian historian. Chiarelotto was entranced with the Neukom’s wines, but he was also convinced that they fell short of the *terroir’s* true potential.

While a unique site is important for great wine, an inspired winemaker is also required. The introspective Chiarelotto had little interest in the guidance of fashionable enologists. He was determined to follow his own path—and he brought with him a clear vision of the singular wines he felt the estate could yield.

His obsession is such that we find few others with which to compare him. The person he most reminds us of is the great Montalcino iconoclast, Gianfranco Soldera. Like Soldera, Chiarelotto remains driven by his own philosophies, possessing an obsessive commitment to quality, with an apparent disinterest in what others think of him or his wines.

 “I was blown away by the intensity these wines possessed.”
Robert Parker

The Evolution of a Dream

Within a year of the purchase, Chiarelotto embarked on a dramatic overhaul of the vineyards—retraining or regrafting thousands of vines. He was willing to accept drastically reduced production for a few years if it would result in greater wines.

In the cellar, Chiarelotto sought ways to soften the tannins, refine the aromatics, and better integrate the oak. With each succeeding vintage, he is getting closer to his ideal.

The Wines

Slowly, Chiarelotto is receiving the rewards of his passion. The buzz that has been spreading through Europe over the past few years has leapt the Atlantic. A growing number of collectors see Montepeloso’s wines as the most beautiful, profound, and expressive of the Tuscan New Wave:

Nardo—The premier Sangiovese of the coast, and one of the best in all Italy. It is an unfiltered blend of mostly Sangiovese with a small percentage of Cabernet Sauvignon. Fewer than 400 cases a year are produced.

Gabbro—THE great Cabernet Sauvignon of Suvereto, Gabbro has done for this variety what Tua Rita’s Redigaffi did for Merlot. A decade from now, we would not be surprised to see Gabbro replace Sassacaia as the ultimate Tuscan Cabernet. A scant 200 cases are made.

Eneo—While the two luxury cuvées get much of the press attention, the Sangiovese-based Eneo has quietly achieved a rabid cult following of its own. Aged in 2nd and 3rd year French barrique, it is a pure expression of Chiarelotto’s vision.

Production will gradually increase as young vineyards reach maturity. For now, these remain among Italy’s elite rarities.