

# GAMMA ROSSETTO

- EMERGING SPARKLING WINES
- TRAVEL UMBRIA
- THE RATING GAME

## BUBBLING OVER

**Bellavista New Generation**



# SPECIAL UMBRIA



Woods and panoramic nature from Assisi to Norcia – medieval villages, monasteries and convents on the path of Saint Francis – passionate food artisans, a young chef, and affordable quality wine

TRAVEL

text and photography  
by Massimiliano Rella

*Around Assisi, towards Todi and into the bordering zones of Montefalco and Sagrantino, a journey along the wine roads of the Canticle. Excellent extra-virgin olive oils, wineries to visit, cured meats and cheeses to sample. And splendid hill towns, following in Saint Francis' footsteps*

# MYSTIC UMBRIA

Among olives and vineyards

on the Strade del Cantico

12

13

ook at the view, all of Umbria is at your feet!" Seven hundred meters up, on Mount Subasio, at sunset, seated outdoors in front of a plate of tender grilled meat, Alessandro Damiani's words seemed almost superfluous. We felt the glory of a few, but intense minutes over the valley of the Tiber as Assisi, in the distance, began to brighten, becoming a blur of yellow lights in an indigo blue sky. The young producer of an extra-virgin olive oil, Bio, of flour and cured meats, but also a grower of lambs and other small farm animals, led us proudly to the most beautiful spot on his agriturismo. Le Mandrie di San Paolo is set among hectares of *moraiolo* olive trees. "In summer, this place becomes magical. We do everything we can to make our visitors happy: trips, tastings, candlelight dinners," Damiani explained. Connected to several hiking paths, like that of Sait

Francis and the Parco del Monte Subasio, the 35-hectare estate is a perfect base for those who like walking. In one hour, you can reach the hermitage, Eremo delle Carceri, and in two, the Forest of Saint Francis, a property belonging to the non-profit Fondo Ambiente Italiano, near spectacular waterfalls with a natural swimming pool. (In summer, be sure to bring your bathing suit!)

Alessandro's life moves between the olive mills, animals, guest rooms and restaurant, helped by his family. Among his responsibilities, production of his extra-virgin olive oil Colli d'Assisi Spoleto DOP takes up most of his time. A medium-intense fruity oil, it is fragrant and pleasant. Visitors can taste it in a room with a view of the spotless pressing machinery.

The Umbria on this itinerary along the Strada dei Vini del Canalic, or the Canticle Wine Route, evidently named as a homage to Saint Francis'

songs, is a journey through hills and panoramic views, sometimes to very isolated places, where few pass by. In Collelungo, on the slopes of Monte Peglia, in the cobblestone alleys of the village, silence reigns. The inhabitants are mostly old people, and on mild days they meet at the tables of the only café. Besides the frescoes of the Madonna della Luce, the other attraction at Collelungo is the underground cellar of Conti Faina winery. Valter, the cellar master, walked us through three long tunnels and a system of underground passageways before we tasted the wine. The weather was still hot, so among the six different wines we particularly enjoyed *Macchia della Torre*, a white from verdicchio and chardonnay grapes. It is dry and savory, with aromas of tropical fruit. Another favorite was the Sarcotore Zelfirino spannaire bruto, of pinot nero and chardonnay; notes of dried fruit and fresh fruit and hints of citrus fruit.



CREATED BY THE LE MANDRIE FARM, NEAR ASSISI (UMBRIA), ITALY, A VIEW OF ASSISI



MONTE CASSIANO IN UMBRIA, NEAR PERUGIA. THE 19th CENTURY THEATRO DELLA CONCORDIA

#### WHAT TO SEE FROM SPELLO TO TODI, TO SEE PIETRINCICHO, AND MASOLINO

We leave from Spello. A medieval town on the slopes of Mount Subasio, it also has a Roman villa with mosaics. In the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, in the Cappella Bagliani, are 16th century frescoes by Bernardino di Betto, known as Pietrincichio (ENGLISH.TURISMO.COMUNE.SPELLO.IT). In the Palazzo Comunale, the library, Biblioteca Fondo Antico, holds 4,000 antique works of theology, the most precious an incunabula from 1474 (tickets are 12 euros | WWW.ARTEMASOLO.IT).

One of Assisi's great attractions, among hills covered with olive trees, is the Forest of San Francesco, owned by the non-profit environmental group, Fondo Ambiente Italiano. Walking along a brook, you come to a meadow with waterfalls and a natural swimming pool. You can reach it also through a gate in the wall surrounding Piazza San Francesco (WWW.FONDOAMBIENTE.IT | WWW.VHITAL.IT).

The Parco delle Sculture di Brufa brings together contemporary art works and installations, chosen from those exhibited in the annual "Brufa in Festa" event. Nearby, in Torgiano, the Museo d'Arte Ceramica Contemporanea holds a collection of the work of ceramicist Nino Caruso along with artistic vessels or pitchers made by Italian and international artists for the annual vino novello celebration and then donated to the museum. Outside the town, in the Parco dei Mulini, run the Tiber and Chiascio rivers and the ruins of medieval mills, such as the Mulino di Mezzo and the Mulino Silvestri (WWW.COMUNE.TORGIANO.IT).

In Montecassiano di Viterbo, the Teatro della Concordia, built in 1898, has 99 seats, with only 37 in the orchestra, one of the country's smallest theaters. Decorated with stucco designs and frescoes, it reproduces in miniature the great theaters of the era, with all the typical classic elements (WWW.TEATROPICCOLO.IT).

And finally, in Todi, is the Tempio di San Fortunato, an interesting example of Gothic construction. In San Michele Arcangelo chapel holds the frescoed "Virgin and Child", a work of Masolino da Panicale from 1432. The Museo Civico has sculpture and frescoes in the Palazzo del Podestà and Palazzo del Capitano del Popolo (WWW.ARTEMASOLO.IT).

In nearby Marsciano we also visited the La Spina winery: the pride and passion of Moreno Peccia, a simpatico banker of 56 who divides his time between the office and his vineyards. From a little over two hectares, he obtains fifteen-sixteen thousand bottles, such as his Vigna Maggiore, a monocaricel trebbiano Spoletino that depends on spontaneous fermentation without added yeasts. It won Due Bicchieri in our guide, Vini d'Italia 2015. Rosso Spina, also a Due Bicchieri wine, has a Montepulciano base. "I've worked in the tank for 33 years," Peccia told us, "but I have always loved making wine. I achieved my dream in 2000, founding my own winery, even if it's small. I like to share my passion with visitors, wine tourists. It enriches my life and offers an opportunity for exchanging ideas."

By now it was late and for dinner we drove to Montecastello di Vibio, officially one of Italy's most beautiful towns: 422 meters above sea level, 1,600 inhabitants, about 100 of whom live within its ancient walls. This medieval jewel has one of the country's smallest theaters, the Teatro della Concordia: 99 seats, kept alive by a few volunteers until Italy awakens to the preservation of its vast heritage. Our walk in the village ended with an aperitif in the only café, on Piazza Vittorio Emanuele, with a fantastic view of Todi, the Tiber valley and the Martani mountains. We made our way to the *Grotto di Zio Totò*, which chef Massimo Costantini manages with traditional good taste, suggesting linguine with cherry tomatoes, wild fennel and herbs, roast rabbit and game, such as squabs.

The next day the trip continued with a visit to Todi, the home town of the 13<sup>th</sup> century poet, Jacopone da Todi. After a tour of the Cathedral and the museum, we enjoyed another memorable view, this time over the historic center of town from the bell tower of the Tempio di San Fortunato, which



UNDERGROUND TUNNEL IN CANTINA GIOVINI FAINA IN COLLETTINO

VINEYARD OF CANTINA PEPPERCELLO IN MONTEFALCO, TOWN IN THE BACKGROUND, BELONGS TO THE MONASTERY OF SANT'ANSELMO, BEING A REMIND AND THE FAMILY HISTORY



#### VISITING THE WINERIES NEAR SAGRANTINO

Two wine routes, the *Strade del Vino Cantico* and *Sagrantino*, come close together in this zone. We start with the *Strada del Cantico*, which we mentioned above, and the winery of Conti Faina (visit and tasting 15 euros | reservations necessary | [www.contifaina.it](http://www.contifaina.it)); La Spina (tasting free | 5 euros with guide and pairing with local products | Mon-Sat; Sunday with reservations | [www.cantinalaspina.it](http://www.cantinalaspina.it)); Peppucci (visits by appointment, Mon-Sun | wine tasting with cured meats and pizza: 15 euros | [www.cantinapeppuccello.com](http://www.cantinapeppuccello.com)). Next is the winery Valle d'Assisi (restaurant, hotel and wellness center | tastings from 6 euros | formulas with lunch and dinner | [www.valledassisi.com](http://www.valledassisi.com)), and Lungarotti (resort Le Tre Vaselle | wine therapy BellaVive | Museo del Vino e dell'Olio | [www.lungarotti.it](http://www.lungarotti.it)). Now we move to the *Strada del Sagrantino*. In Montefalco we can taste *Sagrantino Chiusa di Panzone* and other labels, white and red, from Antonelli San Marco, a winery with an agriturismo, swimming pool and cooking school for Umbrian dishes ([www.antonellisanmarco.it](http://www.antonellisanmarco.it)). At Caprai, the *Enoteca* is the space for tasting and buying wine, among which is *Montefalco Sagrantino Docg 25 anni*, a *barrique* veteran. (Mon-Sun guided visits and tasting: 10 euros | with cheeses and Umbrian cured meats 15 euros | [www.antenorecaprai.it](http://www.antenorecaprai.it)). *Scacciadiavoli* was founded in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Mon-Fri; Sat with reservations | [www.scacciadiavoli.it](http://www.scacciadiavoli.it)). In Bevagna, at the Adanti sisters' winery, you can sample a good selection of *Montefalco DOCGs* and *Montefalco Sagrantino DOCGs* (tastings Mon-Sat with reservations | [www.cantinsadanti.com](http://www.cantinsadanti.com)). Visit the extraordinary *Garapace*, designed by Arnaldo Pomodoro for the Tenuta Castelbuono, belonging to the Lunelli group (visits Mon-Sun | reservations necessary | [www.tenutellunelli.it](http://www.tenutellunelli.it)).

I'M DREAMING  
OF A PINK  
CHRISTMAS...



[www.cuvage.com](http://www.cuvage.com) [f](https://www.facebook.com/cuvage) [i](https://www.instagram.com/cuvage) [p](https://www.pinterest.com/cuvage) [y](https://www.youtube.com/cuvage)

we climbed up 153 stairs to reach. A pleasant drive in the country took us to Peppucci winery, 15 minutes from Todi, set among beautiful hills, woods and vineyards at an altitude of 400 meters above sea level. It was founded in 2003, and the Peppucci family began to harvest their grapes in 2005. Filippo, Elisabetta and Agnese represent a new generation of producers – they are barely thirty years old. Among the 70-80,000 bottles they produce with the advice of enologist Lorenzo Landi, we find labels such as a white, monovarietal Grechetto di Todi, fresh and aromatic, or Aker In, a red from sagrantino grapes harvested on the first days of October and aged in French oak for 18 months and then for 12 in the bottle (Due Bicchieri rossi in Vini d'Italia 2015). The rest of the trip was a drive towards Torgiano, with a stop in Spello to visit the biodynamic vegetable garden of the Fondazione

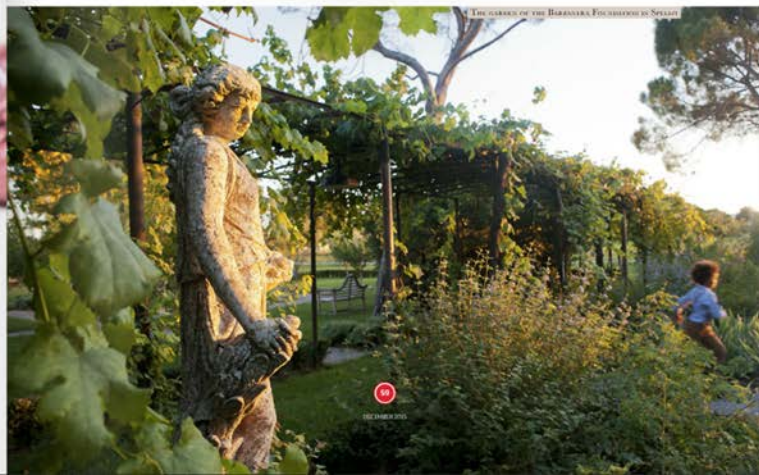
Barbanera. The name comes from a famous book, Almanacco Barbanera, dedicated to the astronomer, astrologer and philosopher who lived in nearby Foligno in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The foundation also has a small exhibit of old editions and interesting book covers. In Torgiano, our trip ended at the Langarotti winery; one of the best-known producers in Umbria. Their two museums have exhibits related to wine and to olives and olive trees. On the slopes of the town, we took a walk along the Chiascio river, in the green Parco dei Mulini (mills) named for the ruins of old industrial structures. One, Malino Silvestri, still produces flour. Five kilometers more and the Strada dei Vini del Cantico brought us one more art scene: the village of Brufa is an example of land art, works and installations in the open air, chosen each year on the occasion of Brufa in Festa, a 28-year-old event.

#### TRAVEL

#### BOTANY THE VEGETABLE AND FLOWER GARDEN OF BARBANERA

Practical farming advice and weather predictions for the months and seasons of each coming year have appeared in the Almanacco Barbanera since 1762. They come to life in the beautiful biodynamic vegetable garden curated by the foundation of the same name in Spello. Designed by landscape architect Peter Carson, the garden grows medicinal herbs and flowers, vegetables and fruit – including rare types – in an ex-agricultural complex that includes silkworks from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In the publisher's historic archives are 50,000 documents, among which are 8,000 almanacs from around the world, as well as paintings and sculptures, often representing the signs of the zodiac, from artists who have designed the various covers over the years. There's also a small museum.

via San Giuseppe 1 | Spello (Pg) |  
tel. 0742-391177 | [www.barbanera.it](http://www.barbanera.it)



THE GARDEN OF THE BARBANERA FOUNDATION IN SPELLO





LA TAVERNA DI SPELLO, IN SPello (PERUGIA)



THE WALL IN MONTE CASTELLO DI VIBIO (near PERUGIA) IS ONE OF ITALY'S MOST BEAUTIFUL WALLS



"TORRES" WAS DESIGNED BY BRUNO ZEVI (1903-1987) IN THE PARK OF THE CASTLE OF TORGIANO, NEAR PERUGIA

## ADDRESSES

## WHERE TO EAT

**R. GIOTTINO DI ZIO TOTO** |  
Via Don Oscar Moras, 2 |  
Monte Castello di Vibio (Tr) |  
TEL. 075 8780652  
AND 328 9590664 |

**WWW.UMBRELLACUCINA.COM** |  
Average price 30 euros  
Local and seasonal dishes prepared by chef Massimo Costantini. Cooking lessons recommended.

**La Cantina** | Via Cavour 2 |  
Spello (Pg) |  
TEL. 0742.651775 |  
**WWW.LACANTINADISPello.COM** |  
Average price 35 euros

In the medieval center, traditional specialties and local ingredients such as truffles and red potatoes from Colfiorino.

**Le Mandorle di San Paolo** |  
Via Canella 16 |  
Loc. San Vitale | Assisi (Pg) |  
TEL. 075 8064070  
AND 349 8217867 |

**WWW.AGRITURISMO MANDORLESANPAOLO.IT**  
E **WWW.MANDORLESANPAOLO.COM** |  
Average price 25 euros  
Home-made pasta, kilometer zero grilled meat, home-made cured meats.

**Taverna di San Sebastiano** |  
Fraz. Collepepe | Spello (Pg) |  
TEL. 0742 651283  
AND 339 671936 |

Average price 35 euros  
Traditional Umbrian dishes, bruschetta, home-made pasta with truffles, grilled meat and vegetables.

**Alta Via di Mezzio** | Via Santa Barbara di Montefalco, 52 |  
Montefalco (Pg) |  
TEL. 0742 362074 |  
Average price 25 euros |

**WHERE TO STAY**  
**Le 3 Vignette** |  
Via G. Garibaldi, 48 |  
Torgiano (Pg) |  
TEL. 075 9680417 |  
**WWW.FOARLELLI.IT** | Double room from 220 euros, breakfast included

In a palazzo from the 17th century, the hotel is ideal for a relaxing stay. Excellent cuisine, shopping with local food specialties, wellness center.

**AGRITURISMO MBRALDESCO** |  
Loc. Ferreria, 58 |  
Torgiano (Pg) |  
TEL. 075 9680631  
AND 368 7284831 |  
**WWW.MBRALDESCO.COM** |  
Apartments from 250 euros weekly

Eight apartments, simply furnished, in a 19th-century farmhouse, enlarged with recent additions. Open-air swimming pool. Production and sale of vegetables, eggs, extra-virgin olive oil DOP Umbria Colli Martani.

**La Montanola** |  
Via Roma 11 | Torgiano (Pg) |  
TEL. 075 962962  
AND 335 5874094 |  
**WWW.LAMONTANOLA.IT** |  
Double room from 70 euros, breakfast included

The agriturismo and olive mill also has three farmhouses at the top of a hill with space for 30. Two swimming pools.

**Le Mandorle di San Paolo** |  
Via Canella 16 |  
Loc. San Vitale | Assisi (Pg) |  
TEL. 075 8064070  
AND 349 8217867 |  
**WWW.AGRITURISMO MANDORLESANPAOLO.IT**

**WWW.MANDORLESANPAOLO.COM** |  
Double room from 70 euros, breakfast included  
An historic stone building in a fantastic panoramic position, with 10 rooms, and swimming pool, view over the valley, hydro-massage. Production and sale of extra-virgin DOP Colli Assisi-Spoleto Bio olive oil, durum and regular wheat flour, lentils, wild flower honey.

**Colle Dei Grechetto 2012** |  
Leonardo Bonagretti |  
Narni (Tr) |  
**WWW.LEONARDOBONAGRETTI.IT**

**Montefalco Sagrantino 2010** |  
Perugia | Montefalco (Pg) |  
**WWW.PERTICALE.IT**

**Montefalco Sagrantino 2009** |  
Antonelli - San Marco |  
Montefalco (Pg) |  
**WWW.ANTONELLISANMARCO.IT**

**Montefalco Sagrantino 2010** |  
Romanelli | Montefalco (Pg) |  
**WWW.ROMANELLI.IT**

**TRE BICCHIERI 2015**

**Cenoso della Sala 2012** |  
Castello della Sala |  
Piculle (Tr) | **WWW.ANTINORI.IT**

**Colle Dei Grechetto 2012** |  
Leonardo Bonagretti |  
Narni (Tr) |  
**WWW.LEONARDOBONAGRETTI.IT**

**Montefalco Sagrantino 2010** |  
Perugia | Montefalco (Pg) |  
**WWW.PERTICALE.IT**

**Montefalco Sagrantino 2009** |  
Antonelli - San Marco |  
Montefalco (Pg) |  
**WWW.ANTONELLISANMARCO.IT**

**Montefalco Sagrantino 2010** |  
Romanelli | Montefalco (Pg) |  
**WWW.ROMANELLI.IT**

**Montefalco Sagrantino 25** |  
Anni 2010 | Arnaldo Caprai |  
Montefalco (Pg) |  
**WWW.ARNALDOCAPRAI.IT**

**Montefalco Sagrantino** |  
Cenoso alla Ceriga 2010 |  
Giambello Tabarelli |  
Montefalco (Pg) |  
**WWW.TABARELLI.COM**

**Montefalco Sagrantino** |  
Collepepe 2010 |  
Tenua Bellafonte |  
Bevagna (Pg) |  
**WWW.TENUABELLAFONTE.IT**

**Montefalco Sagrantino** |  
Della Cima 2010 | Vella  
Mionelli | Bevagna (Pg) |  
**WWW.VELLAMIONELLI.COM**

**Quercia Cl. Sup.** |  
Lecci | Giovanna Vella  
Mionelli 2011 |  
Bubbieni | Barchi (Tr) |  
**WWW.BARBIERI.IT**

**Torgiano Rosso V. Monticchio** |  
Ris. 2009 | Lengarotti |  
Torgiano (Pg) |  
**WWW.LENGAROTTI.IT**

**TRE FOGLIE 2015** |  
(TOP-RATED OLIVE OIL)  
Foligno | Velle |  
Foligno (Pg) | **WWW.TREFOGLI.IT**

**Mosto d'Orlea** | Mionelli |  
Bettona (Pg) |  
**WWW.AGRARIANMIONELLI.IT**

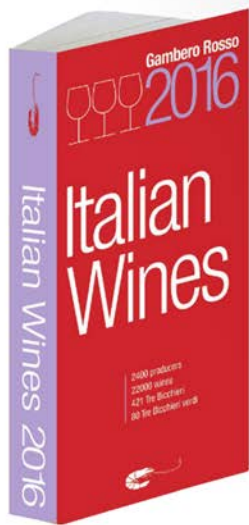
**Old Extravergine di Oliva** |  
Giovanni Batta | Perugia (Pg) |  
**WWW.FLINTORRATTA.IT**

**Pinere di Macco Dop Umbria** |  
Goli Assisi Spoleto | Macco |  
Trevi (Pg) |  
**WWW.AGRICOLAMACCO.IT**

**Quercia Lina** | Gubinesi |  
Trevi (Pg) |  
**WWW.GERDOPQUERCIA.IT**

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A Christmas miracle is  
when you say no to a  
glass of wine.



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