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WINE GUY: More good-value wines from Italy

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RICH MAURO, COLUMNIST

The dominant grape in Tuscany is sangiovese (earthy, high acid, cherry). Chianti, its most famous wine, is a good everyday wine, as is Rosso di Montepulciano.

- 2007 Badia a Colti-buono Chianti "Centemura" (\$11)
- 2006 Da Vinci Chianti (\$16)
- 2007 Avignonesi Rosso di Montepulciano (\$16)

The montepulciano grape is widely planted in Italy but is most notable in Abruzzi. It makes a robust and mouth-filling but smooth and supple wine.

- 2006 La Valentina Montepulciano d'Abruzzo (\$15)
- 2006 Cataldi Madonna Montepulciano d'Abruzzo (\$20)

Puglia is possibly the most dynamic wine region in Italy. Primitivo grapes get much attention, but negroamaro and malvasia nera also are notable.

- 2007 Li Veli Negroamaro "Passamente" (\$12)
- 2005 Cantele Primitivo (\$12)
- 2005 Cantele Salice Salentino Riserva (\$12)

Sicily arguably has shown much quality improvement in recent years, especially with indigenous grapes. So far, my favorites are the red nero d'avola and the white grillo.

- 2007 Feudo Arancio Grillo (\$10)
- 2007 Ajello Bianco "Majus" (grillo, cataratto \$12)
- 2006 Ajello Nero d'Avola "Majus" (\$12)
- 2006 Cusumano Nero d'Avola (\$16)

Rich Mauro has been writing about wine since 1995. He is a policy analyst for the Denver Regional Council of Governments. Reach him at rich@rmpeoplespalate.com or Box 1779, Colorado Springs 80901.

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