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Le Monde pairs memorial Merlot with pitina for its fall Friuli campaign

The seasonal promotion links .73 Merlot DOC 2022 to a traditional smoked meat from the Pordenone valleys.

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Le Monde, a winery in Prata di Pordenone in northeastern Italy, said Monday it is pairing its .73 Merlot DOC 2022 with Borgo Titol's PGI Pitina as part of a seasonal campaign built around food and wine from Friuli-Venezia Giulia.

The initiative is the latest step in what the company describes as a project linking one wine from its "Icone" collection with a regional specialty for each season. For the fall edition, Le Monde chose a red Merlot and pitina, an old cured meat preparation from the Pordenone valleys that remains one of the best-known traditional foods in that part of Friuli.

According to the winery, the pairing is meant to highlight stronger, more savory flavors associated with colder months and to draw attention to the region’s local products and food traditions. The company said the campaign is also designed to emphasize the historical connection between agricultural producers and small food businesses in Friuli-Venezia Giulia.

The .73 Merlot DOC 2022 carries a personal meaning for Le Monde. The number refers to the birth year of Guido, the late brother of Alex Maccan, who is part of the family behind the winery. Maccan said the label was created as a tribute to his brother, who was a strong admirer of the Merlot grape, and that the project began after years of experimentation. He said Le Monde released 2,000 bottles from the 2016 vintage and that production has since risen to nearly 3,000 bottles.

Le Monde describes the 2022 wine as a structured and persistent Merlot, with the grape’s varietal character balanced by fresher notes and ripe red fruit. In tasting notes distributed with the announcement, the winery said the wine shows ruby color with garnet tones and aromas of wild berries, blackberry, cherry and violet, along with light toasted notes and mineral hints. On the palate, it describes the wine as warm, round and full-bodied, with a savory finish and solid structure.

The food selected to accompany it has a long history in the same area. Pitina is an uncased cured meat traditionally made from sheep, goat or wild game, then shaped by hand, coated with cornmeal, smoked and aged. The product is recognized with PGI status, the European Union’s protected geographical indication, and it is also listed as a Slow Food Presidium, a designation used for foods tied to local production methods and cultural heritage.

Le Monde said it chose Borgo Titol’s version because the farm is based in Tramonti di Sopra, close to Frasseneit, the village often cited as the place where pitina first developed in the first half of the 19th century. The product was originally created, according to local accounts, as a way to preserve meat through winter and reduce waste in mountain communities with limited resources.

The producer describes pitina as having a savory taste with a distinct smoky note. It can be served thinly sliced like other cured meats or cooked and eaten with polenta, a staple across much of northern Italy. In presenting the pairing, Le Monde said those smoky and savory qualities make pitina a suitable match for the structure and length of the .73 Merlot.

The announcement also underlined a regional certification shared by both companies. Le Monde and Borgo Titol are both part of the “Io Sono Friuli Venezia Giulia” label, a mark used to identify businesses tied to the region’s production, identity and food culture. The winery said that shared label reinforces the link between the two producers and supports the broader aim of promoting Friuli-Venezia Giulia through products rooted in local history.

Le Monde has increasingly used these seasonal pairings to frame its wines within a wider regional story, presenting them not only as stand-alone labels but as part of the agricultural and culinary traditions of Friuli. With the fall release, the company is continuing that approach by placing a memorial Merlot alongside one of the region’s oldest preserved meat specialties.