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Francesco Mazzei: “Over 30% of Maremma Toscana Wines are Vermentino”

Vermentino Grand Prix Unveils Top Wines

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Francesco Mazzei

Nestled in the idyllic coastal town of Castiglione della Pescaia, this year's fifth edition of the Vermentino Grand Prix has once again dazzled the wine community. Sponsored by the Consorzio Tutela Vini della Maremma Toscana, the event on April 8th celebrated

the spirited Vermentino grape, a cornerstone of the Maremma Toscana DOC and a favorite among the Tuscan white wine varietals.

Francesco Mazzei, the longstanding leader of the Consorzio and a fervent advocate for Vermentino, shared that over 30% of the DOC Maremma Toscana wines are Vermentino, predominantly as single-varietals, spotlighting Maremma as a premier producer of white wine in the region. "Vermentino has effortlessly woven itself into the fabric of Maremma's culture and geography," Mazzei explained. "This grape variety thrives along the coast, each vineyard expressing a unique facet of the terrain, altitude, and maritime influence. It's not just a wine; it's a narrative of our land."

This year's Grand Prix focused exclusively on Maremma Toscana DOC Vermentino wines, demanding at least 85% composition from the titular grape. The entries showcased a blend of mostly single-varietals, with a select few incorporating other varieties such as Viognier and Sauvignon for a twist on tradition.

The 2024 Top Ten Vermentini Maremma Toscana DOC is a who's who of local viticulture excellence. Notable mentions included the youthful exuberance of PRELIUS 2023 from COLLEMASSARI and the sophisticated CHICCA 2022 from GUIDO F.FENDI. Other stars like the UPUPA 2022 from TENUTE BRUNI and the COBALTO 2021 VERMENTINO SUPERIORE from VAL DELLE ROSE added depth and diversity to the lineup, showcasing the versatility and evolving complexity of Vermentino.



Luca Pollini, director of the Consorzio, emphasized the grape's robust character and growth in the region. "Vermentino is not just thriving; it's leading," he stated. "Nearly half of all Vermentino vines in Tuscany are cultivated right here in Maremma, and many of these vineyards are burgeoning, with vines younger than 13 years." Pollini also highlighted the grape's capacity for both youthful freshness and mature complexity, which makes every Grand Prix a platform for revelation and celebration of Vermentino's potential.

The jury for this grand event was a blend of the region's finest palates, including star-rated restaurant representatives, wine shop owners, and notable wine industry professionals like Mario Bonamici, who also organizes Vermentino competitions globally and locally in Cagliari. Luciano Ferraro, Editor-in-Chief of Corriere della Sera, presided over the jury, bringing a seasoned eye to the proceedings.

This year's competition was fiercer than ever, with 73 wines vying for the top spots, an increase from last year's 60 entries. The variety of vintages and innovative fermentation methods—including egg-shaped barrels and amphorae—underscored the dynamic experimentation taking place within the Vermentino sphere.

The Grand Prix not only highlighted the best of the current vintage but also gave nods to the nuanced layers of slightly older vintages, proving that Vermentino can stand the test of time. The event was more than a competition; it was a festive affirmation of Maremma's love affair with Vermentino, a testament to its enduring appeal and promising future in the global wine scene.