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Italy approves major changes to Vino Nobile di Montepulciano rules with new “Pieve” designation and stricter production standards

Amendment highlights historical parishes, enhances labeling transparency, and reinforces traditional winemaking practices for Tuscany’s renowned wine

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On February 17, 2025, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry of Italy officially communicated the approval of a standard amendment to the product specification for “Vino Nobile di Montepulciano,” a renowned Tuscan wine with Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) status. The announcement was published on May 15, 2025, in accordance with Article 5(4) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2025/27. This amendment introduces significant changes to the rules governing the production and labeling of Vino Nobile di Montepulciano, aiming to enhance its value and provide greater transparency for consumers.

The most notable change is the introduction of the term “Pieve” (parish) on wine labels, which can now be followed by one of twelve newly recognized additional geographical units within the Montepulciano production area. These units—such as Sant’Ilario, Ascianello, Badia, and others—are rooted in historical parishes dating back to the late Roman era. The use of “Pieve” is intended to highlight the unique characteristics of

grapes from these smaller areas and cannot be combined with the “Riserva” designation.

For wines labeled with “Pieve,” several new production requirements have been established. At least 85% of the grapes must be Sangiovese, with up to 15% allowed from local varieties such as Canaiolo Nero, Ciliegiolo Nero, Mammolo Nero, and Colorino Nero (the latter capped at 5%). International grape varieties are excluded from these blends to reinforce traditional practices. Vineyards used for “Pieve” wines must be at least 15 years old, ensuring mature vines that are less susceptible to water stress and produce higher-quality fruit.

Yield limits for “Pieve” wines have been reduced to a maximum of 7 tonnes per hectare and no more than 2.5 kilograms per plant. Grapes must reach a minimum natural alcoholic strength by volume of 13%. The maturation period has also been extended: “Pieve” wines must age for at least three years, including at least twelve months in barrel and twelve months in bottle. Chemical, physical, and organoleptic checks will occur after bottle aging to ensure quality.

To guarantee traceability and authenticity, grapes for “Pieve” wines must be handled separately from those used for standard or Riserva Vino Nobile di Montepulciano. Only enterprises managing both vineyard and bottling operations within one of the twelve designated units may produce these wines. The flavor profile required is very dry, balanced, and long-lasting, with potential woody notes. Minimum total acidity has been raised from 4.5 to 5 grams per liter, and sugar-free extract from 23 to 26 grams per liter—both measures intended to support greater aging potential.

Labeling rules have been updated so that the term “Pieve,” followed by the specific geographical unit, appears before “Vino Nobile di Montepulciano Toscana” on the label. The size of this designation may be up to 50% larger than the main wine name. Producers must declare their intention to use the “Pieve” designation by December 31 following harvest.

Additional provisions include a ban on adjusting yields above specified limits for “Pieve” wines—even in favorable years—and new rules for blending previously certified batches. If a batch does not qualify as “Pieve” after tasting committee review, it may

still be certified as standard Vino Nobile di Montepulciano using existing organoleptic analysis results.

The amendment also clarifies that any blending (“taglio”) for quality improvement is only permitted between wines from the same geographical unit; failure to comply results in loss of the right to use the “Pieve” designation. Sampling procedures during aging have been clarified: wine cannot be moved before analytical results are issued, and any wine bottled or marketed outside the area must meet all physical and chemical requirements.

The use of “Toscana” on labels is now mandatory after “Vino Nobile di Montepulciano,” providing clearer information about origin. The section describing the link between wine characteristics and geographical environment has been updated for consistency with these changes.

Editorial corrections were made throughout the product specification document to address typographical errors and update references following changes in ministry names and control body headquarters.

The demarcated production area remains within the municipality of Montepulciano in Siena province, Tuscany—excluding only the Valdichiana plain. All vinification, compulsory aging, and bottling must occur within this area to preserve authenticity and reputation.

These amendments reflect both historical tradition and modern winemaking practices in Montepulciano. They aim to further distinguish Vino Nobile di Montepulciano on international markets by emphasizing its unique terroir and strict production standards while offering consumers more detailed information about origin and quality. The full updated product specification is available through Italy’s Ministry of Agriculture website.