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Cabernet Franc Finds Distinctive Voice in Friuli’s Vineyards and Culinary Partnerships

Le Monde estate and chef Nino Di Costanzo showcase regional identity through acclaimed wine and innovative food pairings bridging tradition and innovation.

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In the Friuli region of northeastern Italy, Cabernet Franc has become a symbol of local winemaking identity. The grape, originally from France, arrived in Friuli in the late 19th century, brought by French nobility and spread through connections with families in the area. Over time, it adapted to the region’s unique environment, which includes clay and limestone soils, a climate influenced by the nearby sea, and protection from surrounding mountains. These conditions have helped Cabernet Franc develop a distinct character that sets it apart from its French origins.

One of the most recognized producers of Cabernet Franc in Friuli is Le Monde, an estate located in Prata di Pordenone. Under the guidance of winemaker Giovanni Ruzzene, Le Monde has focused on expressing the full potential of this grape as a single varietal wine. Ruzzene’s approach emphasizes respect for natural cycles and careful attention to the land. The 2018 vintage of Le Monde Cabernet Franc has received significant acclaim, including the Tre Bicchieri award from Gambero Rosso, one of Italy’s most respected wine guides. This recognition highlights both the quality and consistency of Le Monde’s work with Cabernet Franc.

The wine itself shows deep ruby color with garnet reflections. Its aroma is rich and persistent, featuring notes reminiscent of fruit preserves and subtle hints of herbs. On the palate, it offers a soft yet structured profile with spicy undertones and a long finish. The combination of clay and limestone soils provides essential minerals for vine growth, while temperature shifts from the nearby sea help grapes ripen slowly and evenly.

Le Monde’s Cabernet Franc has recently been featured in a collaboration with chef Nino Di Costanzo, who leads Daní Maison on the island of Ischia. Di Costanzo’s restaurant holds two Michelin stars and is known for blending Mediterranean tradition with modern culinary techniques. For this partnership, Di Costanzo created a dish called Lamb in Eggplant Parmigiana. The pairing was designed to highlight both the wine’s balance and the dish’s complexity. The softness of the Cabernet Franc complements the lamb’s texture, while its spicy notes enhance the flavors of eggplant and other ingredients.

This collaboration represents more than just a food and wine pairing; it is a meeting point between two regions—Friuli and Ischia—that share values such as craftsmanship, respect for tradition, and ongoing innovation. Both Le Monde and Daní Maison aim to

create experiences that connect people to their respective territories through taste and memory.

The story of Cabernet Franc in Friuli continues to evolve as producers like Le Monde explore new ways to express its character. By working with chefs like Di Costanzo, they are also finding new audiences for their wines beyond traditional settings. This approach not only honors the grape’s history but also points toward its future as an ambassador for Friulian identity on tables across Italy and beyond.