

The new releases I tasted along with Gianluca Garofoli were eye-opening, to say the least. Not only did they include the 2019 Podium, which can be placed amongst the top vintages ever produced of their flagship Verdicchio, but it also gave me a peek at the 2020 vintage through the wonderfully refreshing and crisp Serra del Conte, as well as a number of red wines in their range. One of the biggest issues I've always had with Marche reds is the overuse of new oak, but that's not a problem at this address. Garofoli sources their Montepulciano from estate vineyards in the Monte Conero, where it grows in calcareous soils on hillside vineyards that gently slope down toward the sea. This is the most northern location in Italy that you'll find a DOC Montepulciano which, combined with the poor soils and moderating influences of the Adriatic coast, produces fruit that is packed full of character. The 2016 Conero Riserva Grosso Agontano was a perfect example, and it's a wine that I'd be happy to have aging in my cellar. The 2018 vintage isn't as strong for the reds as it was for the whites, but the wines are still remarkably pretty.



GAROFOLI "Podium" Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Superiore DOC 2019 – At each tilt of the glass, the 2019 Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Classico Podium reveals something new. At first, it shows gingery spice, white smoke and yellow flower notes, then it evolves into sour melon, young mango and wet stone aromas. Finally, it turns flinty, with crushed apples and raw almonds. The silky textures are almost glycerol-like, even though it is seemingly weightless in feel. It hovers above the senses while being propelled by vibrant acidity and saturating mineral tones, as ripe orchard fruits and inner florals cascade across the palate. It leaves you with an achingly youthful impression, the combination of structure and lingering notes of bitter grapefruit rind and granny smith apples. The 2019 Podium is a classic in the making; and while it can be enjoyed today, the best is yet to come.

GAROFOLI "Serra del Conte" Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Classico DOC 2020 – More savory than sweet and packed-full of crushed stone mineral tones and crisp green apple, the 2020 Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Serra del Conte makes itself known. While pleasantly ripe in style and soothing on the palate, this impresses more with its core of bright acidity that keeps the expression incredibly fresh and lifted. Hints of raw almond and orchard fruits linger long, as the cheeks pucker through the mouthwatering finale. I love the contrast of tension and ripeness here that makes the 2020 very easy to like. – **89 points**

GAROFOLI "Farnio" Rosso Piceno DOC 2020 – Peppery and floral, the 2020 Rosso Farnio wafts up with wild herbs, dusty roses, violets and tart cherries. It's soft, generous and enveloping, yet with a bump of zesty acidity and tart wild berry fruits that keep the expression energetic and fun. This leaves a subtle coating of fine tannins that frames the experience well, along with hints of licorice and currants. The Farnio is an easy-drinking and nicely balanced blend of 70% Montepulciano and 30% Sangiovese that punches well above its price point. – **88 points**

GAROFOLI "Piancarda" Rosso Conero DOC 2018 – The 2018 Rosso Piancarda is intensely spiced and perfumed, as medicinal cherries and raspberries are complemented by dusty rose and sweet cedar. On the palate the Piancarda takes a turn toward the savory spectrum. Salty and full of zesty minerality, the 2018 shows sapid red fruits, hints of plum and brisk acids that keeps the expression fresh. Grippy tannins linger through the finale, as hints of sour citrus and tart berries slowly taper off. The Piancarda is a varietal Montepulciano from the most northern part of Italy where Montepulciano is produced and is refined in large casks. – **89 points**

GAROFOLI "Piancarda" Rosso Conero DOC 2019 – Masses of ripe plums, black cherries, sage and licorice blast up from the 2019 Rosso Conero Piancarda. It fills the palate with round, fleshy textures contrasted by salty minerals and tart wild berry fruits. The 2019 leaves a coating of grippy tannins to linger, along with hints of tangerine and inner herbal tones. The Piancarda will require a little time in the cellar to fully unwind. This 100% Montepulciano hails from the Monte Conero region, which is the most northern location in Italy, where the grape is permitted in a DOC. The elevations are higher here, the soils are calcareous and the vineyards are heavily influenced by their close proximity to the sea. – **90 points**

GAROFOLI "Grosso Agontano" Conero Rosso Riserva DOC 2018 – Dusty violets, roses, incense wild herbs and wet stone lift up to form a perfumed display as the 2018 Conero Riserva Grosso Agontano blossoms in the glass. The Agontano is silky and refined, contrasting ripe red berries and sweet spice with saline-mineral tones and brisk acidity. This leaves the palate with a coating of fine tannins, yet it remains energetic, savory and almost salty in character, with a hint of black licorice that lingers long. The 2018 Agontano will only require minimal cellaring to show well, and, although quite balanced and pretty, it should be enjoyed sooner rather than later. – **91 points**

GAROFOLI "Grosso Agontano" Conero Rosso Riserva DOC 2016 – The 2016 Conero Riserva Grosso Agontano grumbles up from the glass darkly floral and earthy, with notes of underbrush and tobacco giving way to blackberries and crushed stone. Its velvety textures usher in a polished display of red/black fruits lifted by cooling herbal tones, as fine tannins slowly saturate toward the close. This tapers off long, youthfully structured and with a pleasant inner sweetness, as nuances of tangerine and tart cherry linger under an air of violet florals. The Agontano is quite impressive, yet it has a lot more to say and will require further cellaring to fully blossom. Typically, I'm not a fan of Montepulciano refined in barrique, but the integration here is expertly accomplished. Garofoli matures the Grosso Agontano for twelve to eighteen months in small barrels, of which only ⅓ are new. – **93 points**

GAROFOLI Brut Spumante Metodo Charnat Verdicchio N/V – The NV Brut Spumante Metodo Charnat Verdicchio wafts up with a delicate display of yellow florals, apples and chamomile contrasted by a twang of fresh ginger. Its soothing bubbles and balanced inner sweetness are nicely contrasted by brilliant acidity and tart orchard fruits, making for a lovely interplay of contrasts. This cleans up nicely, leaving yeasty nuances, along with subtle spices and zests of lemon. It's worth seeking out. – **90 points**