



Decanter

ITALY GUIDE 2022

THE FINEST WINES & VINTAGES
ALL THE TOP NAMES TO KNOW
WHERE TO VISIT THIS SUMMER

Alessandro Leoni

In 2005, after completing his agricultural studies in Piedmont, Alessandro Leoni (*below*) started making wine, aged just 18. He became interested in viticulture thanks to a small plot of vineyards belonging to his uncle in Umbria. 'At that time,' he says, 'I met Riccardo Cotarella, with whom I worked until 2018 in different cellars across the "bel paese"... setting up and running start-up projects, from the soil to the bottling. Creating a new cellar is truly emotional!'

I came across Leoni's wines while I was on holiday in Capri, where some of the best local wines were from the producer San Salvatore 1988 – the San Salvatore Pian di Stio (made by Leoni and Cotarella) was such an elegant, pure and focused version of the Fiano grape. When I met Leoni in 2017, I was impressed by his desire to experiment with less famous varieties and places – he also oversees the production of a thrilling Biancolella made on Ischia in the Gulf of Naples.

Recently, Leoni returned to Orvieto in Umbria, the home of his first inspiration, where he has set up his own company, Feudi Spada. 'Riccardo Cotarella has been a great teacher,' he says. 'I owe him a lot, but I have always had an innate love and passion for the land where my grandfather was born.' Leoni's Umbrian wines include an elegant Chardonnay, an unusual blend of Grechetto and Riesling, and a red made from Alicante – all delicious and characterful wines. I love the precision, purity and joyfulness of his white wines and am intrigued by the potential of his reds. I can't wait to see what he will do next.

San Salvatore 1988, Pian di Stio Fiano, Paestum, Campania 2018 95

N/A UK sansalvatore1988.it

Made by Leoni with Riccardo Cotarella as consultant, this is a wonderfully taut, cool and elegant style of Fiano from grapes grown at 550m in the Cilento national park near Paestum, Campania. Pale gold in colour, with aromas of peach and fragrant meadow flowers, then zesty green apple and grapefruit on the palate, leading to a dry, tangy, savoury finish. Organic. **Drink** 2022-2023 **Alc** 14%

Cantine di Crateca, Biancolella, Ischia, Campania 2020 93

N/A UK vinicratecaischia.it

What a delightful, zesty example of Biancolella! Grown on volcanic soils on Ischia island, the grapes are cooled by sea breezes. Leoni's advice in the vineyard and some techniques in the winery have produced intense aromas of green tropical fruit. Brimming with bright flavours and mouthwatering acidity, with crunchy green apple, pink grapefruit and sweet lime. **Drink** 2022-2023 **Alc** 12%

Feudi Spada, La Marchesa, Umbria 2020 93

N/A UK feudispada.it

Leoni's own-label wine from Umbria is an intriguing blend of Grechetto with 10% Riesling (he says the varieties have a similar DNA and come together well with time). A beautifully subtle and elegant wine, it has delicate yet persistent aromas of white flowers, honeysuckle and sweet pea. An attractive bitter note on the finish with a twist of green olive and stony mineral flavours. **Drink** 2022-2024 **Alc** 13% **D**



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