

**OVERVIEW**



Marche's most sought-after grape variety at present is Verdicchio, considered one of Italy's best white varieties, and the primary source of Verdicchio is in the hill towns (castelli) around the city of Jesi in central Marche. The denomination is a mouthful: Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi DOC. This wine was once famous for the fish- or amphora-shaped bottles that it came in, and it had a reputation for not being as interesting as the bottles. In today's wine world, where so-so doesn't sell, Castelli di Jesi wineries have dramatically improved the wine's quality, and the kitschy bottle has been replaced by a standard one that fits in a wine rack. The rules of Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi DOC wines are fairly simple: the wine must contain at least 85% Verdicchio. However, there are quite a few style and geographic variations. The wine can be still or sparkling, for instance, or it can be made in a sweet dessert style using dried grapes. Wines made in the southern part of the denomination where production first began can use the term Classico on the label, and that area has been subdivided into 99 small parcels whose names can appear on the bottle if the grapes are all from a single parcel. Superiore wines require grapes that are at peak ripeness at harvest. If those variations are not enough, there is also a Riserva version of the still wine that spends at least a year and a half aging. It has its own denomination, Castelli di Jesi Verdicchio Riserva DOCG, but makes up only a small fraction of production.