Ci□ Ci□, Bacchus 2006 Rosso Piceno

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Difficult to forget an Italian wine producer called Ciù Ciù “because the great grandfather used to work on the railways” and this jolly little organically grown red is just the sort of Italian red I wish I could find more of.

The Marche on Italy’s Adriatic coast is better than most regions at offering Italian value, balance and personality in both reds and whites (Verdicchio chiefly). Rosso Piceno, like the other famous Marche red Rosso Conero, is a blend of juicy Montepulciano grapes and Sangiovese for structure and acidity, with the Montepulciano portion increasingly favoured. **Ciù Ciù, Bacchus 2006 Rosso Piceno** certainly tastes more like Montepulciano with its sweet, mouth-filling fruit than of the more austere Sangiovese, although I am told the blend is 50:50. Presumably it's the Sangiovese that keeps this wine so lively. Pierluigi Lorenzetti is apparently the visiting oenologist here and clearly does a good job with the Bartolomei brothers’ carefully grown grapes on calcareous-clay soils 300m above sea level. Presumably it is this altitude that keeps the grape on the vine well into October, and accounts for the alcohol level of 13.5%. Drink this wine any time this year, and you could even cool it slightly for summer drinking, with or without food.

There is also a more expensive **Gotico 2004 Rosso Piceno Classico** with much more tannin and acidity that is almost bitter and not nearly so much fun, as well as the well made, tangy-yet-fruity white **Offida Pecorino 2006**, the increasingly popular local grape so called apparently because sheep (*pecora*) like to eat them (I’ll fall for any old wives’ tale).

For the moment I can find the wine only at Les Caves de Pyrène near Guildford in the UK tel +44 (0)1483 538820 and at Trinity Wine Stores, Balham Station Road, London SW12 tel +44 (0)20 8673 3773, but doubtless it is much easier to buy in Italy.