

## 2022 Antonucci Pignocco Verdicchio Marche, Italy

Stefano Antonucci's dynamic and candid personality captivates all who meet him. This irresistible drive and energy, combined with an intrinsic bond to his territory, is what led him, in 1994, to make the drastic decision to change his life direction and return to the small village of his childhood, Barbara, in the heart of the Marche region, giving up his job as a banker. He recounts, *"Wine is an aroma, a taste, and an art that has flowed through my veins since childhood. It was a passion that grew day after day and could no longer be relegated to merely a pastime. My job as a banker began to feel increasingly restrictive and wasn't enough to satisfy my curiosity, and my energy or fulfill my irrepressible yearning for new experiences. And so, it was to Barbara that I returned to follow my dream."*

Stefano Antonucci had always been intrigued by the world of wine and deeply connected to his territory. From this foundation, he began the transformation of his family's small cooperative winery into the Santa Barbara Winery of today, a reference point for exceptional quality in Marche. *"This was where I had learned to love the land, to know and respect its secrets, its rhythms, and its products. This was where I had grown up, surrounded by individuals who transmitted their authentic values to me and whose smiles moved me deeply. So, I set forth on this ambitious undertaking, under my father's watchful, curious (and slightly worried) eye,"* explains Stefano.

Since its beginning, Santa Barbara has always had two principal objectives: to reintroduce the Marche region's indigenous grape varieties and to craft wines of great personality that appeal to international tastes while respecting the tradition of the Marche region. In fact, in addition to the autochthonous grapes, international varieties including Merlot, Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Sauvignon Blanc are cultivated as well to enhance the lineup. In other words, one eye on the territory and the other on the market. It is with this driving force that Stefano produces modern wines with traditional varietals, elegant, intriguing, and persuasive examples of the finest winemaking. **(continued on the red wine page)**



The "Pignocco" gets its name from a legendary and particularly imposing bushy pine tree situated at the top of a hill surrounded by vineyards. This 100% Verdicchio is an easy-drinking wine, vinified and aged only in stainless steel to enhance its approachability. Floral perfumes are accompanied by notes of almond and peach; in the mouth, it is fresh and savory. The Pignocco is extremely versatile with food, an ideal accompaniment to appetizers and light dishes. Drink now.

## Seared Scallops with Lemon Butter Sauce

*This dish is simple and quick for a date night at home or an indulgent weeknight meal.*

### Ingredients:

12 fresh or frozen scallops  
sea salt for seasoning  
ground pepper (optional for seasoning)

1 small lemon, sliced in ¼ inch slices  
2 tablespoons salted butter  
½ tablespoon olive oil  
¼ cup freshly cut parsley

### Directions:

Prepare scallops by patting them completely dry with a paper towel. Season with sea salt on both sides (optional season with ground pepper as well). Set aside.

Heat 1 tablespoon of butter in a cast iron pan or other large saucepan on medium high heat. Once the butter is melted add the lemon and cook until brown on both sides (about 2 minutes per side). Remove lemons from pan and set aside. Add the scallops one at a time to the pan. Make sure to space them evenly so they don't steam in the pan. If your pan is small cook in two batches.

Add the other 1 tablespoon of butter and olive oil to the pan. Sear the scallops for about 2-3 minutes on each side. Only turn and touch one time - no need to move them around in the pan. Flip with tongs to turn at half way cooking point. Do not overcook. Take skillet off the heat. Add the lemons back to the pan and garnish with parsley. Serve hot!

Makes 12 scallops | Recipe <https://www.cucinabyelena.com/seared-scallops-in-lemon-butter/>

## 2022 Antonucci Roso Piceno Ste' Marche, Italy

**(continued from the white wine page)** The Santa Barbara estate vineyards range from 25 to 40 years old and encompass an area of about 45 hectares (111 acres) of land, from the rolling hills of Barbara, across Serra de Conti, Montecarotto, and Arcevia up to Morro D'Alba and Cupramontana. The particularity of these areas lies in the soils, water-rich clay with some calcareous and gravelly areas, inhabiting a strip of land bordered by the Adriatic Sea to the east and the Apennines to the west. Work in the vineyards (January through October) is carried out by hand under the attentive guidance of renowned technicians and expert farmers, seeking a balance between spur pruning, focused interventions, and thinning only when necessary.

Stefano explains, "Each harvest is an important test of our wines and vineyards, but also an opportunity to know the grapes soil, and the land a little bit better. Year after year, we set our sights on improving the standard of our grapes, while always respecting our traditions and the history of the land we farm. To do this, sometimes the foundation must be "renovated," applying new production concepts and dedicating an almost obsessive attention to the health of the grapes."

The wine cellar is fitted with modern, state-of-the-art equipment to preserve and enhance the very essence of freshly harvested grapes, employing temperature-controlled 50 and 100-hL stainless steel vats and cement tanks. Aging is instead carried out in the Estate's old monastery, an ideal location thanks to the room's natural climate and constant temperature and humidity, in traditional French 225-liter oak barriques and 450-liter tonneaux.

A strong spirit of innovation combined with boundless passion and meticulous, hands-on attention in the vineyards and cellar grant the wines a refined and unique personality, impeccable and always dynamic, a reflection of Stefano Antonucci himself.

Notes from [www.indigenouselections.com](http://www.indigenouselections.com)



The Antonucci Roso Piceno Ste' is a blend of 70% Montepulciano and 30% Sangiovese. This shows bright expressive tones of raspberries, blackberries, and marasca cherry that wrap around dusty, grippy tannins and a hint of leather. Finishes with a spicy grip that's begging for some meatballs or cured meats. Drink now.

## Giant Meatballs with Ricotta

*Basic meatballs become dinner party fare when stuffed with rich, creamy ricotta cheese.*

### Ingredients:

Olive oil, for baking sheet  
3 cups (½-inch pieces) crusty white Italian bread, crusts removed  
1 cup whole milk  
1 pound ground veal  
1 pound ground beef (80 percent lean)  
1 pound ground pork  
1 large egg, lightly beaten

½ medium onion, minced (about ¾ cup)  
½ cup finely chopped flat-leaf parsley leaves  
1 teaspoon finely chopped fresh oregano leaves  
1 cup finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano, plus more for serving  
1 ½ cups whole-milk fresh ricotta cheese  
1 teaspoon coarse salt  
¾ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
4 cups Marinara Sauce

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Lightly brush a rimmed baking sheet with oil; set aside.

Place bread in a bowl and add milk to moisten. Chop bread into small pieces no larger than 1/4-inch and place in a large bowl. Add veal, beef, pork, egg, onion, parsley, oregano, cheeses, salt, and pepper. Using your hands, gently mix until well combined.

Divide the mixture into 8 equal portions and roll each portion into a large meatball. Transfer meatballs to prepared baking sheet. Bake until golden brown, about 15 to 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, bring the marinara sauce to a simmer in a large saucepan. Transfer the meatballs to the marinara sauce and simmer, partially covered, until cooked through, about 30 minutes. Serve immediately with additional Parmigiano-Reggiano.

Serves 8 | Recipe <https://www.marthastewart.com/1092192/giant-meatballs-ricotta>



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