

# Pecorino

*By Peter Dry, Emeritus Fellow, The Australian Wine Research Institute*

## BACKGROUND

Pecorino (*peh-koh-REE-no*) is a white grape variety that appears to have originated in central eastern Italy. It is now grown in the Marche region and in neighbouring Abruzzo, as well as in Puglia, Umbria and Lazio. Since the late 1980s Pecorino has been revived. In 2001 'Pecorino di Offida' in the Marche region was raised to DOC status. It is used for both varietal and blended wines. Global area in 2010 was 1228 hectares, close to 100% in Italy. Synonyms include: Arquitano, Biancuccia, Bifolchetto, Bifolco, Bifolvo, Dolcippola/o, Forcese, Forconese, Iuvino, Juvino, Lanzesa, Moscianello, Mosciolo, Mostarello, Norcino, Pecorella, Pecorello, Pecorello di Rogliano, Pecori, Pecorina, Pecorina Aquitanella, Pecorina Arquatanella, Pecorino Bianco, Pecorino de Arquata, Pecorino di arquata, Pecorino di Osimo, Piscianino, Promotico, Sgranarella,

Stricarella, Trebbiano Viccio, Uva Cani, Uva degli Osti, Uva Dell'occhio Piccola, Uva delle donne, Uva delle Donne, Uvarella, Uvina, Vecia, Verdicchio Bastardo Bianco, Vissanello, Vissanello Bianco. Note: the variety known as 'Pecorino' in Calabria is actually Greco Bianco (syn. Pecorello Bianco). Pecorino was introduced to Australia by Chalmers Wines in the mid-2010s and there are currently just a handful of Australian producers making Pecorino wines in Heathcote, Hunter Valley and Adelaide Hills.

## VITICULTURE

Budburst is mid-season and maturity early. Vigour is low to moderate with semi-erect growth habit. Bunches are medium and well-filled to compact with small to medium berries. Yield is moderate. In Italy it is generally pruned to canes, but spur pruning

is also used in Australia. It is reported to have good tolerance of downy mildew, but is susceptible to oidium.

## WINE

Pecorino wines may vary with environment and winemaking, but generally have good acidity and richness on the palate. The following descriptors are commonly used: fresh, spicy, ripe fruit, floral and almond, with minerality and possibly slight bitterness. The variety has potential for sparkling base in warm climates.

*For further information on this and other emerging varieties, contact Marcel Essling at the AWRI ([marcel.essling@awri.com.au](mailto:marcel.essling@awri.com.au) or 08 8313 6600) to arrange the presentation of the Alternative Varieties Research to Practice program in your region.*