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## CRISTINA MARIANI-MAY NAMES ITALY'S 'NEXT GREAT WHITE'

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**Castello Banfi's Cristina Mariani-May has named what she believes ought to become the leading white wine variety from Italy – and she's pushing it worldwide.**



Cristina Mariani-May

During an interview at Vinitaly with the high-profile wine personality, [who was recently appointed CEO of New York-based Banfi Vintners](#) – alongside her role overseeing the company's estates in Italy – Cristina expressed her opinions on the future of Italian white wine.

With both white wine and rosé made using the Vermentino grape, and producing distinctive and refreshing expressions, she said that this variety ought to become a flagship for Italy.

"I believe Vermentino should be the next great white from Italy," she told *db* last week at the Verona-based wine fair.

Continuing, she said that the variety's prevalence in white and *rosato* wines from Tuscany, as well as its presence in wines served in tourist hot-spots along Italy's coast, should ensure the grape's fashionable status in the future.

In terms of style, she also expressed her belief in its suitability as a leading white grape from Italy.

"Vermentino holds the perfect position of being between an unoaked Chardonnay and a Sauvignon Blanc," she said.

Recording Vermentino's "grapefruit acidity", she said it was fresh, but not green and grassy in the way that some New Zealand Sauvignon Blancs can be.

Speaking about her white Vermentino called La Pettegola from the Tuscan coast, she said it was growing fast in markets from Italy to Germany and the US.

She also said that Vermentino was an excellent component for Sangiovese-based rosés from Tuscany, playing a similar supporting role to the Grenache-based rosés from Provence, where Vermentino is commonly used, but labelled under its French synonym, Rolle.

Concluding on her reasons for believing in Vermentino, she mentioned the grape's stylistic versatility, depending on where and how it's grown and handled in the cellar.

"With Vermentino, you can make a wine with coastal freshness, or you can do something with richness that can age," she said.

While acknowledging that Italy's biggest export variety in the still white wine segment was Pinot Grigio – with Banfi championing the grape with its own Tuscan-grown version – she also said that "the category is so congested."

Speaking more generally about youthful crisp white wines and rosés, she mentioned that the competition worldwide was intensifying.

"There's no resting, that's the one thing, and you need to be there with the newest thing in the fresh wine category, because the competition is so fast on your heels."