

**Raffaldini Vineyards and Winery****2006 Montepulciano, Estate
(Yadkin Valley)**

This is only the second release of this wine, but one quickly sees why more of it should be planted in the mid-Atlantic. With its vibrant dark garnet color and intensity of flavor, I believe Montepulciano could become one of the South's top varietals. I was impressed with the 2005 from Raffaldini, its first release; the 2006 has similar concentration but greater depth and structure. Flavors of black plum, blackberry and a hint of

currant fairly burst from the glass, nicely integrated with a grip of tannin that creates impact without being heavy or hot.

Raffaldini has one of the few stands of Montepulciano, the Italian variety used mainly in Montepulciano d'Abruzzo and Rosso Conero, in the U.S. – and it is small, only nine acres, more than half of it planted within the last year or so. The 2006 comes from vines only 3 to 4 years old – surprising intensity for such young vines. A lot has to do with yields. Winemaker Stephen Rigby keeps them low, 2 to 2.5 tons per acre, either through early shoot thinning or dropping clusters in summer. Oak influence is minimal, so it's interesting to note that the wine's appeal comes mainly from the fruit itself.

Only 238 cases were made in 2006; 200 cases are reserved for wine club members, the rest will be available in the tasting room, at select restaurants or for special winery events.

Reviewed September 19, 2008 by [Barbara Ensrud](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Raffaldini Vineyards and Winery](#)

Vineyard: Estate

Vintage: 2006

Wine: Montepulciano

Appellation: [Yadkin Valley](#)

Grape: Montepulciano

Price: 750ml \$16.00

THE REVIEWER**Barbara Ensrud**

Barbara Ensrud has been writing about and reviewing wines since 1979, with a nationally syndicated column for the *New York Daily News* and numerous other publications. Her "no numbers" approach to evaluating wine is simple: how does it taste – on its own, as well

as with particular foods? Is it good value, whether \$10 or \$210? Does it measure up in terms of varietal character and regional identity? ...*"When I taste a good wine, I can't wait to share it with fellow wine lovers."*