



The starting point is Novoli (Lecce Province). Negroamaro is found in 47 of Puglia's Doc wines, and is a constant presence on our trip to explore ancient traditions connected with wine and grapevines.

For example, in **Novoli's** central Piazza Tito Schipa there is the **Fòcara** in January – a celebration of Saint Anthony the Abbot. In December the country people begin collecting the first leune, the dry vine cuttings, and these are then burnt in an enormous bonfire. Every year the blessing of the animals is followed by lighting a huge stack of wood – usually 18-20 metres across and 20-22 metres high – which is unique across the entire Mediterranean area. Sparks rain down from the bonfire all night.



We move towards **Lecce** and visit the interesting wine towns of Carmiano, **Monteroni** and **Arnesano**, on the borders between the **Salice Salentino**, **Squinzano** and **Copertino Doc** wines.



Lecce is the capital of Puglia's Baroque architecture, and is charming in its elegance, its sumptuous Baroque buildings and warm Lecce stone. Visitors should not miss the Piazza del Duomo (Cathedral Square) and Santa Croce Basilica with adjacent Palazzo dei Celestini. It is difficult to choose between over seventy beautiful historical 16-17th century buildings, the Castle of Carlo V, Roman remains and museums. In August there is the unforgettable Calici di Stelle in the narrow streets of the old town, where visitors can savour the best wines of the region in a great open-air wine-tasting event.

