



April 2017

Grapevine

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A Closer Look at the Surprising Wine Gems from Sicily

Sicily is the largest of Italy's wine regions and the largest island in the Mediterranean. Shaped somewhat like a sideways piece of pie with a few bites missing, vineyard elevation ranges from near sea level along the coasts to 3,600 feet on the highest slopes of Mount Etna. Fertile soil of differing compositions from region to region and long, humid summers throughout play an important part in the outstanding quality of Sicily's wines, but the extremes in altitude bring varying weather conditions. Annual rainfall spans 12 inches in the southeast to 47 inches on high mountain vineyards.

Just a short drive from the famous seaside resort town of Taormina is Mount Etna, an active volcanic site where the ash-enriched soil produces incredible wine grapes. Made up of steamy volcanic chasms, snowy peaks and hulking seaside cliffs overlooking the picturesque island, it is breathtaking. While Sicily has several winemaking provinces, Mount Etna is by far the most well-known and revered, and it is the region's oldest DOC — Denominazione di Origine Controllata. Located in northeast Sicily near Europe's largest active



A volcanic eruption on Mount Etna in 2015. The volcanic ash is essential to Etna's soil for grape growing. Photo from Skurnik Wines.

volcano, its heights scale just under 11,000 feet and it is often snow-capped. The steep slopes and soil — volcanic ash, loam and a lot of sand — are challenging labor, but those conditions produce stellar wines.

Early in the 20th century, phylloxera — a tiny grape pest that fed on susceptible vines — destroyed much of Europe's vineyards. The louse was unsuccessful in Mount Etna due to those same sandy soils because phylloxera cannot exist in sand. There are now very old, pre-phylloxera vines from original, ungrafted rootstock...rare in Italy.

While Sicily is known mostly for Nero d'Avola, there are plenty of other indigenous grapes. Etna Whites are often made from Carricante

and Catarratto, with the addition of Trebbiano or Minnella — though there are numerous others sometimes included. The **2015 Erse Etna Bianca Tenuta di Fessina** is 80% Carricante blended with Catarratto and Minnella and aged in stainless steel and bottle for a total of a year. It is elegant and crisp with pear notes and a long finish. \$17.99

Many Etna Reds, Rosés, and sparkling wines are made from Nerello Mascalese — a grape often likened to Burgundian Pinot Noir because of its finesse and elegance — and Nerello Cappuccio, the latter in smaller proportion. High altitude extreme temperature swings from day to night help to ward off over-ripened grapes.

The **2012 Murgo Brut Rosé** is made from 100% sustainable Nerello Mascalese, seeing 24 hours of skin contact to achieve its salmon pink hue, then aged *sûr lie* for at least two years in the *metodo classico*. The palate is both creamy and lively, with balanced acidity, plentiful bubbles and refreshing notes of strawberries, cherries and orange zest. **92 AG/WE** \$17.99

The **2015 Terre Nere Etna Rosso** is a 95/5 blend of organic Nerello Mascalese and Nerello Cappuccio, made with Burgundian simplicity: maceration, malolactic fermentation and extended aging in French oak and bottle. It is a well-balanced stunner with elegant notes of fresh fruit and sweet spices. \$17.99

Sicily's — and more specifically, Etna's — wines embrace its climactic extremes, bringing them into beautiful, elegant balance. ♦

Incredible Savings!
15% off all Wine —
Every Bottle,
Every Day!!!

Did you know... The Greeks conquered Mt. Etna in 729 BC setting up trade outposts and planting wine grapes. The poet Theocritus wrote about the vineyards on the slopes of Mt. Etna in the 3rd century BC.

Wine Tastings Fri, 4-7 & Sat, 2-5

In addition to New Arrivals, we'll have the following...

Sat 4/8: Passover Wines & New Arrivals

Fri 4/14: Good Friday Whites & Reds: For Friday fish.

Sat 4/15: Springtime & Easter Dinner Wines

Fri 4/21: April 2017 Staff Picks!

Fri 4/28: Wines from the Article on Page 1: Try these incredible wines from Sicily.

Sicilian Caponata *Adapted from Wine Enthusiast*

1 large eggplant, cut into ½-inch dice
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 celery stalk, cut into ¼-inch dice
1 small red onion, minced
½ pound pitted, halved green olives
1½ tablespoons rinsed capers
½ cup tomato purée
1 tablespoon sugar
½ cup red wine vinegar
Kosher salt, to taste
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
Basil leaves, for garnish (optional)
Toast, for serving (optional)



Place eggplant in bowl of cold, salted water. Let soak 90 minutes. Drain and pat dry with paper towels.

Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in large skillet over medium heat. Add eggplant and celery. Cook 15 minutes, or until golden brown.

In separate skillet, heat remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil over medium-low heat. Add onion, olives, capers and tomato purée. Cook, stirring often, until mixture thickens, about 15 minutes. Add eggplant mixture. Cook another 5 minutes.

Raise heat to medium-high. Add sugar and vinegar, and salt and pepper to taste. Cook 3 minutes to thicken and blend flavors. Serve cold or at room temperature with crostini, garnished with basil leaves, and Max's April staff pick or your Sicilian favorite. Serves 4–6.

News & Events

We are ushering in springtime with the return of our **Rosé garden**, which is growing nicely, if we do say so ourselves. From both old world and new world, there are now over 30 to choose from. With new vintages of beloved favorites and some terrific new ones, we can't wait for you to try them.

The lively acidity of Rosé is refreshing as an aperitif and also happens to be a wonderful pairing for Easter ham. We will be tasting a few on Friday and Saturday of Easter weekend, so be sure to stop in and try them.

Old Fashioned Spring

An Old Fashioned is usually a cold weather comfort, so in honor of Spring, we present you its Springtime adaptation.

4 oz Boodles Gin
½ oz simple syrup (one part sugar, one part water)
6 dashes orange bitters
Lemon and orange wheels for garnish

Add all the ingredients to a chilled mixing glass and fill with ice. Stir for 20 seconds and strain into two Old Fashioned glasses with fresh ice. Garnish with lemon and orange wheels.



Classic Negroni

In honor of our front page article on Sicilian wines, we bring you a time-honored classic cocktail from Italy.

2 oz Campari Milano
2 oz Uncle Val's Botanical Gin
2 oz Carpano Antica Sweet Vermouth

Measure all of the ingredients to two Old Fashioned glasses and add a large ice cube to each. Stir until cold, and garnish each with an orange half-wheel.



April 2017 Staff Wine Picks

Sheila: 2015 Banshee Chardonnay (Sonoma Coast) \$16.99 (reg \$19.99) Aged for 11 months in 85% seasoned and new French oak and 15% stainless steel, it has notes of apple, honey and vanilla. *Buttery pan-fried tilapia with sliced almonds

Joe: 2014 Proud Pour 'The Oyster' Sauvignon Blanc (North Coast) \$15.29 (reg \$17.99) Born from a desire to preserve and restore oyster bed communities, this sustainable wine is crisp with lemon and green apple flavors. *A dozen raw oysters

Max: 2012 Macarico Alto Vulture Aglianico (Basilicata, Etna) \$15.29 (reg \$17.99) 93 RP Biodynamic, stainless-fermented and oak aged for 12 months, it tastes of blackberries, figs and minerals. *Crostini and Sicilian caponata

Ian: 2015 Paul Jaboulet Aîné Parallèle 45 Côtes Du Rhone Blanc (Rhône Valley) \$10.99 (reg \$12.99) 50% Grenache Blanc is blended with Marsanne, Viognier and Bourboulenc; aged in steel. White fruit notes. *Curried mussels

Renee: 2016 Banshee Rosé (Mendocino) \$16.49 (reg \$18.99) 90 AG A 48/22/16/14 blend of Grenache, Pinot Noir, Syrah and Barbera, it has notes of nectarine, melon and berries with balanced acidity. *Roasted beet salad

Carol: 2013 Van Duzer Pinot Noir (Willamette Valley) \$21.29 (reg \$24.99) Created by a Burgundy-born winemaker and influenced by Pacific coastal breezes, it tastes of licorice, cherries, blueberries and spice. *Baked ham and scalloped potatoes