



PERFECT WINES FOR A GENEROUS KITCHEN

More than any of Italy's southern regions, Sicily has been a crossroads of civilizations. Phoenician, Greek, Roman, Arab, Byzantine, French and Spanish settlers have brought with them their own architectures, crops and kitchens to produce the layer cake that is Si-

cilian culture. Arabs gave the island its iconic cassata sweet, named for "qas'at," the basin in which ewe's milk ricotta was mixed with candied peel, sugar, nuts and so on to make it. The name of the zibibbo grape is from "zabib," the Arab word for raisin. Normans left their mark,



Sicily has more hectares under vine than any other region of Italy.

too, for instance in the language of citrus fruits and in salt cod “baccalà.” Nature has been generous with Sicily, providing fish, fruit, vegetables, olives and wine in abundance. Viticulture on the island began 5,000 years ago in the Etna area, where the rich volcanic soil favors grape farming. Experts say that by the first century BC, the island had 21,000 hectares under vine, a huge area for the population of the time. Long after the Romans, Spanish rulers brought varieties from their homeland to Sicily. Then in the 18th century, the British expanded grape production for fortified Marsala wine, which made the fortune of many families in western Sicily. Some of the original Marsala “stabilimenti” (wi-



Nero d'Avola is Sicily's signature native grape.



neries) are still operating. In the 19th century, Sicily's 320,000 hectares under vine were devastated by phylloxera. Subsequent replanting with more robust varieties threatened native grapes with extinction but far-sighted growers have managed to save about 70 types, including nero d'Avola, grillo, catarratto and inzolia. Today, the island has about 150,000 hectares planted to vine, 5% in the mountains (Etna and Palermo), 30% on flatlands and 65% in hill country. The split between whites and reds is 77%-23% and training systems are astonishingly diverse. Sweet wines are important with Passito and Moscato di Pantelleria, Moscato di Noto, Moscato di Siracusa and Malvasia delle Lipari. Sicily is renowned for sweets, including Modica chocolate, and for its marvelous street foods as well as cased meat products and its myriad cheeses. 🍷

Sicily: our selections

MAGGIO VINI • Cerasuolo di Vittoria Classico DOCG "Vigna di Pettineo" 2010



GRAPES:
nero d'Avola,
frappato

DRINK BEFORE:
2015

Serve at 18 °C
in a tulip glass
about six cm
at the rim

\$17

Massimo and Barbara run the Maggio wine estate, an operation that has represented all that is good in the Ragusa and Vittoria area's output. The wines, obtained largely from native varieties, show plenty of character.

THE WINE

Star-bright ruby red shot through with alluring flecks of purple; nutmeg and pepper spice over mint chocolate-edged sour cherry aromatics, fresh greens at the back; warm alcohol, bracing acidity, faintly tannic progression with a nicely spice-themed finale.

TRY IT WITH...

Balanced, well-structured and a natural partner for hearty meat roasts, such as kid with potatoes, or pasta dishes with rich sauces like egg pappardelle with wild boar.

CONTACT: www.maggiovini.it

ALCESTI • Sicilia IGP Grecanico "Opàlie" 2011



GRAPES:
grecanico 100%

DRINK BEFORE:
2013

Serve at 10 °C
in a tulip glass
about five cm
at the rim

\$10

When Leonardo Paladino set up Alcesti in 2003, he was out to produce great wines that were also deliciously easy to drink. He has achieved that goal with a fine range of bottles from native and international varieties.

THE WINE

Deep, attractively bright yellow shot through with flecks of gold; penetrating citrus offers a counterpoint to sage-edged peach fruit, almonds at the back; long and deliciously refreshing with an impressive finale that nicely mirrors the citrus on the nose.

TRY IT WITH...

A wine that brings out the best in fish of all kinds, from soups and risottos to grills, fries and all crustacean-based dishes, such as astice alla catalana (lobster catalan).

CONTACT: www.alcesti.it