

1. Sella & Mosca La Cala Vermentino - 2013, Sardinia. 12.5% abv.

Pale transparent yellow color. At nose it shows pear, quince and orange blossom aromas intermingled with lily and rose nuances. At palate it's elegantly acidic, crisp, dry, mouth-watering, with discreet minerality and flavors of grapefruit, pear with an orangey finish. Slightly prickly on the tongue with medium-long aftertaste. Excellent with seafood pasta and any summery salad of arugula and orange/nuts composition.

2. Fazio Casa Vinicola, Calebianche Catarratto 2013, Sicily. 12.5% abv.

DOC Erice, from Trapani, this is 100% Catarratto. Delightful exotic note of lychee and guava at first, very juicy, peachy and tropical. The extra ripeness and sweet exoticism is lovely on the palate, giving this real personality. That peach or nectarine flesh and juice carries on to the mouth, but with the natural acidity of the fruits too. Clean, flowing and delightful, with even a hint of mineral saltiness in the finish. 90/100.



3. Varvaglione Vigne e Vini Primitivo Di Manduria Papale, Puglia. 14% abv.

The name Primitivo translates roughly as “early one”. It is a 100% Primitivo di Manduria DOP wine. In the heart of DOP areas – DOP stands for ‘Di Origine Protetta’ referring to a Protected Designation of Origin for quality wines produced in a specified region – the Golden Line of Papale grapes carefully selected and manually picked into cases. The aromas are intense and evoke sensations such as fruit jam and black currant, blackberry, cherry, cocoa and liquorice. On the palate this wine is round, smooth, with a persistent finish tending all'aromatico.

4. Librandi Ciro Duca Sanfelice Riserva, 2011 - Calabria. 14% abv.

This Ciro wine has received good scores from various critics: 91 by Stephen Tanzer, and 91 points by Vinous. This is the most popular Calabria wine. Made from 100% Gaglioppo, a southern Italian grape variety best known for producing soft red wines from the mountainous Ciro DOC in Calabria. The variety is the main grape in this part of Italy and has been used in the region for centuries. It produces varietal red wine that is typified by a range of crushed berry flavors, often accented by cherry and spicy secondary notes.



5. Torridoro Cabernet Merlot Terre Siciliane IGT, 2013 - Sicily. 14.5% abv.

The Family's Choice - Superb red wine, with a rounded smooth body and a wide bouquet with intense, pleasant aromas of ripe fruits on the nose. Italian 50% Cab/50% Merlot? Those crazy Sicilians - what were they thinking? A delicious bottle of wine is what. Ripe fruit and easy tannins.

6. Luna Argenta Appassimento 2013 - Puglia. 14.5% abv.

20% Primitivo, 80% Negroamaro proprietary red blend. “A unique red blend from Puglia, showing black fruits, herbs, black olive, and raspberry flavors. Finishes with soft, rounded tannins.” —Steve Pollack, wine buyer for the Chairman's Selection program.



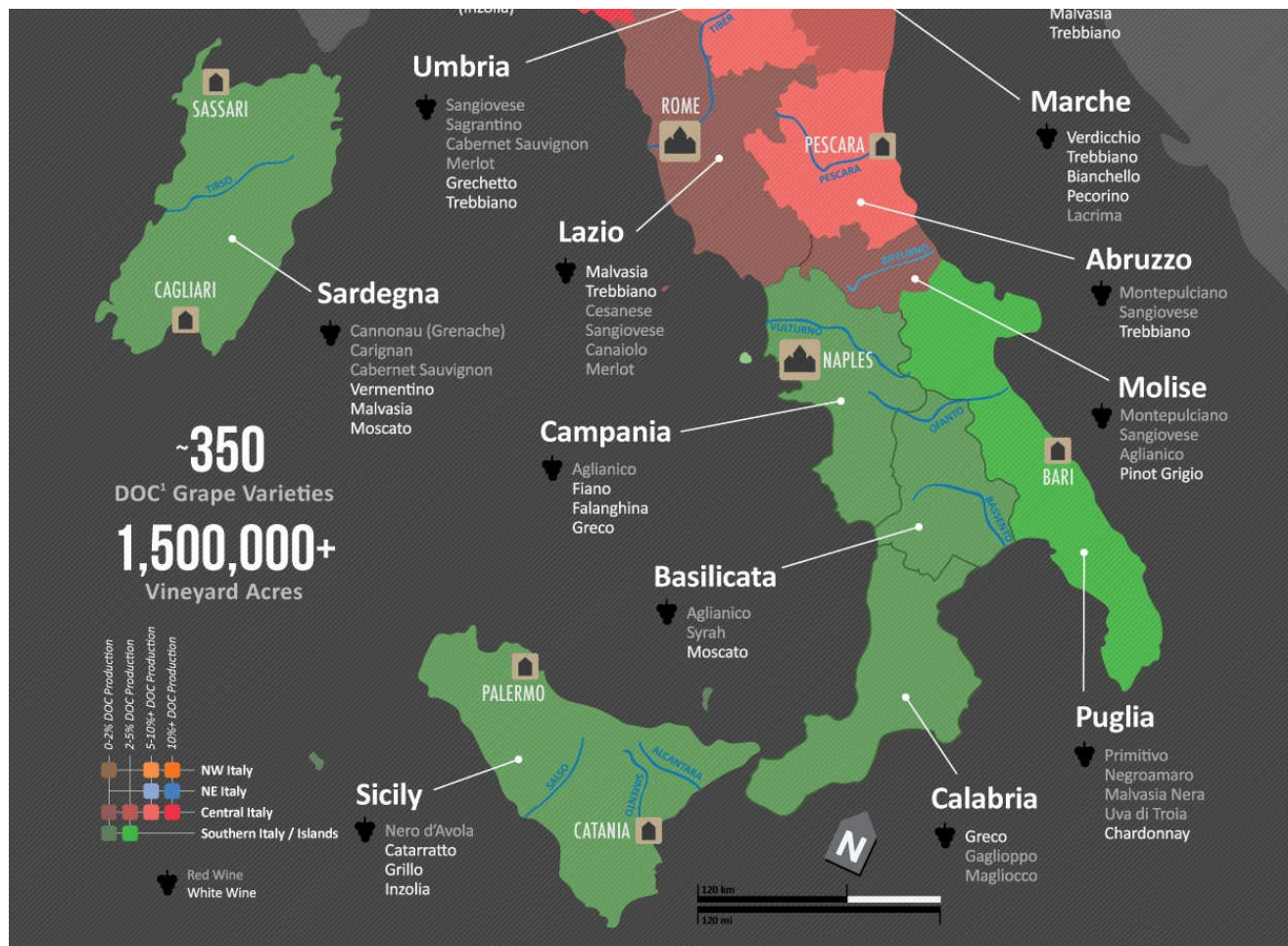
7. Planeta Santa Cecilia Red (DOC Noto), 2009 - Sicily. 13.5% abv.

94 points JamesSuckling.com/ A decadent wine with hints of jam but then goes firm and racy. So refined. Full with firm tannins and a fresh finish. A beauty. Best Nero d'Avola in years from Sicily.

In the southernmost corner of Sicily, with its white soils and ancient vines, Noto is the epicentre of the Nero d'Avola cultivation. The wine expresses elegance, power, balance and emphasis on the unique aromas of Sicily, and now is finally a point of reference for red wines from indigenous Sicilian grapes. Its name is derived from that of our family – Planeta di Santa Cecilia.

About Southern Italy

Molise, Campania, Puglia, Basilicata, Calabria By Monica Lerner



The perfect intersection of archeology and wine is found in southern Italy. From Naples to Reggio Calabria, this portion of the peninsula was a formidable extension of ancient Greece, or Magna Graecia. The widespread colonization of southern Italy left a lasting Hellenic imprint that would inspire the culture of ancient Rome.

Southern Italy is a major interval on the timeline that traces the history of wine. As the Greeks realized the trading potential of fermented grape juice, they brought many nonnative varieties to the fertile soils of Campania, Puglia, Basilicata and Calabria. Sunny southern Italy became a giant nursery. Genetic variations one generation to the next gave rise to one of the largest grape biodiversity hotspots on the planet.

This classical era throwback is what makes southern Italy so sensational. The area boasts Pompeii (an important port for wine exports during the Roman Empire), the ancient Greek trading hub Metapontum and the legendarily indulgent Sybaris.

The names of grapes—variations on the name greco or “Greek”—reveal their origins as do the actual growing methods. In Puglia and Molise, head-trained vines, or alberello, reflect the methods used by the ancients. In Campania, grape vines are draped onto tree trunks in a little trellising trick handed down throughout the centuries. In Calabria, vine stocks are tied into giant knots as a way of reducing yields. Just like in archeology, the area’s wines peel back layer after layer to reveal ancient roots.

Within Calabria is the region of Cirò, where some believe the first wine in the world was produced. Archaeologists have found a “vinoduct” there, which carried wine from its production site to the homes of the Sybarites nearby.

Sybaris was an important city of Magna Graecia. The city was founded in 720 BC by Achaean and Troezenian settlers. Sybaris amassed great wealth thanks to its fertile land and busy port. Its inhabitants became famous among the Greeks for their hedonism, feasts, and excesses, to the extent that “sybarite” and “sybaritic” have become bywords for opulent luxury and outrageous pleasure-seeking.

Another wine from Calabria, the Cremissa, was used to toast athletes in the ancient Olympics.

Grape Varieties

Gaglioppo: The mainstay red grape of Calabria (the “toe” of Italy), this light, ruby-colored variety is featured in Cirò and is steadily gaining interest abroad.

Negroamaro: The grape known as “bitter black” is farmed throughout the Salento area in southern Puglia and is featured in Salice Salentino where it is blended with fruitier Malvasia Nera.

Primitivo: Said to be a relative of California’s Zinfandel, Primitivo di Manduria is one of Puglia’s most popular and enjoyable red wines, showing jammy fruit flavors.

Catarratto: The grape is a variety from the island of Sicily, off the southern coast of Italy, and is mostly used in the production of light, easy-drinking white wines. Despite being grown almost exclusively in Sicily, it is one of Italy’s most commonly planted grape varieties, making up around 60 percent of the island’s total vineyard area. Catarratto is probably a descendent of Garganega, the key white-wine grape variety in northeastern Italy’s Soave wines.

Vermentino: The white-wine grape is grown in various locations around the western Mediterranean: northwestern Italy, southern France and the neighboring islands of Corsica and **Sardinia**. It goes by various names, among them Pigato in Liguria, Favorita in Piedmont and Rolle in Provence. Vermentino wines have refreshing acidity and attractive aromas of peach, lemon peel, dried herbs and a whiff of saline minerality.

Fiano: Beautifully redolent of Golden Delicious apple and pear, Fiano di Avellino is a creamy white wine from Campania that pairs with spaghetti alle vongole or fried calamari.

Greco: Of Greek origin, this white variety is used across southern Italy but finds its maximum expression in Campania’s volcanic soils as Greco di Tufo wine.

Aglianico: This austere red grape (from the word “Hellenic”) was on the verge of extinction. Today it makes two of Italy’s best, cellar-worthy wines: Taurasi (from Campania) and Basilicata’s underrated Aglianico del Vulture.