

Sardinian Wine

Since the mid-18th Century, Sardinia has been one of Italy's five autonomous regions (the others being Sicily, [Friuli-Venezia Giulia](#), [Trentino-Alto Adige](#) and the [Aosta Valley](#)), but its separation from the mainland has led to a culture and identity somewhat removed from the Italian mainstream. This is reflected in the Sardinian relationship with wine. Wine is much less culturally and historically engrained there than in the mainland regions, and wine production and consumption on any scale has developed only in the past few centuries.

Grapes

The portfolio of varieties planted in Sardinian vineyards bears little resemblance to those in any other Italian wine region. Instead one finds varieties of French and Spanish origin, exemplified by [Grenache](#) (called Cannonau here), [Carignan](#) (Carignano), [Cabernet Sauvignon](#) and [Bobal](#).

The most "Italian" varieties here are [Malvasia](#) and [Vermentino](#). Aside from the better-known grape varieties mentioned above, the island makes use of several exclusive varieties, including [Torbato](#), [Semidano](#), [Niederra](#), [Nuragus](#), [Monica](#) and [Nasco](#).

Regions

The majority of Sardinian vineyards lie on the western side of the island, which is also where its most location-specific DOCs are found. They line the west coast, running from south to north: [Carignano del Sulcis](#), [Vernaccia di Oristano](#), [Malvasia di Bosa](#). The exception is [Alghero Vermentino di Gallura](#), the island's only DOCG, whose area covers the island's northeastern corner. However the most familiar appellations to many drinkers are likely DOCs [Cannonau di Sardegna](#) and [Vermentino di Sardegna](#).

Grenache Red Wine Profile

MAJOR REGIONS: *About 456,000 acres worldwide*

- 1 France (~250,000 acres) Rhône, Châteauneuf-du-Pape
- 2 Spain (~170,000 acres) Priorat, Calatayud
- 3 Italy (~55,300 acres) Sardinia, Sicily, Calabria
- 4 United States (~10,000 acres) California, Washington
- 5 Australia (~8,000 acres) South Australia

Grenache Characteristics

FRUIT: Strawberry, Black Cherry, Raspberry

OTHER: Anise, Tobacco, Citrus Rind, Cinnamon

OAK: Yes. Usually Medium Oak Aging

TANNIN: Medium

ACIDITY: Medium

ABV: Medium-plus alcohol (13.5-16%)

COMMON SYNONYMS: Cannonau (Italy), Garnacha (Spain), Garnatxa (Spain), Grenache Noir, Alicante (Rare)

What does Grenache Taste Like?

The unmistakable candied fruit roll-up and cinnamon flavor is what gives Grenache away to expert blind tasters. It has a medium-bodied taste due to its higher alcohol, but has a deceptively lighter color and is semi-translucent. Depending on where it's grown, Grenache often has subtle aromas of orange rinds and ruby-red grapefruit. When Grenache is grown in **Old World** regions such as **Côtes du Rhône** and **Sardinia**, it can have herbal notes of dried oregano and tobacco.

Sicilian Wine

Although once famous for sweet Muscats (see [Pantelleria](#)), and later fortified [Marsala](#), the island's best known wines are now its dry table wines produced under the regional IGT title, [Terre Siciliane](#).

Rural viticulture and blue skies, Sicily. Regions

Mount Etna, the towering stratovolcano, dominates the island's eastern skyline, and is responsible for the mineral-rich, dark soils which characterize the [Etna DOC](#) vineyards. Vines are now being planted higher up on the volcanic slopes, to capitalize on the cooler air and richer soils there. On their lower slopes and the coastal plains below them, the DOCs of [Siracusa](#), [Noto](#), [Eloro](#) and [Vittoria](#) sweep from east to west, forming a crescent which mirrors the arcing coastline. In western Sicily. The western fifth of the island is covered by the Marsala DOC, and also within this area fall the DOCs [Alcama](#), [Contessa Entellina](#), [Delia Nivolelli](#), [Erice](#), [Menfi](#), [Monreale](#), [Salaparuta](#), [Santa Margherita di Belice](#) and [Sciaccia](#). Also of note is the small [Sambuca di Sicilia](#) DOC .

Grapes

The grape varieties used in Sicilian viticulture are a combination of 'native' varieties. [Nero d'Avola](#) and [Catarratto](#) are the most important natives. The sheer volume of Catarratto juice created each year means much of it is shipped to cooler Italian wine regions, where it is used to increase the body and weight of otherwise thin, over-acidic wines. A large proportion of what remains on the island is used to make Marsala, for which it is joined by the white varieties [Grillo](#) and [Inzolia](#). Another sweet wine of significance to the island is [Moscato di Pantelleria](#), the Moscato grape in question being [Muscat of Alexandria](#). Other grape varieties of note are [Grecanico](#), Alicante ([Grenache](#)), [Perricone](#), [Nocera](#), and [Frappato](#), the latter being the key ingredient in Sicily's only DOCG wine [Cerasuolo di Vittoria](#). Sibling varieties [Nerello Mascalese](#) and [Nerello Cappuccio](#) are also small players in terms of volume, but are of vital importance around Mount Etna. [Syrah](#) has been brought here from its home in southern France. [Trebiano](#) is also present in the wines of Sicily.

Nero d'Avola Taste

- **Fruit:** Nero D'Avola is known for its superbly bold fruit-driven flavors that range from black cherry to prune.
- **Body:** Nero d'Avola is one of the full-bodied wines of the world in the same boldness as **Cabernet Sauvignon**, **Pinotage**, and **Syrah**.
- **Tannin:** The **tannin** in Nero d'Avola is high, but not as high as wines like Barolo or Petite Sirah.
- **Acidity:** Acidity in wine ranges from the tartness of a lemon to the creaminess of greek yogurt. With Nero d'Avola you can expect moderately high acidity, but not so tart that the wine tastes overly spicy.
- **Alcohol:** Alcohol level not only determines the level of booziness but also greatly affects the wine's body. Nero d'Avola typically range from 13.5%–14.5% ABV, which would put them exactly in the “Medium Plus” category—*pretty bold!*

Calabrian wines

Cirò

The Cirò wine region is located in the eastern [foothills](#) of the [La Sila](#) region.

The wines of the regions are predominantly red containing at least 95% of the [Gaglioppo](#)

grape and up to 5% of the white [Greco bianco](#) and [Trebiano](#) grapes permitted. [Rosés](#) and white wines from at least 90% Greco bianco and up to 10% Trebbiano are also made in Cirò but in very limited quantities. The designation of *Cirò classico* will only appear on red wines. Red Cirò is typically very [tannic](#) and full [bodied](#) with strong fruit presences. It is often consumed 3–4 years after [vintage](#) but can take more time to soften the tannins.

Other wine regions

Provinces of Calabria

Of the remaining 11 DOC regions, [Melissa](#) and [Isola di Capo Rizzuto](#) are located near Cirò along the Ionian coast. In the far southern province of [Reggio Calabria](#) are the [Bianco](#) and [Bivongi](#) regions. The western wine regions are located in the provinces of [Catanzaro](#) and [Cosenza](#). They include the DOCs of [Donnici](#), [Lamezia Terme](#), [Pollino](#), [San Vito di Luzzi](#), [Savuto](#), [Scavigna](#) and [Verbicaro](#).

Gaglioppo Wine

Gaglioppo is 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. The origins of Gaglioppo are unclear. The traditional theory is that the variety arrived with [Aglianico](#) at the time of the ancient Greeks. However, recent DNA testing suggests that it is more likely to be one of the many descendents of [Sangiovese](#). A third theory is that both are true but that it is the result of a cross-pollination between Sangiovese and an unknown variety from Greece.

Gaglioppo Grapes

Gaglioppo responds best to dry conditions, but can become too alcoholic if its high natural sugar levels are left to develop for too long on the vine.

Lacrima is an occasional synonym for Gaglioppo .

Synonyms include: Gaglioppo Rosso, Gaglioppo Nero, Gaglioppo di Cirò, Gaglioppa, Lacrima.

Fiano di Avellino Wine

Fiano di Avellino is a [DOCG](#) within the [Campania](#) region of [Italy](#). It is named after the white [Fiano](#) grape, a variety which dates back more than 2000 years

Although Fiano is grown in other parts of Campania, its best performance is obvious in Fiano di Avellino wine. Fiano flourishes in this area, thanks to Avellino's close proximity to the Apennine Mountains, its mild [microclimate](#), [diurnal temperature variations](#) and mineral-rich, volcanic and calcareous soils.

This variety's incredible sweetness makes it a superb candidate for the semi-sweet sparkling wine that is a favorite among locals. The wines are characterized by lush notes of quince, orange blossom, spice and hazelnuts with an excellent underlying minerality and lively acidity. ByDOCG regulations, there must be a minimum of 85% Fiano, with the possible addition of up to 15% of [Greco](#), [Coda di Volpe Bianca](#) and/or [Trebiano Toscano](#). The wines are usually best drunk between three and five years.