

From the volcano's edge: Eight smoking hot wines from Etna picked by our expert

Freshly returned from this year's Etna Days event, Alessandra Piubello picks eight of her favourite red and white wines produced on the slopes of Mount Etna in Sicily.



Alessandra Piubello

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Credit: Anadolu / Contributor/ Getty Images

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An age-old viticultural area, Etna has become an internationally recognised wine territory.

The volcano features a complex mosaic of soils, slopes, altitudes and microclimates, condensed into over 130 *contrade* (historical sub-areas defined by particular lava formations that characterise the geology – and the wines).

The **native varieties** Nerello Mascalese and Nerello Cappuccio are used for reds and whites; while Carricante dominates white production.

All are able to channel and express the distinctive imprint of this volcanic kaleidoscope.

It was a dimension we experienced during Etna Days this September. The event was conceived by the **Etna DOC** consortium to spotlight the constantly evolving path of **Sicily's** first denomination.

The Etna DOC was established back in 1968 and is now on its way to becoming a DOCG in the near future.

The tastings highlighted a clear improvement in the whites due to producers increasingly channelling Carricante's acidic and sapid character. It's a variety that produces wines of enormous evolutionary potential. Focusing on their longevity will be a winning card in the years to come.

The subtle and complex reds are always fascinating, offering vibrant, characterful wines with a narrative of vivid gustatory tension and volcanic personality.

From the crater: Eight Etna wines to try



Federico Curtaz, Etna, Superiore, Sicily, Italy 2021

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This Carricante from age-old vineyards at 900m above sea level is a progressing wave that bursts with vitality and infinite energetic return. Hints of broom, yellow fruit and flint offer a crystalline and pure sip, enlivened by a sapid and refreshing vein. With no...

Points 96



Benanti, Pietra Marina, Etna, Superiore, Sicily, Italy 2020

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Milo is the only area where Etna Superiore can be produced, demonstrating all of Carricante's potential. An intense bouquet blooms with impressive fragrances ranging from sage to acacia, gunpowder, and a subtle citrus vein. An engaging gustatory dynam...

Points 95



I Custodi Delle Vigne Dell'Etna, Imbris, Etna, Superiore, Sicily, Italy 2021

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The Carricante from contrada Caselle in Milo evokes hints of aromatic herbs, hazelnut and orange blossom honey, intensifying into a clear smoky note. Enveloping flavours make the articulate palate even more pleasant, and a refined, enjoyable finish seems...

Points 94



Cantine di Nessuno, Milus, Etna, Superiore, Sicily, Italy 2022

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A polyphonic blend of intensity and finesse, this opens with scents of camomile, yellow fruit and orange blossom. Supported by acidity, impressive matter gives volume to this sapid sip, with a strong and deep finish. Seby Costanzo purchased the 10ha, eastern...

Points 92





Girolamo Russo, San Lorenzo, Etna, Sicily, Italy 2022

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An intriguing interpretation from the San Lorenzo cru that, with vines ranging from 70 to 100+ years old, respects Etna's rigour and typicality. It has a multifaceted bouquet with notes of red fruits, blood orange, floral and smoky hints. Striking for its excellent...

Points 95



Graci, Arcuria Sopra il Pozzo, Etna, Sicily, Italy 2020

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A single-vineyard in the contrada of Arcurià, Sopra il Pozzo 2020 has laser focus and bags of energy. Lifted and very fresh, it opens with enticing fragrances of wild strawberry and dried herbs. Vertical and saline with zippy acidity, its finessed tannins...

Points 94



Pietradolce, Barbagalli, Etna, Sicily, Italy 2020

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Barbagalli is reliably one of Etna's finest red wines, and it doesn't disappoint in 2020. It's from a beautiful plot in Contrada Rampante, at 900m above sea level. Although still youthful, the potential is clear: creamy dark fruit aromas with herbal lift lead into a bol...

Points 96



Tenuta Tascante, Contrada Sciaranuova VV, Etna, Sicily, Italy 2020

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A pure Nerello Mascalese wine from a 64-year-old walled vineyard near a forest at over 700m above sea level. A complex and varied aromatic spectrum offers notes of violet, blood orange, black cherry and spice. Sapid and enveloping in its decisive tannin finess...

Points 95



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