

## 9 CERASUOLO

chosen by Kerin O'Keefe, a freelance wine writer and author based in Italy

**Cerasuolo di Vittoria** is one of those rare wines that combine character and depth with sheer drinkability and enjoyment. As versatile as it is delicious, the DOCG wine can be paired with almost anything, even fish. Made in south-eastern Sicily, it is a blend of the red grapes Nero d'Avola and Frappato. Although Nero d'Avola is the grape behind the island's many high-octane wines, when cultivated in the sandy red soil of Cerasuolo's growing zone, it yields extreme elegance rather than raw power. Frappato, a native almost never grown outside the denomination, lends freshness and exquisite aromas to the mix.

Sicily's first and currently only DOCG, Cerasuolo di Vittoria is the denomination most celebrated in the island's history; the original growing zone is designated by the term *Classico*. Quintessential Cerasuolo has floral and fruity aromas, with spicy berry flavours and a silky texture. Alcohol levels are usually between 13% and 13.5% – downright refreshing in this day and age.

### **COS, Cerasuolo di Vittoria Classico 2007**

★★★★★ (18.5pts/20)

Heady, earthy, floral aromas with succulent cherry, raspberry and spice flavours. Lovely minerality, great depth, fantastic length. Now–2015. **£15.95–£19.30; Adv, Buo, CPy, Evy, NoG, SLP, Zel**

### **Terre di Giurfo, Maskaria,**

**Cerasuolo di Vittoria 2007** ★★★★★ (17)

mineral rather than tart acidity. Long finish. Worth decanting. Drink now. **£8.74–£12.42; Evy, J&B**

Intense blackberry nose with black pepper. Ripe berry with silky tannins. Vibrant and delicious. Now–2012. **£12.90; Nat**



### **Planeta, Cerasuolo di Vittoria 2008**

★★★ (16)

Pretty aromas of strawberry and rose, with bright cherry and spice flavours. Even better served slightly chilled. Drink now. **£11.50–£14.24; AGW, EnW, SLP, WaD, WSt**

### **Valle dell'Acate, Cerasuolo di Vittoria Classico 2007** ★★★★★ (16)

Spicy, toasty aromas with rich blackberry and cinnamon flavours and hints of oak. Now–2012. **£15; Oen**

## 10 ETNA

chosen by Peter McCombie MW, a restaurant wine consultant and writer specialising in Italy

Like many parts of Italy Etna boasts its own local grapes, in this case red Nerello Mascalese and Nerello Cappuccio and white Carricante. These are old vines and special terroirs which enable the production of distinctive wines, with a minerality and freshness firmly at odds with the cliché of the overripe southern red. Local producers have been joined by incomers, attracted by the enormous potential, with some even likening its appeal to Burgundy.

I love the crisp, yet quite weighty Carricante – like drinking liquid oyster shells. The key red grape, Nerello Mascalese, shares characteristics with Nebbiolo. It is relatively pale, with the capacity to develop complex perfumes and with a firmly structured, mineral palate that makes refreshing drinking.

### **Tenuta del Terre Nere 2007** ★★★★★ (18pts/20)

(Carricante, Catarratto, Grecanico, Inzolia) This has an appealing, intriguing nose hinting at apples, citrus, wax and steel. The palate is dense with a subdued, unflashy richness, cut by a



### **Tenuta di Trinoro, Passopisciaro 2006**

★★★★★ (18)

(Nerello Mascalese) There's a fascinating tension about this wine: ripe but also savoury, hinting at herbaceousness; modern but traditional too. The palate is powerful, with lots of alcohol, quite high acidity, firm, yet ripe tannins and a long, dry, fruity finish. Showing attractive, Nebbiolo-like development. Not an easy wine, but impressive. Now–2014. **£24.95–£27.99; C&B, SLP**

### **Benanti, Rossodiversella 2006** ★★★★★ (16)

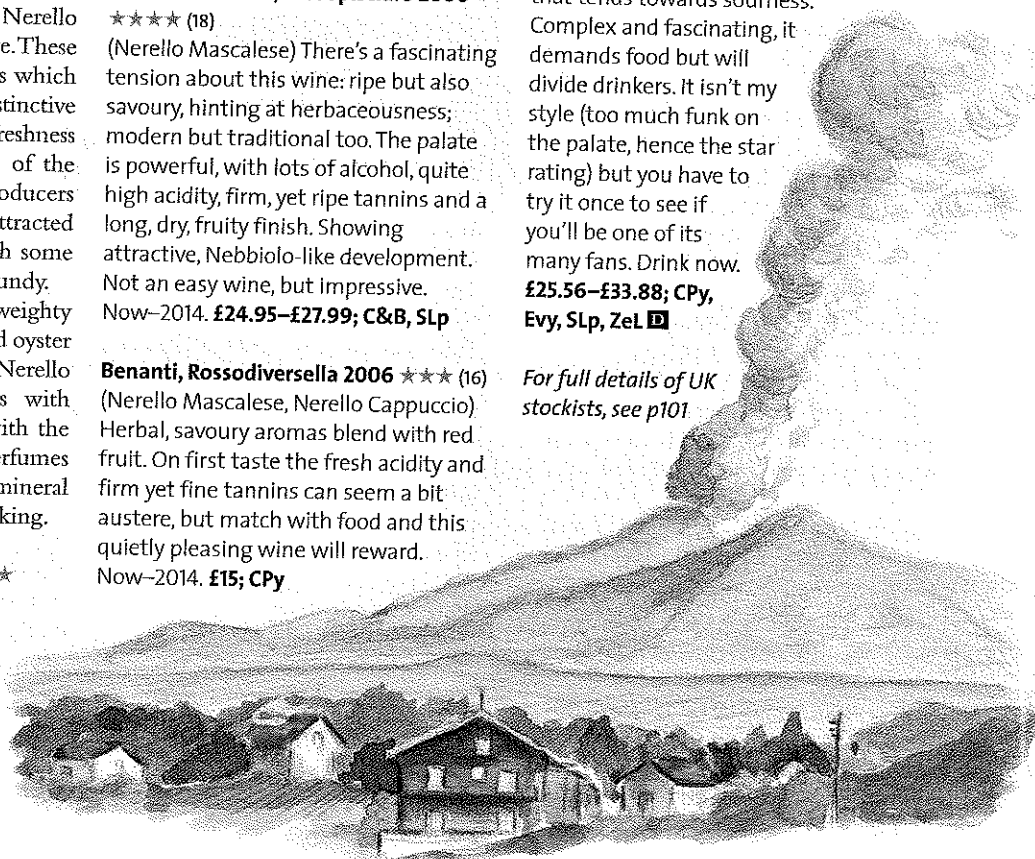
(Nerello Mascalese, Nerello Cappuccio) Herbal, savoury aromas blend with red fruit. On first taste the fresh acidity and firm yet fine tannins can seem a bit austere, but match with food and this quietly pleasing wine will reward. Now–2014. **£15; CPy**

### **Frank Cornelissen, Munjebel 4 2007**

★★★/★★★★★

(Nerello Mascalese) The cloudy, pale garnet look of this *Vino da Tavola* may alarm, but the mushroomy, almost-Burgundian nose is appealing. In the mouth it's fleshy and evolved, with rounded tannins and marked acidity that tends towards sourness. Complex and fascinating, it demands food but will divide drinkers. It isn't my style (too much funk on the palate, hence the star rating) but you have to try it once to see if you'll be one of its many fans. Drink now. **£25.56–£33.88; CPy, Evy, SLP, Zel**

For full details of UK stockists, see p101



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