

ABCS OF REGIONS

Sensational Sicily

Understanding the region's signature grapes and wines

It's a golden age for the wines of Sicily. The Italian island's distinctive bottlings, many of them from native grapes, can firmly claim a place in the world of fine wines.

Fifty years ago Sicilian producers' primary focus was bulk wine. But beginning in the 1980s and '90s, a number of wine estates forged a new path, adopting modern techniques, and in the 2000s, interest from foreign winemakers in the potential of Mount Etna fueled a rebirth of quality wine production in the area.

There's a synergy to this success, says Alessio Planeta, whose family's [Planeta](#) winery has been a pioneer of quality production. Planeta cites awareness of the global market and promotion of the island's wines in that space, deeper understanding of Sicily's varied *terroirs* and native varieties, and healthy competition paired with a sense of community. "In short, Sicily is an island," says Planeta, "But now it is joined to the world by a thousand invisible bridges."

U.S. consumers have taken notice. Today, Sicily exports 21% of its production to the U.S., and total exports to the U.S. market grew by 40% from 2016 and 2021, according to a 2022 Nomisma Wine Monitor report. *Wine Spectator* went from reviewing fewer than 50 wines from Sicily in the entire decade of the 1990s to more than 225 wines in 2021 alone, with close to half of them earning 90 points or higher.

Let this in-depth guide connect you to Sicily's grape varieties and wines.

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Recommended Wines

Vini Franchetti-Passopisciaro Terre Siciliane Contrada P 2019 (94, \$90)

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