

REGIONS OF THE MONTH



SICILIA

Some say that today, Sicilians have less Italian blood in their veins than Phoenician, Greek, Arabic, Norman, Spanish, or French. Because Sicilia is on a crossroads between Europe and Africa, it has been overrun by many different cultures, which have left their traces on this beautiful island, the largest in the Mediterranean. The Greek cities of Sicily flourished during the 6th and 5th centuries BC, and their ruins are some of the most impressive outside of Greece, especially the Valley of the Temples near Agrigento. The Romans took over in the 3rd century BC, followed by the Vandals, Ostrogoths, and Byzantines. The Arabs ruled from the 8th to the 11th century, although not much has survived from their rule. The Norman era began in 1060, and the cathedrals of Monreale and Cefalu are their brilliant achievements as is Santi Peitro e Paulo outside Taormina. The 17th and 18th centuries saw the accomplishments of the Spanish Viceregal court, especially the palaces and churches of Palermo.

Sicilia has now switched its older emphasis on dessert wines to lighter, dryer wines, both whites and reds. The pale white, dry Bianco d'Alcamo is the only DOC wine made in significant quality. The dry white and red wines of Etna, whose vines drape over the lower slopes of the volcano, show notable class as does the pale red Cerasuolo di Vittoria. Increasingly prominent are the fruity aromatic whites, Inzolia, Catarratto, and Grecanico. Native reds have also achieved prominence, such as Nero d'Avola, Nerello Mascalese, and Perricone. The newly introduced French varieties, Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Syrah are also producing exciting results.

CAMPANIA

The capital of Campania, Naples was founded by the

Greeks, enlarged by the Romans, and subsequently invaded by the Normans, Hohenstaufen, French, and Spanish among others. Established by the Greeks in the 11th century BC, Naples was the earliest of a cluster of far flung settlements throughout southern Italy. Many important figures of the age, including Pythagoras, Archimedes, and Aeschylus lived in these settlements, and today some of the best ruins of the ancient Greek world can be found there. Along with mathematics, architecture, and drama, the ancient art of wine-making also flourished in the hills and valleys of the region as the cult of Dionysus spread. Aglianico and Greco, vines that the Greeks introduced, are still highly prized. The Greek historian Herodotus called this part of Italy Oenotria, the land of wine.

In the 16th century, Sante Lancerio, the bottler of Pope Paul III, raved about the wines of the Kingdom of Naples, and their reputation continued into the 19th century. But subsequently, viticulture went into decline for decades as growers left the land, and the majority of remaining producers ignored DOC regulations and instead chose to plant prolific vines rather than those that would produce premium grapes. In the last fifteen years, producers have once again recognized the potential of southern Italy in general and have modernized their viticulture and winemaking techniques. Fiano di Avellino and Greco di Tufo are among Italy's most distinguished white wines, while Taurasi from Aglianico has been called the Barolo of the south because of its aging ability. This is Campania's only DOCG wine to date. Mastroberardino is a distinguished winery in the region as is Feudi di San Gregorio, Villa Matilde, Mustilli, and Casa d'Ambra.



YOUR ACCESS TO OUTSTANDING WINES FROM CALIFORNIA AND ITALY



Planeta at Vittoria

Italian *Wineries of the Month*

Southern Dreams

Planeta

Planeta is located in Sicilia in the hills near Agrigento, which is mid point between the southern and western points of the island on the Mediterranean side. The Planeta family has been cultivating vines in the region for more than 300 years. The present generation of winemakers owns over 250 hectares at Ulmo, Dispensa, and Gurra with some of the vineyards at 250 meters above sea level. Fabrizio Moltard is the consulting viticulturist. Planeta released its first wines in 1994 and is managed by Diego Planeta. Other family members occupy full-time roles in the company. Alessio is in charge of vineyard and winery management; Francesca directs marketing; and Santi is director of sales. The winemaker is Carlo Corino, an Italian who had been working in Australia for 15 years before coming to Planeta and was well schooled in modern wine making methods. Thanks to the energy and competence of these young people,

the winery has become a leading player on the Italian wine scene. The winery specializes in the native white varieties, Greco and Catarratto, and the native red variety Nero d'Avola, but also produces top quality Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, and Merlot.

Cusumano

Cusumano is located in Sicilia near Partinico. Brothers Alberto and Diego Cusumano own 390 hectares of vineyards at Partinico, Monreale, Pian degli Albanese, Alcamo, Salemi, Mazara del Vallo, Butera, and Pachino, which include the ancient grapes of the island, the white grape Inzolia and the noble red Nero d'Avola. But they have also planted the international varieties Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Syrah with much success, and their wines are collecting high praise, including two and three glasses awards from the wine guide See **CUSUMANO**, *inside*



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WINES OF THE MONTH



ARTISAN SERIES

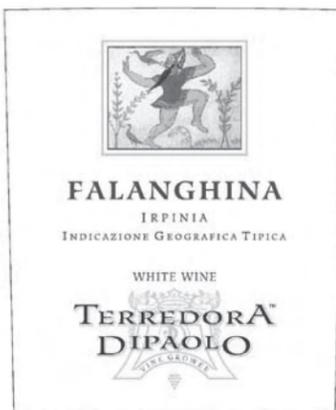
**Cusumano Winery
2003 Nero d'Avola**

100% Nero d'Avola from estate vineyards, the wine was aged in stainless steel tanks without contact with oak barrels and exhibits the pure fruit flavors of this ancient grape variety, probably indigenous to neighboring Calabria but now the most distinguished grape of Sicilia. With wild berry aromas, the wine has an intense fruity palate balanced by acid and smooth, round tannins. Serve at cool room temperature.



**Terredora di Paolo
2003 Falanghina**

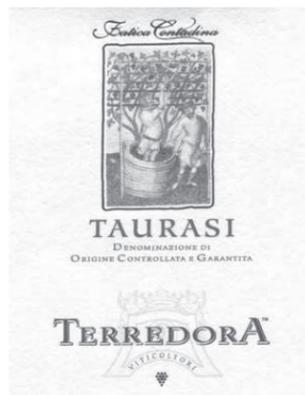
This wine is 100% Falanghina from a 16-hectare estate vineyard located at Casali della Baronia. With deep yellow color, the wine has an intense bouquet of apple, pineapple, and citrus fruits. The flavors swell on the palate and finish with crisp acidity, which together create remarkable structure. The winemaker is Lucio Mastroberardino. This is a truly fine example of Falanghina, possibly of ancient Greek origin, which some scholars think was the same grape variety that the Romans used for their highly prized Falernian. Serve chilled.



WINEMAKER SERIES

**Terredora di Paolo
1999 Taurasi**

This wine is 100% Aglianico from estate vineyards at Campo Re and Lapio. Dark ruby red in color, the wine has a rich, complex bouquet, fruity with ripe berry and black cherries, well mixed with black pepper and spicy character, which is full bodied and balanced with soft but firm tannins and a long finish. Winemaker Lucio Mastroberardino aged the wine for 18 months in French barrels, for 12 months in Slavonian barrels and for 12 months in bottle before release from the winery. Open the bottle an hour before serving at cool room temperature.



**Planeta Winery
2003 Cerasuolo di Vittoria**

This wine is a blend of 60% Nero d'Avola and 40% Frappato from a 17-hectare estate vineyards located at Acate. Red with a purple hue, the wine has a fragrance that is typical of wines produced in the Vittoria area, fruity and reminiscent of red berries, strawberries, cherries, figs, and ginger. The wine is distinctive and highlights the characteristics of the terroir. Instead of oak barrels, winemaker Carlo Carino aged the wine in stainless steel tanks for eight to emphasize the pure fruit flavors of the grape. Serve at cool room temperature.



WINES OF THE MONTH

COLLECTOR SERIES

**Planeta Winery
2002 Santa Cecilia**

This wine is 100% Nero d'Avola from estate vineyards at Ulmo and Dispensa. Purple red with violet hues, the wine has hints of hazelnuts and carob, peppercorns, and fig preserves with a nose that is reminiscent of the scent of Nototufa, the dust of the pathways in the vineyards during summer. Planeta considers the wine its most ambitious with a taste that spreads out from the center of the palate, filling the mouth with its balanced texture and a certain tingle. Winemaker Carlo Corino aged the wines for 12 months in French oak barrels.



CUSUMANO, from cover Gambero Rosso. The winemaker is highly respected Mario Ronco from Piemonte.

Terredora di Paolo Terredora di Paolo is located in Campania in the province of Avellino near Montefusco. The winery and vineyards for years had been owned by the Mastroberardino family but were split into two properties by the brothers Walter and Antonio, who separately continue to make highly respected wines. Terre Dora is

**Planeta Winery
2002 Syrah**

100% Syrah from estate vineyards at Menfi, the wine is ruby red in color with violet undertones. The nose is full with spices, pepper, and cloves, dominated with fig scents, and the wood notes, which blend into the fruit together with a cocoa-like complex aroma, while the palate is luscious and supple in texture with a long finish. Winemaker Carlo Corino aged the wine for 12 months in French oak barrels. This wine won the prestigious 3-glasses award from "Gambero Rosso," Italy's prestigious wine rating board. Serve at cool room temperature.



owned by Walter Mastroberardino and his children Paolo, Lucio, and Daniela, who dedicated it to their mother Dora Mastroberardino. They have 120 hectares of vines on the sunny, windy hills of Irpinia. Devoted to their land and to the indigenous vines of the region, they handpick the harvest and place the grapes in small tanks with minimal time between picking and pressing. The indigenous grapes grown on the estate are Greco, Fiano, and Aglianico, which originally may have been planted by the Greeks as early as the seventh century B.C.

PICK & CHOOSE

JUST RED? JUST WHITE?
JUST CALIFORNIAN?
JUST ITALIAN?
HOW ABOUT A COMBINATION?

CALIFORNIA WINES
Artisan Series: \$29.50/month, a red and a white
Winemaker Series: \$59.50/month, 2 reserve reds
Artisan red-Winemaker red: \$46/month

ITALIAN WINES
Artisan Series: \$32/month, a red and a white
Winemaker Series: \$62/month, 2 reserve reds
Collector Series: \$112/month, 2 collectable reds
Artisan red-Winemaker red: \$48/month
Winemaker red-Collector red: \$87/month

CALIFORNIA-ITALIAN COMBINATIONS
CA Artisan red-IT Artisan red: \$33/month
CA Artisan white-IT Artisan white: \$29.50/month
CA Winemaker-IT Winemaker: \$62/month
Alternate CA & IT Artisan Series: \$29.50/\$32/month
Alternate CA & IT Winemaker Series: \$59.50/\$62/month

DOUBLE UP
You can also receive more than two bottles per month. CA sales tax is included. Shipping is extra.

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