



YOUR ACCESS TO OUTSTANDING WINES FROM CALIFORNIA AND ITALY

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 winemaking 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 twenty 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.

Italian Wineries of the Month



The artful aging cellars of Mastroberardino

Noble Aglianico, the Barolo of the South

Mastroberardino

This extraordinary family is responsible for rescuing Campania's ancient grape varieties from extinction. Without the family's efforts over 130 years that the winery has officially existed, Fiano, Greco di Tufo, and the noble Aglianico would probably have been only historical references in the writings of Titus Livius and Pliny the Elder. Aglianico is now produced throughout Campagna in Taburno, Irpinia, and Sannio, but its greatest expression comes from Taurasi and is known as the "Barolo of the South" because of its extraordinary flavors and ability to age. Headquartered in Altripalda about 40 miles northeast of Naples in the center of the Irpinia wine making region, Angelo Mastroberardino first registered the company in 1878 at the Chamber of Commerce in Avelli-

no. Today, his great grandson Piero Mastroberardino is the current President. The Prestigious wine journal *Gambero Rosso* says "we have the sneaking suspicion that the champions presented this year by the talented Vincenzo Mercurio (winemaker) may well be the great classics of the future." A steady stream of international visitors tour the cellars, where the family both barrel-ages its wines and displays the artistic masterpieces of Raffaele de Rosa, Maria Micozzi, and Doina Botez among others, in this place "of work and contemplation," according to the website. The family's devotion to ancient grape varieties was recognized by the Italian government, which commissioned it to replant the vineyards around Pompeli and match the grapes originally growing there before

See **WINERIES** next page



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Novembre 2008

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WINES OF THE MONTH



ARTISAN SERIES

Mastroberardino
2005 Lacryma Christi del Vesuvio

This fine wine is 100% Piedirosso, which Pliny mentioned 2000 years ago and that later entranced Voltaire in 1700. The wine continues to please modern drinkers. Grown in the volcanic soil around Mt. Vesuvius, the wine shows cherry, plum, and raspberry aromas supported by spiced pepper and clove. Warm and well-structured, the Lacryma Christi has smooth tannins and can be served with pasta or polenta with meat-based sauces or with roasted, braised, or stewed red meats.

Mastroberardino
2006 Sannio Falanghina

Made entirely from the historic Falanghina grape, the wine takes its name from the Latin word *phalange*, meaning "supported by stakes." This Falanghina has a warm yellow color, and its complex character includes fresh, fruity aromas of citrus, pineapple, and white flowers that continue on the palate and refresh with clean acidity. Serve this delicious wine chilled as an aperitif or with first courses and fish or white meats.

WINERIES from cover

the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 79 AD.

Feudi di San Gregorio

Feudi di San Gregorio is another one of Campania's finest wine estates. Owners Vincenzo Ercolino and Mirella Capaldo recently purchased vineyards in Puglia and Basilicata to further explore the noble grapes of southern Italy. With each new vintage, the Italian wine rating board Gambero Rosso says, "there are not enough superlatives in our language to avoid repeating ourselves." In 2002, Vincenzo Ercolino was named "Wine Producer of the Year" by the Association of Italian Sommeliers. Situated in the tiny village of Sorbo Serpico in the Irpinia region, the estate was established

WINEMAKER SERIES

Mastroberardino
2003 Aglianico

Irpinian land owes its character to its unusual microclimate, which is influenced both by Mt. Vesuvius and by the area's temperate climate. The wine is 100% Aglianico and was aged for 12 months in French oak barrels. With hints of amarena, wild blackberry, and toast on the nose, the palate shows soft and elegant with notes of berries and strawberry jam. Serve with tomato-based broths and soups and roasted red or white meats.

Mastroberardino
2003 Taurasi Radici

Radici, meaning "roots" was produced for the first time in 1986 and is the result of painstaking research into exposure, chemical and physical characteristics of terroir, and topography. It's strong personality, dense structure, and aromatic concentration are the primary features of this prestigious symbol of Irpinian viticulture. The wine is, of course, 100% Aglianico from the Taurasi appellation and was aged for 24 months in barrel and 12 months in bottle before release from the winery. Deep ruby red in color, the wine has a full, complex bouquet redolent of violet and berries. In the mouth, it is enveloping and elegant with flavors of plum, bitter cherry, strawberry jam, and black pepper. Serve with roasted meats, large game, and mature cheeses.

by Ercolino and Capaldo in 1986. They have aggressively tapped into the enormous potential of Campania's unique terroir and ancient varieties, such as Fiano di Avellino, Greco di Tufo, and Aglianico. In addition to its own vineyards, the winery sources grapes from the finest vineyards set in the rolling hills of the Irpinia region, located near Mount Vesuvius. The volcano's legendary eruptions have sandstone and marl soils with mineral-rich deposits of volcanic ash, forming a unique composition that imparts highly distinctive aromas and flavors in the grapes. Mario Ercolino serves as chief winemaker, working closely with consultant Riccardo Cotarella, one of Italy's best known enologists.

WINES OF THE MONTH

COLLECTOR SERIES

Mastroberardino
2000 Naturalis Historia

Naturalis Historia is 100% Aglianico, a rediscovery of the flavors of *Campania Felix*, or "the beautiful country," what the ancient Romans named the area because of its beauty and the bounty of its volcanic soils. The name of the wine, *Naturalis Historia*, is a tribute to Roman historian Pliny the Elder and the titled his 37-volume encyclopedia of agricultural practices. He was killed when Vesuvius erupted. This ripe, concentrated wine is made from the Mirabella Eciano vineyard, whose vines are 35 years-old. The *Naturalis Historia* has deep color and a complex and lingering bouquet with notes of violet, berries, and chocolate. On the palate, the wine is smooth and structured with plum, bitter cherry, and raspberry. One of Mastroberardino's best estate wines, the *Naturalis Historia* was aged for 18 months in French oak barrels. Serve at cool room temperature with game, meat courses, and aged cheeses.

Feudi di San Gregorio
2004 Taurasi

This 100% Aglianico wine is made from grapes grown in the Taurasi appellation, where the most profound expression of the grape has developed. Inky red in color, the wine is rich and dense with captivating aromas of ripe berries and cherry, accented with spice and vanilla. On the palate, the wine coats the tongue with layers of jammy fruit and licorice, balanced by smooth tannins and cleansing acidity. Enjoy this Taurasi with red meats, duck, and hearty vegetarian dishes.



PICK & CHOOSE

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

CALIFORNIA WINES

Artisan Series: \$34.50/month, a red and a white
Winemaker Series: \$62.50/month, 2 reserve reds
Artisan red-Winemaker red: \$48.50/month

ITALIAN WINES

Artisan Series: \$34/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: \$35/month
CA Artisan white-IT Artisan white: \$34/month
CA Winemaker-IT Winemaker: \$62.50/month
Alternate CA & IT Artisan Series: \$34.50/month
Alternate CA & IT Winemaker Series: \$62.50/month

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