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19 Remarkable Bottlings from Sicily Italy's most southerly island offers a wealth of exciting reds and whites

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Tasting Highlights bring the best wines from our editors' most recent tastings to WineSpectator.com members.

At just under 10,000 square miles, Italy's largest island, Sicily, is about the size of the state of Maryland. But packed in those miles are a wide variety of landscapes and microclimates that allow the island's wineries to produce quality red and white versions in a range of styles.

The mix includes indigenous and international grape varieties, bottled both as solo acts and as blends. Nero d'Avola, a signature grape for the region, is Sicily's most widely planted red grape. Comparing fresher versions from the higher elevations outside of Palermo, in the northwest of Sicily, to richer examples from wineries along the southern coast, it's easier to understand the variety possible from Sicily's different winegrowing areas.

Producers further explore this diversity with a wide range of white wines, including crisp Catarrattos, fresh Chardonnays, floral Inzolias and saline-tinged Grillos, among other grapes. And if you're interested in the wines of Sicily, don't forget to check out Mount Etna. Quality bottlings from an exploding number of boutique producers from Etna have erupted on the wine scene during the last five to 10 years. The bright, mineral-driven reds are elegant overall, but with firm tannins that recommend them to food as well as to time in the cellar.

COS Nero d'Avola Sicilia Contrada 2008 Score: 94 | \$85

A seamless red, with fine concentration and definition to the flavors of wild cherry, pomegranate, red licorice, herb, smoke and spicy mineral. Mouthwatering and elegant, offering a lovely finish that showcases the silky tannins. Drink now through 2028. 50 cases imported. —A.N.

BENANTI Etna White Superiore Pietramarina 2009 Score: 92 | \$50

A lovely, lacy white, with a streak of petrol-tinged mineral and well-honed acidity finely layered with flavors of fleur de sel, pine forest, Anjou pear and Marcona almond. Accents of wax and lemon zest linger on the refined finish. Drink now through 2024. 100 cases imported. —A.N.

COS Nero d'Avola Terre Siciliane Nero di Lupo 2012 Score: 92 | \$30

A mouthwatering red, with a beautiful tapestry of aromas and flavors, including ground coriander and star anise, crushed cherry, bergamot, rose petal, herb, bresaola and smoky incense. Elegant, achieving density without excessive weight. The fine tannins lend grip on the lasting finish. Drink now through 2024. 600 cases imported. —A.N.

ARIANNA OCCHIPINTI Cerasuolo di Vittoria Classico Grotte Alte 2008 Score: 92 | \$75

This elegant, vibrant red offers a panoply of mouthwatering white raspberry, wild cherry and spiced currant fruit, layered with taut tannins and a skein of aromatic accents of tea rose, loamy earth, ground anise and Darjeeling tea, echoing on the finish. Drink now through 2024. 125 cases imported. —A.N.

SPADAFORA Sicilia Sole dei Padri 2008 Score: 92 | \$80



Courtesy of Azienda Agricola COS

Vintners Giambattista Cilia and Giusto Occhipinti in the vineyards of Sicily's COS winery.

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Well-sculpted tannins and racy acidity structure ripe and juicy flavors of date, dried currant, dark chocolate and tarry smoke, keeping this focused and tightly knit through to the firm, tobacco- and spice-laced finish. Syrah. Best from 2016 through 2028. 15 cases imported. —A.N.

COS Grecanico Terre Siciliane Pithos Bianco 2012 Score: 91 | \$44

A distinctive white, with a lovely interplay between the razor-sharp acidity, salinity and ripe, aromatic flavors of black raspberry puree, macerated peach, almond skin, fresh herb and floral. A concentrated white that stays light on its feet. Will shine with food. Drink now through 2024. 200 cases imported. —A.N.

DONNAFUGATA Contessa Entellina White Chiarandà 2011 Score: 91 | \$45

Rich, with toasted hazelnut, pear tart, crystallized honey and beeswax flavors, this is finely balanced and light-footed, bolstered by well-honed acidity. The finish shows fine minerality and drive, offering lasting smoke and iodine notes. Drink now through 2024. 150 cases imported. —A.N.

FIRRIATO Sicilia Santagostino Baglio Soria Red 2011 Score: 91 | \$23

Aromas and flavors of bacon fat and mesquite smoke mix with ripe black cherry, licorice snap, mocha and mint in this expressive red, with fine-grained tannins and juicy acidity. Elegant through to the aromatic, coffee-tinged finish. Nero d'Avola and Syrah. Drink now through 2024. 1,500 cases imported. —A.N.

MORGANTE Nero d'Avola Sicilia Don Antonio 2011 Score: 91 | \$42

A stylish red, with suave tannins wrapped around a core of plum sauce, raspberry ganache, vanilla and black licorice snap flavors. Concentrated and juicy, set on a medium-bodied, finely balanced frame. Drink now through 2024. 2,500 cases made. —A.N.

I VIGNERI DI SALVO FOTI I Vigneri 2012 Score: 91 | \$39

A sanguine, mouthwatering red, with plush tannins and a pretty bouquet of tea rose, dried marjoram and mocha aromatics accenting the black cherry puree, plum sauce, anise and smoky mineral notes. Drink now through 2022. 120 cases imported. —A.N.

TENUTA DELLE TERRE NERE Etna Guardiola 2012 Score: 91 | \$43

A firm and chewy version, with sappy cherry and berry fruit, stylish accents of cocoa powder and oak spice, and a subtle vein of smoky mineral. Fresh and mouthwatering, presenting a grippy, spicy finish. Best from 2016 through 2024. 1,160 cases made. —A.N.

MARCO DE BARTOLI Grillo Sicilia Grappoli 2011 Score: 90 | \$40

Bright and harmonious, with a backbone of tangy acidity and a saline-tinged note of raw almond underscoring the flavors of white cherry, green plum fruit, ground spice and pickled ginger. The salted almond accent echoes on the lasting finish. Drink now through 2020. 250 cases imported. —A.N.

COS Terre Siciliane White Rami 2012 Score: 90 | \$30

A dry and focused white, with lovely integration to the layers of saline minerality, almond skin, macerated raspberry, peach and strawberry, offering aromatic ground spice and citrus oil accents. Vibrant, delivering a lasting finish. Grecanico and Inzolia. Drink now through 2024. 300 cases imported. —A.N.

GRACI Etna White Arcuria 2012 Score: 90 | \$40

A medium-bodied white, with a pleasing interplay between the creamy texture, well-cut acidity and fleur de sel—accented flavors of persimmon, almond skin and lemon peel. Drink now through 2020. 300 cases imported. —A.N.

RAPITALÀ Chardonnay Terre Siciliane Grand Cru Conte Hugues Bernard de la Gatinais 2012 Score: 90 | \$37

A creamy white, with smoke, toasted hazelnut, vanilla and oak spice accents to the flavors of creamed apple, pastry and almond financier. Harmonious, boasting sleek acidity that reins in the overall richness. Drink now through 2022. 100 cases imported. —A.N.

SPADAFORA Nero d'Avola Sicilia Schietto 2010 Score: 90 | \$33

Fresh and harmonious, with a lovely array of plum sauce, loamy earth, graphite, black cherry puree and licorice notes. Fine-grained tannins impart a velvety mouthfeel, while the mouthwatering finish echoes the ripe fruit and spice details. Drink now through 2024. 150 cases imported. —A.N.

PLANETA Sicilia La Segreta White 2013 Score: 89 | \$14

Expressive up front, offering pretty orchard blossom, star fruit and melon notes, this well-knit white is subtle midpalate, with clean-cut acidity and a hint of fleur de sel defining the finish. Grecanico, Chardonnay, Viognier and Fiano. Drink now through 2018. 51,666 cases made. —A.N.

FIRRIATO Nero d'Avola Terre Siciliane Chiamonte 2012 Score: 88 | \$17

A rich note of mesquite smoke heralds this grippy, medium-bodied red, mixing with crushed black raspberry, herb-marinated olive and accents of oak spice. Fresh and juicy through to the firm finish. Drink now through 2019. 8,000 cases imported. —A.N.

TASCA D'ALMERITA Sicilia Regaleali White 2013 Score: 88 | \$15

A vibrant white driven by tangy acidity, this shows expressive notes of green apple, candied lemon, lime zest, Thai basil and green melon. Light and lithe, with a mouthwatering finish. Grecanico, Catarratto, Inzolia and Chardonnay. Drink now through 2016. 104,000 cases made. —A.N.