

# 13 Sicilian Goodies for Under \$30

New reviews of Nero d'Avola, Grillo and more from Italy



Photo by: Hans Peter Siffert

Donnafugata showcases indigenous Sicilian varieties like Nero d'Avola and Catarratto.

Alison Napjus

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

Italy's largest island, Sicily, lies to the southwest of the boot's toe, about a hundred miles north of Africa's Tunisia. For most of the island, ample sunshine and regular rainfall during the growing season provide conditions that allow vines to thrive. The wide variety of vinegrowing areas—largely along the coastlines—offer distinctive microclimates and soils that support a diverse lineup of grape varieties.

The result is a grab bag of distinctive bottlings for wine lovers to explore. Sicilian winemakers planted and experimented with international grape varieties, such as Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon, in the 1980s and 1990s, and these grapes are still widely planted. But this selection spotlights the renewed focus and interest in the island's local grape varieties, which have increased in quality and prominence in the last 15 years.

The lineup showcases Nero d'Avola and Catarratto in particular, Sicily's most widely planted red and white varieties, respectively. The bright, brambly and herbaceous Nero d'Avola is produced as both a varietal and in blends. The lip-smacking and fruity Catarratto finds more success when blended, although occasional solo bottlings, such as Donnafugata's Anthilia, are clean-cut and appealing, especially on a hot Sicilian day.

**ZISOLA Noto 2015 Score: 89 | \$27**

This bright red is medium-bodied and elegant, with well-knit flavors of wild cherry, dried thyme and tangy mineral. Offers a hint of mocha and chewy tannins on the fresh finish. Nero d'Avola. Drink now through 2022. 4,000 cases imported.—A.N.

**DONNAFUGATA Sicilia White Anthilia 2016 Score: 88 | \$16**

A crisp and clean-cut white, with a pretty range of green melon and pear fruit, floral and spice flavors. Citrus and mineral notes linger on the finish. Catarratto. Drink now through 2019. 3,400 cases imported.—A.N.

**DONNAFUGATA Sicilia White Lighea 2016 Score: 88 | \$20**

A light-bodied and lively white, with an aromatic overtone of orchard blossom and zesty spice and flavors of kiwifruit, star fruit, pastry cream and grated ginger. Lithe and expressive. Zibibbo (Moscato). Drink now through 2019. 900 cases imported.—A.N.

**FEUDO DI SANTA TRESA Nero d'Avola-Perricone Terre Siciliane Nivuro 2015 Score: 88 | \$17**

This medium-bodied, round red is lightly juicy and balanced, firmed up by chewy tannins and offering flavors of crushed raspberry, orange peel, smoke and spice. Drink now through 2019. 25,000 cases made.—A.N.

**ZISOLA Sicilia White Azisa 2016 Score: 88 | \$21**

A sleek, light- to medium-bodied white, with lip-smacking acidity and a streak of smoky mineral, layered with Asian pear, grapefruit zest, spring blossom and apricot notes. Grillo and Catarratto. Drink now through 2019. 1,000 cases imported.—A.N.

**BAGLIO DI PIANETTO Nero d'Avola Sicilia Y 2015 Score: 87 | \$12**

An open-knit, medium-bodied red, with chewy tannins and a lively mix of wild strawberry, licorice snap, tar-tinged mineral and grilled herb flavors. Drink now through 2020. 1,000 cases imported.—A.N.

**DONNAFUGATA Sicilia Sedàra 2015 Score: 87 / \$16**

An easy-drinking, balanced red, with light, well-knit tannins and subtle notes of raspberry, dried thyme and citrus peel. Clean-cut and lightly chewy on the finish. Nero d'Avola. Drink now through 2019. 3,000 cases imported.—A.N.

**FEUDO DI SANTA TRESA Nero d'Avola Terre Siciliane Purato 2016 Score: 87 / \$13**

Bright and tangy, this light- to medium-bodied red features light, taut tannins and lively flavors of brambly blackberry and raspberry, wild herb and spice. Drink now through 2019. 2,474 cases imported.—A.N.

**SQUADRA Terre Siciliane 2015 Score: 87 / \$13**

A bright, balanced, medium-bodied red, offering light grip and easy-drinking flavors of ripe mulberry, dried lavender, mocha and spice. Nero d'Avola with Nerello Mascalese. Drink now through 2019. 3,000 cases imported.—A.N.

**SQUADRA Terre Siciliane White 2015 Score: 87 / \$13**

A round, fleshy white that's balanced by light, citrus-tinged acidity, this offers notes of yellow apple, almond blossom, fleur de sel and melon in a light- to medium-bodied frame. Catarratto with Grillo. Drink now through 2019. 1,500 cases imported.—A.N.

**TONNINO Nero d'Avola Terre Siciliane 2015 Score: 87 / \$14**

This creamy red is light- to medium-bodied and round, with a pure note of ripe mulberry and accents of dried marjoram and mandarin orange peel. Smoke and spice details show on the light, taut finish. Drink now through 2019. 2,500 cases imported.—A.N.

**VILLA POZZI Nero d'Avola Sicilia 2016 Score: 87 / \$10**

A beam of ripe and juicy wild strawberry flavors leads the way in this medium-bodied red, framed by light, creamy tannins and hints of spice box, mocha and smoke. Easy-drinking and fresh. Drink now through 2019. 27,816 cases imported.—A.N.

**VILLA POZZI Grillo Sicilia 2015 Score: 86 / \$10**

A lip-smacking, light-bodied white, with petrol and mineral accents underscoring the kiwifruit and Meyer lemon zest notes. Drink now. 20,000 cases imported.—A.N.

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