



Perfect Wine Pairings for Sicily's Regional Cuisines

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Sicily: the largest island in the Mediterranean sea and a region of Italy with a long history of notable cuisine. “There’s just something about Sicily,” says *Wine Advocate* reviewer Monica Lerner. “And much of that something has to do with the Mediterranean island’s stratospheric gustatory offerings.”

Indeed, the offerings in Sicily are plentiful, with favorites including arancini, various seafood dishes and of course, cannolis.

Here, Lerner offers up her favorite pairing suggestions for the next time you dive into those Sicilian kitchen classics. (And be sure to check out Lerner’s recent Sicilian wine report in [Issue 232](#).)



Arancini

Stuffed with things like mozzarella, peas, meat ragù and other delicious combinations of local ingredients, these rice balls are crunchy on the outside and savory-soft on the inside. “Because they make the perfect finger food, I choose a lean-bodied red with bright primary aromas. The [Frappato grape](#) is ideal.



Caponata

Much of Sicilian cuisine is influenced by the sweet-versus-sour themes brought to the island during centuries of Arab domination. Caponata—a mixture of chopped and fried eggplant, tomatoes, bell peppers and capers—is full of sharp flavor contrasts. My pairing selection is a [favorite wine in Palermo](#) (or better yet the 2015 vintage). Dedicated to Count Tasca's 50th wedding anniversary (Nozze d'Oro), the wine is romantic and delicious.



Spaghetti ai Ricci

Ricci is the Italian term for sea urchin, and with sea urchins, you definitely need a wine with strong salty or mineral definition. One of the best, no doubt, is the [2013 Benanti • Etna Bianco Superiore Pietra Marina](#)—the vineyards are just a short distance away from where those sea urchins are fished.



Polpo Bollito

Italian for boiled octopus, this delicate and simple dish requires a wine with a salty vein and needs a little extra pulp to match the gummy texture of the octopus meat. My choice is the delicious [2016 Planeta • Sicilia Carricante Eruzione 1614](#).

**Cannoli**

No one has more of a sweet tooth than the Sicilians. The sweetest desserts are matched by one of the hallmarks of island enology: the [Donnafugata • Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé](#). Drop everything and take the cannoli (with Passito di Pantelleria, of course).