

MENU

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WINE VARIETALS YOU (PROBABLY) DON'T KNOW, BUT SHOULD

november 17, 2017





**As you may recall**, I had the pleasure of joining **Wines of Sicily** on their immersion press trip this past September. It was such a beautiful experience that had me fall in love with the incredible Italian island that offers so much when it comes to food, wine and culture.

As background, the Wines of Sicily mission is to promote the *Sicilia DOC* aka: it sets out to raise awareness around the world of the highest quality Sicilian wines. After tasting so many great wines and meeting many of the passionate winemakers behind these wines, I feel a personal mission to do the same :). It's a special, special place and one of the biggest takeaways I personally had from the trip was regarding the grapes indigenous to the island that make up some of the lesser known varietals of wine.

Today I wanted to share some of these varietals with you (most of which were new to me) and keep an eye on the photos as the bottles photographed were some of my favorite wines tasted during the trip – many of which can be found in the U.S. if you ask your local wine store! Sicilian wines tend to be very affordable so the below varietals – either seen solo or as a blend – would make great additions for your next hosting duty or as gifts for friends & family this holiday season.



Without further delay, below are some varietals for you to get to know.





## GRILLO

Grillo is my new favorite white as a little *aperitivo*. It is so fresh and aromatic and is incredibly refreshing on a hot summer day. If you serve it well chilled it'll make a great pairing with cold salads, grilled seafood but is also perfectly lovely drunk alone before you dive into a meal. You may see this grape blended with Chardonnay or another local Sicilian grape, Catarratto (see below!)



## INZOLIA

I served a bottle of this varietal to girlfriends last weekend and we didn't stop talking about how much we all liked it for about ten minutes. My friends remarked how much they preferred it over Sauvignon Blanc because of a noticeably lesser acidity making it easier to drink. Inzolias are a little nutty and have a light mineral finish which I found makes this a great wine for a variety of occasions. If you tend to order or buy Sauvignon Blanc frequently, this is a great Italian varietal with which to familiarize yourself.





## CATARRATTO

Not only is this grape so much fun to say, it is light and oh-so-drinkable. You'll smell fruits reminiscent of peaches and melon and herbs and find that it pairs so well with fish dishes and veggies. A favorite catarratto I drank was from family run winery Donnafugata – their Anthilia wine (shown above).





## NERO D'AVOLA

Nero D'Avola is arguably the most famous indigenous Sicilian grape and for good reason. I absolutely love this varietal and will now find myself shopping for it rather than my usual go-to Pinot Noir. Nero D'Avola is full bodied and well structured and smells just incredible. Think cherry, rose, cocoa. (My mouth is watering just thinking about it.) This is a great wine for get togethers as it pairs very well with charcuterie and antipasta but can also go with heartier dishes like roasted meats and pastas with meat sauces. I can't recommend this wine varietal enough as you begin planning for the holidays.





## FRAPPATO

Oh you guys, this wine! I now love Frappato. Not just for its gorgeous ruby red color but because of how it pairs so wonderfully with pasta and pizza as well as roasted meats and even cheese. You can serve it with a slight chill which I highly recommend during summer months when you're indulging in a fresh pasta dish. It is pretty close to heaven! I plan to have my family enjoy this particular bottle (from Valle Del'Acate) during the holidays because I love it so much. It's slightly spicy but with a freshness that makes it incredibly drinkable. (Not to mention it is less than \$20!)



## GRECANICO

If you cook a lot of fish or veggies at home, next time pick up a bottle of Grecanico to accompany the meal. This white wine is fruity and floral and incredibly fresh and balanced. The above **bottle from Planeta** (one of my favorite properties while visited in Sicily) is a blend featuring 50% Grecanico.





Are you guys familiar with these wines? I'd love to hear if you've ever had them or are interested in trying them based on what you've now read!





In particular, look for “Sicilia DOC” on a label and you’ll be assured that the wine has been produced for optimum freshness, elegant structure, the preservation of ancient winemaking traditions and has been held to higher standards of winemaking.





If you're looking for some additional fun pairing suggestions, check out [this site](#). I'll also be sharing some of my favorite Sicilian experiences and spots in another post soon with lots of photos so keep an eye out for that!

*A huge thank you to Wines of Sicily and all their partners for the incredible experience. I can't wait to return in the future!*

p.s. [Everything I learned about wine while in France](#) and [72 hours in Bordeaux](#).

*[Bekka Palmer Photography]*

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