



VITICULTURE, AN ART RENEWED

A glance at a map will tell you why viticulture in Calabria is such an elite affair. The region's steep coastline forms a near-continuous barrier for new arrivals from the sea and the interior comprises 42% mountains rising to over 2,200 meters and 49% hills with only 9% flatlands, mainly reclaimed marshes that are

more suited to crops other than grapes. The area of Catanzaro and Reggio Calabria was colonized almost a thousand years before the Trojan War and the Greek settlers who arrived found vines already growing here. Calabria's role as a crossroads for different peoples has left an Albanian-speaking community, a



Calabria's terraced rows reach down almost to the shore.



One of the most widely grown varieties is gaglioppo, a dark-skinned grape.

Grecanico (Greek) group and even speakers of Occitan, descendants of Waldensians who fled here from persecution, at Guardia Piemontese. When Milo of Croton won the wrestling contest at the Olympic games, he was given skins of Kremisa, the modern-day Cirò obtained from gaglioppo grapes. This intense red long ago won attention far beyond the confines of the region, as archeological evidence shows: in ancient times, Cirò had “vinoducts,” concave terracotta tile conduits that allowed wine to flow from the high ground into the holds of ships waiting on the coast. Gaglioppo may be Calabria’s most important vine type but native grapes abound with over 700 varieties cultivated before the arrival of phylloxera. Even today, 120 vine types are re-

corded, although only a dozen or so are actually used. Today, we find mantonico bianco and nero, greco nero, magliocco canino nero, marsigliana, pecorello, prunesta, guarnaccia bianca and guardavalle but many others are waiting to be recovered.

Calabria’s mountainous geography and melting-pot history has given the region a wide range of foods and many ways of preparing them. Some are famous, like the red onions from Tropea, the Diamante citron, limes, chili peppers, licorice and of course olive oil, grapes and a wide range of cheeses. Sheep and goats provide meat, as do pigs and Podolica cattle. Finally, seafood is another specialty, whether from local fish or Stocco di Mammola, based on northern European stockfish.



TERMINE GROSSO • Calabria IGT Rosso “Giglio Nero” 2011



GRAPES:
gaglioppo,
cabernet
sauvignon

DRINK BEFORE:
2016

Serve at 18 °C
in a tulip glass
about six cm
at the rim

**NOT YET
IMPORTED**
estimated
shelf price
if imported
\$30

Most of Termine Grosso's 500-hectare holding is pastureland but more space has been set aside for vines in recent years. The Verga family has plantings at Roccabernarda and Cirò.

THE WINE

Lustrous ruby red veined with orangey garnet; as the wine aerates, delicious whiffs of pine resin and tobacco mingle with cherries and leather; warm entry quickly offset by acidity and cushiony, faintly astringent extract before a reprise of fruit and resin.

TRY IT WITH...

A characterful young red that superbly partners red meat dishes such as grills but can also be served successfully with tangy cheeses like Sicilian ewe's milk Pecorino.

CONTACT: www.terminegrosso.com

ZITO • Cirò DOC Rosato “Imerio” 2011



GRAPES:
gaglioppo 100%

DRINK BEFORE:
2013

Serve at 12° C
in a tulip glass
about five cm
at the rim

\$24

In 1870, Stefano Zito was selling barrels of unbottled wine in the Cirò area. That was how the Zito operation began. A century later, in 1972, Giovanni Zito built the winery and released the first bottles to market.

THE WINE

Deep, lustrous pink; the fine array of whistle-clean aromatics offers up attractive just-ripe wild strawberries and raspberries lifted by faint whiffs of violets; a warm front palate precedes assertively fresh acidity and a long berry fruit-themed finale.

TRY IT WITH...

An excellent pink wine to serve with plain or more elaborate dishes, like tepid octopus and potato salad or tomato-based fish soups, like the classic caciucco alla livornese.

CONTACT: www.zito.it