



The beautiful headquarters of Azienda Agricola Pupillo

Sicily

NORTHERN SLOPES OF THE ETNA VOLCANO (Province of Catania)

Marco de Grazia owner of Tenuta delle Terre Nere (Etna Rosso DOC, Etna Bianco DOC, Etna Rosato DOC) - the following is a report sent in November by Marco to the customers of the estate:

A very mild winter followed by abundant spring rains, affecting the flowering with an acceptable quantity of coulure. This is how 2014 started. The late spring was temperate, and still quite rainy, with oidium pressure that we required some extra effort to control. The summer months were warm and blessed by a few good showers. The vines were never stressed, the panopies emerald green until the very end. As August came around, and the expected veraison began, we were puzzled by its most unusual length. In point of fact, the grapes seemed never to want to turn color completely. Naturally, as far as Nerello goes, this affected the tannins as well, which continued tasting harsh, with some exceptions, well into early October. The Carricante followed a similar pattern: a slow ripening and a slow veraison. In this case it was the sugar levels which were very slow in rising.

Both Nerello and Carricante, and the accompanying complementary white varieties, were unusually healthy. The load was very well balanced. Thinning was only necessary in a few particularly productive parcels.

September days were cool, and the nights were cold. The white varieties slowly but surely continued ripening. Nerello seemed to be more affected by the lack of warmth.

September 27 we began harvesting our first white grapes from the lower, earlier ripening altitudes sourced on the Southern slopes of Etna. After close monitoring, these were followed by more Carricante from our own vineyards. The white grape harvest lasted until mid October, ending with the finest Carricante I have ever tasted, the grapes simply exploding with lingering flavor.

The musts were lovely in color, flavor and, analytically speaking, a winemakers dream. Particularly outstanding were the results from Calderara Sottana and Santo Spirito. Although it is early, the wines not even having started malolactic fermentation, I do powerfully believe that this is the finest vintage ever for our whites, and the very first vintage in which we will finally bottle our Carricante from Calderara and Santo Spirito as single vineyards! This is the crowning of a dream for me.

Yes, Nerello's sugars were doing well, but the skins were slow to follow. October, however, was proving very generous, a veritable indian summer. And that did the trick alright. We started harvesting Feudo di Mezzo October 10 and continued on with a few interruptions all the way to October 27, finishing comfortably, the weather allowing us all the leisure we needed.

Recalling harvests past, it is difficult to see one equally satisfying. Perhaps 2011, a true blueblooded classic. But the whites, although very fine, were not as complete as the 2014s appear to be. And the 2014 reds seem to enjoy finer tannins. Not only: whereas the 2011 produced less than 30 hectolitres per hectare, the 2014 averaged a healthy 36.

All in all, its perhaps too early to pronounce exact comparative judgements. Unquestionably, however, it will be a memorable vintage.

Equally important, not only were we able to wait for perfect ripening of all vineyards, but we were also able to harvest an extra 50% more grapes for our Etna Rosso 2014. Thus will allow us, with the 2015 vintage, to implement our 3 year plan to age our Etna Rosso in wood eighteen months, like our single vineyards. Because we will have a sufficient amount of 2014 Etna Rosso to cover our market needs for the extra six months aging of the 2015! This means that in our January allocations we will offer everyone roughly 50% more Etna Rosso, in order that everyone will have the chance to have a sufficient quantity to last until the 2015, which will not be released in September 2016, but rather in the spring of 2017 along with the 2015 crus.

Last but not least, several years now of experience in microvinifying Rosato has finally led us to believe that the grapes from Santo Spirito are particularly suited to this wine. Therefore, from the 2015 vintage, (harvest allowing), our Etna Rosato shall be a single vineyard as well, promising to reach even greater heights.

"Another reason, another season for making whoopie!"

SIRACUSA

The climate during 2014 was dry, but good. The winter was mild and dry. The temperature was below average till the end of June, there was no rain. July was also cool. There were a couple of rainfalls at the beginning of September which was very positive for the Nero d'Avola vines.

Carmela Pupillo of Azienda Agricola Pupillo (Moscato di Siracusa DOC, Sicilia IGT): *"...we started picking the whites for our sparkling wine on the 20th of July and we finished the harvest of the Moscato for the dry and demi-sec wines on the 15th of August. We left the clusters of Moscato for the production of Solacium (the sweet version of Moscato di Siracusa) on the vines till the end of August (in order to obtain overripe grapes) when we harvested. We dedicated 3 hectares this year to the production of Solacium, we defoliated the vines on the 17th of August. We*

picked the Nero d'Avola later than usual on the 15th of September. The Moscato base wines have a particular finesse and elegance this year, due to the cooler climate, and they are extremely pleasant to drink. Furthermore, 2014 can be considered one of the best vintages for Solacium, the sweet Moscato. All varieties had a very good grape yield. The Nero d'Avola wines respond to our standards of producing young wines, with a good and whole fruit.. It was a lovely harvest!..."

WESTERN SICILY

There was a medium quantity of rain during the winter. The weather during the springtime and the summer was mild without excessive heat (very unusual for Sicily), there was also a wide night/day temperature range (also very unusual for Sicily). The climate of 2014 was extremely favourable for the ripening of the grapes.

Centonze Srl. The Company was established in 1998 by a family of oenologists, Giovanni Centonze together with his son and daughter Nicola and Carla. Approximately 20 hectares of vineyards belong to the Company in the area of Trapani and the Centonze family manages the best vineyards and selects the best grapes in the most representative Sicilian terroirs (Cerasuolo di Vittoria DOCG, Sicilia IGT). Nicola Centonze:..." it was a wonderful harvest for Sicily. The white wines are good to excellent. The reds are fabulous! The climate ensured a perfect phenolic ripening. We harvested one week/ten days later in comparison to the previous vintages. We picked Zibibbo, at the end of August, the other varieties in September and Frappato at the end of September/beginning of October. I am very satisfied...."

MESSINA

The weather before the budding phase was dry and warm and this concentrated the compounds of the grapes. The climate was mild during the ripening phase of the vines and during the harvest.

Maurizio Costantino of Istituto Agrario P. Cuppari (Faro DOC):" ..the harvest started on the 15th of September and finished on the 30th of September. The grapes had reached a good ripeness. The grape yield was 6 tons/hectare. In 2014 the grass cover on the aisles between the rows of vines was mowed and worked into the soil. The wines are elegant, very rich and with good aromatics. 2014 is an excellent vintage....." "