

PARCELLE

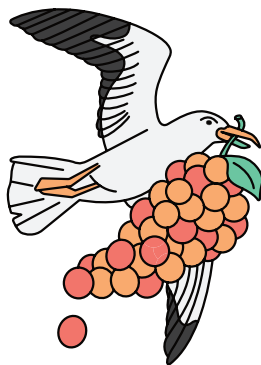
PRESS



VACATION WINE

GRAPES FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN ISLANDS

We could say plenty of great things about the islands of the Mediterranean.



Sicily, Greece, Sardegna, Corsica, and the Canary Islands are all bucket list spots you should visit—and for good reason. The water is crystal clear, dotted with yachts, full of the best seafood, and everyone seems a bit more beautiful. But unlike most of the other beachy vacation spots you drool over on Instagram, these islands also have great wine. And unlike almost everything else you'll encounter in the Mediterranean, the wines have exceptional value. That means you're getting a good deal while you're drinking good stuff—and we like everything about that.

You won't find the wines on these five islands made anywhere else in the world. Each island has its own history and microclimate, both of which influence noticeable differences in how the wines taste from one of these spots to another. The grapes were planted long before humans came in wearing bikinis, and they've all taken on characteristics based on their isolation and specific environments. Each island has its own tradition for growing vines to survive in places that are surprisingly difficult to have vineyards on, even despite all the picturesque views.



Sicily is a large island at the southern tip of Italy where literal truckloads of wine are made. The majority is unremarkable and either consumed locally or shipped off in bulk. But in the northwestern corner of the island, you'll find an active volcano: Mount Etna, an astonishing bump that pops up out of the sea. It has become not only Sicily's but all of Italy's most up-and-coming region. Thanks to the weather being much cooler way up here than on the rest of the island, the wines are super crisp and light.

While you'll see some international varieties planted here, such as chardonnay or merlot, you want to look for the native grapes. Etna is home to one of our favorites, carricante, which produces white wine called Etna Bianco. This grape grows only on this volcano, and until 15-20 years ago, no one cared about it. Now, thanks to producer Salvo Foti, the industry loves this wine, and its unique and refreshing taste—salty, kind of smoky, and incredibly crisp—will captivate you even if you're not drinking it to be “in the know.” Although we recommend drinking these wines young and in copious amounts, they also tend to age well, so don't be afraid if you see one with a couple of years on it.

REMEMBER THIS...

With regard to temperature and flavor, cooler temperatures always create wines that have higher acidity and lower alcohol levels, which makes for lighter, crisper wines. In areas where the weather is warmer, the alcohol level can increase, which creates a more full-bodied flavor.

We believe the playing field to be relatively even with regard to white wine from island to island, but we also believe Sicily produces the best reds. On Mount Etna, you'll primarily find a grape called nerello mascalese (and, again,



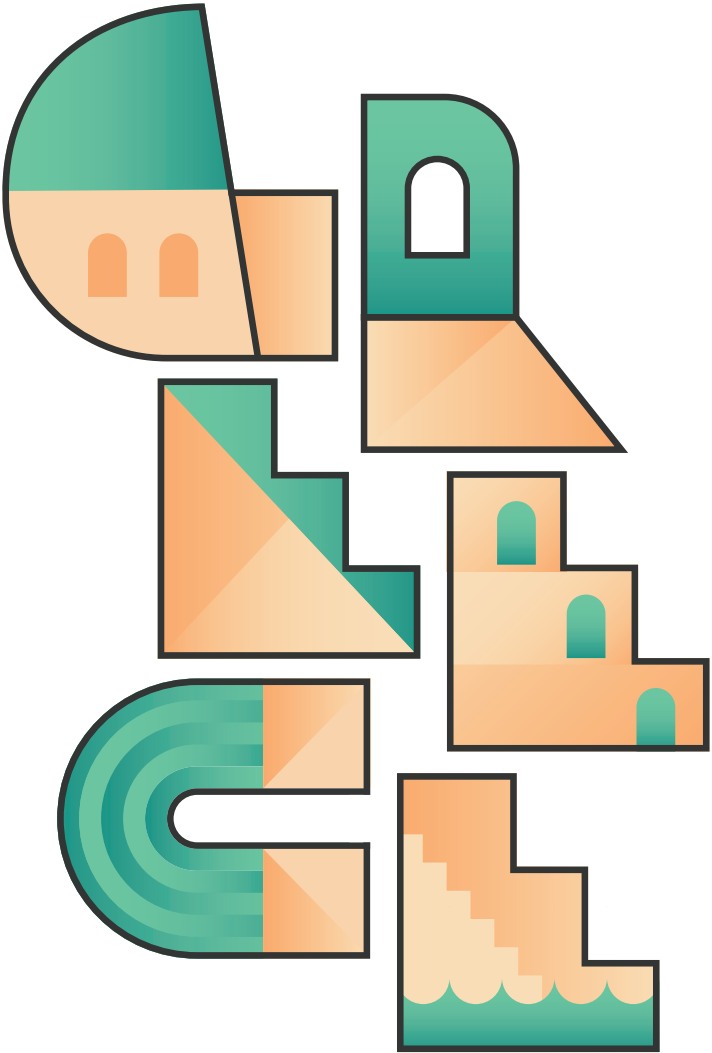
Mount Etna's the only place you'll find it). When discussing obscure grapes like this one, it's best to draw comparisons to the classic grapes we see on every shelf—but nerello isn't quite like anything else. It makes wine similar to pinot noir in color, light and ruby red. Its flavors range from fresh strawberries to a hunk of bloody meat. In body, it's much like nebbiolo, which has both richness and a light and refreshing aftertaste. Nerello has such distinct characteristics that you might say it will someday be welcomed into the high society of grapes. Until then, it's beloved by those looking for something just a little bit weird. ▲





SALVO FOTI is like the mayor of Mount Etna. He grew up in the neighboring city of Catania, always looking up at the imposing figure of the volcano. After studying winemaking in school, Salvo decided to stay local and pursue a career in preserving, which, in this instance, meant bringing back the native grapes of the area.

Salvo started his career working with a winery called Benanti, which was among the first to release wines from grapes like carricante and nerello mascalese. Today, Salvo is the founder of a group of vineyard workers called I Vigneri. They act as consultants to vineyards interested in farming grapes in a specific way; theirs is a nod to the days when vineyard work was a craft and not done by machine. On Etna, the old vines look like overgrown bonsai trees. Gnarly and bent, they must be tended by hand. Salvo believes it's a lost art, and his group is committed to making sure it doesn't become extinct. He also makes a bit of wine himself under this label. None of his wines taste like anything you've had before, which is a good trait to have if you're devoting yourself to preserving old traditions.



As it stands today, we can say with confidence that the only wine you should be drinking from Greece is white wine. Like on all the other islands mentioned here, some red is made, but we've yet to find one that captivates us. The whites here, especially those made from the grape assyrtiko, are some of the best value in the world.

You'll most commonly see wines from Santorini, which is an island that looks like a giant rock. It has almost no trees and the soil is dry and sandy. For both humans and grapes, finding shade is a challenge, if not an impossibility. Think of grapes like round bodies laying immobile and exposed to the sun. That might be a dream if you love getting your tan on, but for grapes, too much sun is tough—it turns them into, well, burnt raisins. Long, long ago, the clever people of this area developed a method for the vines to grow into a basket shape instead of linearly. The basket protects the grapes from the ripping wind and from getting so tanned.

For Greek wines, the label may list the grape, or it may just say Santorini—and if that's the case it is still assyrtiko. Assyrtiko has a bit of a zing and a crispness that can even come across as sour. It smells of salt water and tastes like a lemon. The flavors can be revitalizing in the way a double espresso (or perhaps something stronger) sets you straight after a wild night. That is zing.

The reds taste like a strawberry, but after you've brushed your teeth. The experience may be the same too: You're looking forward to that bite of sweet fruit only for it to turn bitter and alarming. The reds from here have lots of tannins.* If you like drinking wines that can hurt, welcome home. ▲

*Tannins are what make you taste the bitterness.

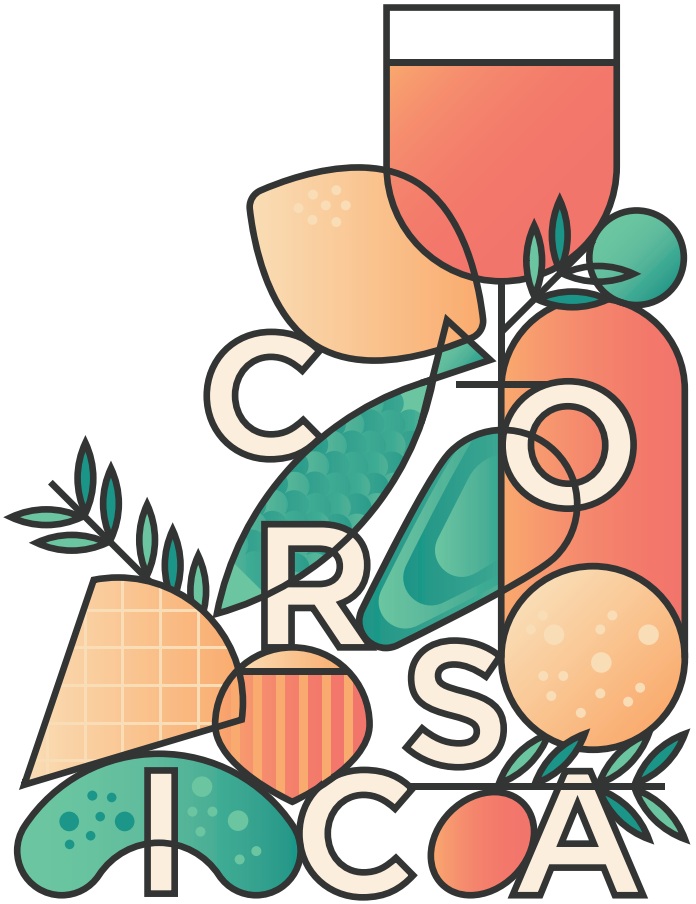
SAR DEG NA

ALSO
KNOWN AS
SARDINIA



Sardegna is like the Puerto Rico of Italy. It's technically a part of the larger country, but very much has its own culture, history, food, and charisma. This island is smack in the middle of the Mediterranean, floating between France, Spain, and Italy—and absorbing bits of them all to encapsulate its own attitude. The landscape is dry and rocky, but surrounded by perfect-looking water. It looks like a pot of succulents you forgot to water floating in an above-ground pool. We highly recommend you plan a vacation here.

Sardegna is known for making rich white wines, earthy reds, and sweet dessert wines. The whites are best compared to other coastal Italian versions, while the reds are made from grapes found more often in France and Spain. Vermentino is the white grape; cannonau is the red. (Cannonau is the same grape as grenache—it just has a name that's harder to pronounce.) ▲



Corsica flies a bit under the radar in comparison to, say, Sicily and Greece. It is French, after all; subtlety is natural. This island is a special and still-secluded place. It manages to thrive on tourism, but without having succumbed to the trendy party lifestyle of other spots nearby. It's a wild, mountainous, overgrown paradise of wine and food.

The wines from Corsica have only recently started to leave the island and head to places like the US. Unlike on some of the other islands, no single producer has ever made enough of it to really gain global recognition. Rather, these producers make a limited amount and mostly sell their wines locally.

Many different grapes are grown here; most are some mutation of other grapes you'll find along the northern coasts of Italy and the southern part of France, like vermentino. Look for labels that say Patrimonio and Ajaccio, which are areas in which vermentino grows. Corsican vermentino has a bit more richness to it than an Italian version. In general, Corsican whites should always taste like melon, be a little bit salty, and likely be a bit more expensive than wines from some of the other islands.

You're most likely to see two red grapes: sciaccarellu and nielluccio, which is said to be the same grape as sangiovese, the grape of Chianti, a spot relatively nearby on the Italian mainland. These reds are medium-bodied and taste like sundried tomatoes, herbs, and wild berries. ▲





The Canary Islands are a group of small Spanish islands off the coast of Northern Africa. If you look at a map, you'll see they run on the same latitude as Central Florida. If you're thinking there could be potential for wine-making on the outskirts of Disney World, rest assured, it won't be a good investment.

These islands are littered with steep hills that rise straight from the sea and reach up to 2,000 feet in elevation. At the center is the highest mountain in Spain. It's a long hike from your beach chair, and its elevation makes it a lot cooler than the flashy stretches of sand you might associate with party towns on islands like Tenerife. This elevation (and therefore temperature) is the greatest force on the flavor of wine here, whereas in other places, the sun and soil might

be. Without the impact of this height, these wines would taste of nothing more than fruit and alcohol—and would likely not grab our attention as distinct and exciting. Some vines here date back more than 200 years. Think of them as inherited gardens that carry in them the responsibility and honor of preserving the work and traditions of the past.

REMEMBER THIS...

As a global rule, old vines produce more complex wines. Complexity is an ambiguous descriptor when it comes to wine. Think of it like a dry-aged steak: The longer it ages, the more the taste changes. The grapes have thicker skins and are dense in flavor. It's a badge of quality. If you survived a couple hundred years under the sun, you'd want a badge too.

The grapes here grow all around this part of the world—you'll find them in Portugal and other parts of Spain. In many instances, they're not really significant, as most of these wines are a blend of whatever is planted in the small vineyards a producer may own. But the two grapes to know are listán blanco and listán negro, white and red respectively. We'd tell you what they taste like, but as we said, it's not really significant.

In many ways, the Canary Islands have always been self-sustaining. Since they are surrounded by fish, they have produced their own food, and the wine has been consumed locally. It didn't need to leave the island, and until recently, it rarely did. For a long time, these wines went unknown; making great wine off the coast of Africa seemed like a fairytale. But then some younger winemakers set out to make the fairytale come true. Quickly and just by using the old vineyards and their native grapes, in the hands of a new generation, the wines of the Canary Islands have become considered globally distinct and of high quality. ▲





JONATAN GARCIA LIMA grew up on the island of Tenerife. His father started to buy land in the 1980s after making money working in local factories. He just wanted an escape from work and to make some extra cash selling grapes to the larger cooperative producers.* Well, he happened to buy some old vines and well-placed vineyards in which Jonatan saw potential.

In 2006, Jonatan started the winery Suertes del Marqués. It's hard to fathom that a business of fewer than 20 years has roots dating back more than 200, but that's the magic of wine.

All the grapes he uses are native varieties and grown in a braided style, which means they look like a long, thick dreadlock, rather than the thin and manicured vine you're used to seeing. Grapes are grown this way when the vineyards are used to grow other produce in addition to grapes. This tradition has been around for centuries, and Jonatan has preserved it despite the challenges it presents in working vines only by hand. A quality wine starts with this sort of attention in the vineyard. If you think of it like a meal, you need to start with good tomatoes if you're ever going to have a delicious sauce.

*Cooperative producers buy grapes from independent farmers.



Parcelle opened in 2018 with a team comprised of some of the country's best sommeliers; we have spent years introducing guests to wines in a restaurant setting. Our objective at Parcelle is to bring that experience and opportunity to you by offering smart, delicious wines for every scenario in your life.

Our selections reflect a limited number of producers, all of whom we consider best in class—they are committed to the craft of winemaking, rather than to the commercialization of the product, and most farm organically. We strive to bring you well-made wines at many price points and from many areas of the world.

Whether it's a bottle for every day or for a super special occasion, we are here to ensure you'll always be drinking something good.

Parcelle

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