



Winemaker: Donato Gentile
Generation: 3rd



Terre di Orazio Aglianico del Vulture DOP

Named for the locally-born poet Orazio (aka Horace) who coined the term "Seize the day!", this ample DOC hails from the volcanic soils of Venosa, due east of Monte Vulture. Made from 100% Aglianico, it positively brims with typicity: dark plum and cassis on the nose are flanked by a pronounced minerality and hints of gray & black pepper. The palate boasts smooth, supple fruit, along with dry yet friendly tannins. And, while the co-operative has over 350 farmers under its wing, quality levels remain extremely high here, with yields averaging just 1.5 bottles per plant!

WINEMAKER BIOGRAPHY

No ordinary co-operative, the Cantina del Vulture sits in the shadow of Basilicata's most famous (extinct) volcano and focuses on sustainable, low-yield Aglianico. Case in point, the "Terre di Orazio" DOC, which serves as a mirror for the area's prehistoric terroir and hits on all cylinders with its deep concentration and typicity.

ENOLOGIST

Donato Gentile

TASTING NOTES

Color Rich, dark cherry skin
Nose Dark plum and a pronounced minerality, along with hints of gray and black pepper, fresh balsamic, and garden rose
Palate Very smooth with ample fruit and dry, consistent tannins
Finish Pleasant and food-friendly



VINEYARD & VINIFICATION

Vineyard Location	Aglianico del Vulture DOP, Basilicata
Vineyard Size	100 ha
Varietals List	100% Aglianico
Farming Practices	Non-certified organic and vegan; dry-farmed; grapes picked by hand
Elevation	450-500 m
Soils	Volcanic
Maturation Summary	In 500 L French & 750 L Slovenian barrels for 12-15 months and bottled for 12 months
Alcohol	14.0 %
Acidity	5.5 g/liter
Residual Sugar	0.5 g/liter
Annual Production	150 bottles



REGION

BASILICATA

With two small corridors that extend to the Ionic Sea on one side and on the other to the Tyrrhenian, Basilicata is primarily a small, sparsely populated, mountainous region in southern Italy surrounded by Campania to the north, Puglia to the northeast, and Campania to the south. With mountains and hills covering over 90% of its surface, arable land is relatively scarce, and vineyards only cover about 2000 hectares in total... By far, the best-known area for wine production is the Vulture sub-region, spread throughout the hills at the base of the long-extinct volcano after which it's named. In the Aglianico del Vulture DOC, volcanic soils, high altitudes, long ripening periods, and large diurnal swings ensure well-developed wines with good complexity and bold structure. 3 other DOCs (Grottino di Roccanova, Matera, and Terre dell'Alta Val d'Agri) and 1 IGT also allow a departure from Basilicata's superstar, with modest amounts of Montepulciano, Sangiovese, and Primitivo peeking out from behind the Aglianico curtain. Overall, red wine comprises over 80% of the region's total, with native varieties accounting for the lion's share and only tiny amounts of Cab and Merlot planted. Although white wines have always been in the minority, Malvasia della Basilicata in particular is yielding some fantastic results, with worthwhile biotypes of Falanghina and Moscato also beginning to make a name for themselves.

AGLIANICO DEL VULTURE DOP

Established as a DOC in 1971, Aglianico del Vulture is one of southern Italy's long-standing heroes, often compared and contrasted with Taurasi from Campania. As with the Irpinian DOCG, the Vulture sub-region is rather small (about 550 planted hectares, compared to Taurasi's 400), lies at an average altitude of 500 meters, and enjoys primarily volcanic soils. That established, the climate in Basilicata is decidedly hotter - and humidity levels higher - which tends to produce wine with riper fruit and rounder tannins. This is not to say that Aglianico del Vulture is in any way timid - full body, deep aromas and flavors of plum, and a spicy volcanic component typically accompany the dry, structural tannins that define this grape variety and place. To qualify for the DOC, both the still red wine and traditional method spumante must be 100% Aglianico and come from one of the sub-region's 15 communes. These, in turn, are located in turn at the foot of Monte Vulture, the extinct volcano which dominates the skyline and landscape of northern Basilicata. The basic DOC rosso has a minimum ageing requirement of 1 year, while the Superiore (elevated to DOCG in 2011) and Superiore Riserva require 3 and 5 years, respectively.

As a side bar, there is a division of opinion when it comes to the origins of the Aglianico variety. Some believe the grape was introduced to southern Italy by the Greeks in between the 7th and 6th C. B.C. and that the Romans who came after renamed the wine *Vitis Ellenica*, or "Greek wine". Then there are those who believe Aglianico to be noble to this area, named instead after the ancient city of Elea (hence Eleanico) once located on the Tyrrhenian coast of Lucania, the ancient territory corresponding to modern-day Basilicata plus much of Campania's Salerno province. Either way, the name was changed to Aglianico when the Aragon dynasty ruled this region, with the double "l" converted to the Spanish "gl". You say tomay-to, I say tomah-to... any way you slice it, the wines from Vulture have deep-running roots and are something to behold!



CANTINA DI VENOSA

Located in the heart of the southern Italian peninsula - equidistant from Salerno to the west and Bari to the east - the town of Venosa is beginning to experience a bit of a renaissance. For years, young people moved away in favor of bigger cities and opportunities, leaving an aging population and fields that often went neglected. Fortunately, that trend has started to reverse itself as more and more people seek the peace and safety of the countryside, and as those same young folks return to the nest. Among them is 35-year-old enologist Donato Gentile, who worked in Abruzzo for a number of years, then decided to come back home and assume the helm of the Cantina di Venosa. Founded by 27 growers in 1957, today the co-operative boasts some 350 small growers who average just 2 or 3 hectares apiece. Don't be fooled by the word co-op, however, as this group is ultra-dedicated both to the environment and to producing wines of true quality. The monovarietal wines in the "Terre di Orazio" line, for example, have 0 residual sugar, demonstrate great typicity, and average just 1.2 - 1.5 bottles per plant, rivalling some of the best estate wines on the market. Nearly all farmers use the Guyot system of vine training, limiting the number of clusters per vine, and Donato keeps tabs on everyone's ripeness levels, personally deciding when and where to begin the harvest.

With an altitude averaging 500 meters, Venosa lies some 20 km due east of the extinct volcano Vulture, from which the Aglianico DOC derives its name. The "Terre di Orazio" line of wines, in turn, was named after the town's most famous son, the poet Orazio Flacco (aka Horace) credited with coining the phrase, "Seize the day". (In fact, the frame of his house still stands and can be visited today.) Beyond this, Venosa is a food and wine town, surrounded by vineyards and fields of strawberries, peppers, and rapini greens, all woven into the local cuisine. Decidedly, Aglianico is the primary variety grown in this sub-region (accounting for 95% of the co-operative's vines), and is known here for its bold structure, earthy tannins, and volcanic spice. When asked to compare the results to those of Taurasi, locals confirm that the climate is much hotter in Vulture, with higher humidity also contributing to somewhat softer, more integrated tannins and wines that are a touch more fruit-driven and ready to drink sooner... Any way you slice it, Aglianico del Vulture is its own destination and one of southern Italy's ancient rock stars!