



Winemaker: Mimmo Costanzo
Generation: 1st

PALMENTO
COSTANZO

Bianco di Sei Bianco Etna DOC

Palmento Costanzo sets the bar high even for Etna, one of Italy's most visceral winemaking regions. With vines ranging 30-100 years of age, and 8000 plants per hectare at an average of 750, this is the creme de la creme! "Bianco di Sei" refers to "six", which is the top designation for volcanic activity, and is the top tier white from this estate. Intense and elegant, with an endless array of high altitude fruits, white blossoms, fresh herbs and a paradoxical freshness.

WINEMAKER BIOGRAPHY

Making wine high on the side of an active volcano may not be everyone's calling, but it suits Mimmo Costanzo to a 'T'. Alongside his wife, Valeria, he creates wines with incredible, big-boned structure, intense minerality, and finesse. Ever committed to the environment, Mimmo has also all but effaced the estate's carbon footprint.

ENOLOGIST

Nicola Centonze



TASTING NOTES

Color Straw yellow
Nose Subtropical fruit, with white flowers, sage and mint
Palate Savory and full-bodied, yet fresh
Finish Long and lingering



VINEYARD & VINIFICATION

Vineyard Location	Etna DOC, Sicily
Vineyard Size	10 ha
Varietals List	90% Carricante 10% Catarratto
Farming Practices	Organic (non-certified); grapes dry-farmed and picked by hand; advanced bioarchitecture ensures low carbon footprint
Elevation	680 m
Soils	Basalt with brownish volcanic sands and lava stones
Maturation Summary	In Steel for 6 months and Bottled for 6 months
In Steel	6 months
Alcohol	12.0 %
Acidity	6 g/liter
Residual Sugar	1 g/liter
Annual Production	30,000 bottles



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PALMENTO COSTANZO

In the year 2000, Mimmo Costanzo and his wife, Valeria, purchased 7 visually stunning hectares in the Contrada Santo Spirito cru, pressed onto the north slope of Mt. Etna. As this terraced 'moonscape' lies partially within the Parco dell'Etna, the estate is actually part of a protected Unesco site. Ergo, while the Costanzo's have added a few more hectares in the interim, nothing can be altered or changed over time. Their vines range in age from 7 to an incredible 120 years, with altitudes spanning 550 – 800 meters and roots diving down into vent-based, volcanic sands and lava-based basalt. At 8,000 vines per hectare, the plant density recalls Valle d'Aosta, with its packed terraces clinging onto steep slopes. Combined with picking by hand, organic farming, and low yields, this unique set of conditions helps to create some of the most astonishing wines in the Small Vineyards portfolio.

Baseline of all Palmento Costanzo's red wines is the formidable Nerello Mascalese. A late-ripening varietal, this grape is known for taut, herbaceous flavors, along with high minerality and nuanced, earthy tones. Surprisingly, DNA suggests that it's actually the once upon a time offspring of Sangiovese! Growing alongside it is Nerello Cappuccio, a 'little brother' that ripens slightly earlier, and whose color and perfume are used to soften the edges of Mascalese. Both clones of Nerello are high in natural acidity and possess pronounced "vertical" tannins, making a compare/contrast with old-fashioned Nebbiolo a fascinating exercise.

REGION

SICILY

A Mediterranean crossroads and Italy's largest autonomia, Sicily has been home to winemaking for some 6000 years. In the 8th century BC, the Greeks brought more advanced viticultural techniques to the island, and a brisk trade with Phoenicians and Romans ultimately followed. In more recent centuries, Sicily has been known mainly as a bulk provider of wine grapes – with the focus primarily on quantity – but that reputation is swiftly changing. In the 1980s and 1990s, Sicily's unusual terroir and potential for fine wines finally began to garner attention. Much of the acclaim was initially directed at international staples like Chardonnay and Syrah, but starting in the 2000s, natives like Nero d'Avola and Nerello Mascalese began taking their rightful place center-stage.

A trio of red grapes in particular are driving Sicily's growth today: Nero d'Avola, with its brambly fruit, juicy acidity, and softer tannins, is the most widely planted and wines are often fresh, unoaked, and affordable; Frappato, another easy-drinker with supple tannins, is mostly used as a blending grape; Nerello Mascalese, the powerful, elegant, and sometimes spicy or mineral-driven baseline for Etna reds, is second in volume to Nero d'Avola, but has been rising along with the DOC's popularity. White varietals of note include Cataratto, the most widely planted and often a starting point for Marsala; Grillo and Insolia, a pair of medium-bodied grapes that provide dry but substantive wines; and Carricante, the lush but zippy force behind Etna Bianco. With its dry, Mediterranean climate, Sicily affords its 23 DOCs and single DOCG abundant sunshine, moderate winter rainfall, and constant coastal breezes. As a result, the island's also well-suited to organic farming and the natural wine movement.

ETNA DOC

Established in 1968, the increasingly popular – and wholly unique – Etna DOC lies on and around Europe's largest active volcano. Much of Mount Etna's verdant natural landscape is protected under the auspices of the Parco dell'Etna, so even though vineyards have increased by nearly 200% in the past decade, the overall growing zone remains finite. (Currently, there are just over 900 hectares under vine.) With global demand at an all-time high and prices skyrocketing, some have likened the appellation to an "Italian Burgundy". Production is centered around the villages of Randazzo, Solicchiata and Passopisciaro, where growers have used dry stone lava to create terraces for centuries.

Mungibeddu, or 'A Muntagna, as Etna's called by the Sicilians, is home to a fascinating red varietal that doesn't thrive anywhere else on the island. Nerello Mascalese is a dark-skinned, herbaceous, and earthy grape that likes to show off its ripe largesse at warmer, lower altitudes; as the elevation increases and temperatures fall, it showcases higher acidity, taut, "vertical" tannins (not unlike those of Nebbiolo) and, thanks to the basalt-based soils, a marked minerality. Different deposits of volcanic soil can lead to myriad variations on this theme, however. With over 200,000 years of eruptions, countless lava flows have cascaded down Etna's slopes, intersecting and overlapping one another, such that even small estates may host multiple micro-terroirs.

Red and rosé wines from this DOC must be at least 80% Nerello Mascalese, with a maximum 20% Nerello Capuccio. Bianco must use a Minimum of 60% Carricante, with a maximum 40% Cataratto and/or a maximum of 15% of other permitted white varieties, including Trebbiano and Minella Bianca.