



Winemaker: Alfio & Rosario Maduado
Generation: 3rd & 4th



Grillo Cuvee Spumante Extra Dry Sicilia DOC

A true extra dry, this friendly sparkler from the environs of Sambuca in Sicily (Agrigento) is playful from start to finish. The nose offers subtle lemon-lime aromas with hints of minerality and peach candy, while the palate yields warm citrus and just a touch of sweetness. Not overly dry on the finish, it's the perfect companion to antipasti or grilled seafood, and a great, southern Italian alternative to Prosecco.

WINEMAKER BIOGRAPHY

With all hands on deck, Cantine Madaudo is a true Sicilian family affair: 4th generation winemaker Rosario Madaudo works beside his father, Alfio, and uncle, Andrea, along with his younger brother, Giuseppe and two cousins, Maria Pia and Cristina. Together, they have transformed a small family tradition into a serious estate with vineyards in both Sambuca di Sicilia and the north slope of Mt. Etna.

ENOLOGIST

Vito Giovinco

TASTING NOTES

Color Pale straw
Nose Light lemon-orange with hints of minerality and peach candy
Palate Warm citrus with just a bit of sweetness
Finish Friendly, crowd-pleasing



VINEYARD & VINIFICATION

Vineyard Location Sicilia DOC, Sicily
Vineyard Size 15 ha
Varietals List 100% Grillo
Farming Practices Organically farmed (non-certified), dry-farmed, grapes picked by hand
Elevation 350 m
Soils Clay and limestone
Maturation Summary Bottled for months
Alcohol 11.5 %
Acidity 6.0 g/liter
Residual Sugar 6.0 g/liter



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 varieties 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.

SICILIA DOC

Spanning the entirety of the island, the Sicilia DOC was upgraded from the original IGT in 2011, with the primary goal of promoting Sicily's native varieties. Although internationals like Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon are technically permitted, there is an unspoken agreement amongst many producers that the appellation be applied to Sicilian natives like Nero d'Avola, Frappato, and Grillo (to name a few). For better or worse, the DOC Sicilia doesn't supply nearly as much information on terroir as the island's other, smaller appellations. For example, because producers may include grapes from anywhere in Sicily, there's no way to know offhand where they were harvested; on the windswept coast, up a volcanic mountainside, or Sicily's scorching interior? Further, winemakers are allowed to collect fruit from multiple zones and then blend, so grapes may not have come from a single area. Because it's so open-ended and inclusive, this DOC has been called a "wild west" appellation, although to be fair, it's also helped to reduce maximum yields and encourage quality over quantity on the island. Currently, the zone includes over 56,000 acres of vineyards (out of Sicily's total 261,000).

To qualify for the DOC, a bianco must contain a minimum of 50% Ansonica (Insolia), Catarratto, Chardonnay, Grecanico Dorato, and/or Grillo. Rossi and rosati must include a minimum of 50% Frappato, Nerello Mascalese, Nero d'Avola, Perricone, and/or Syrah. Along with a lengthy list of other authorized grapes, any of these may also display the varietal given a minimum of 85% in the bottle. There are no aging requirements, and both sparkling and sweet wines are also permitted.



CANTINE MADAUDO

Rosario Madaudo's legacy of wine started with a small farm back in 1945, when his great-grandfather began working their first vines in Villafranca Tirrena, a small, coastal commune on the Tyrrhenian side of Messina in the northeast corner of Sicily. Today, the young winemaker assists his father, Alfio, and uncle, Andrea, oversee a thriving business that includes 20 hectares on the north slope of Mt. Etna (some 90 km away), 40 hectares in the Agrigento (on the other side of the island), and a hip wine bar devoted to bubbly attached to the winery in their hometown. What impresses Rosario the most is what happened in the years he went away to school in Milano, studying first economics and then getting a masters in food and wine communications. Upon returning home, he was amazed at how his elders had taken a small family business and added an exponential, expanding production far beyond the previous generation. He speaks excitedly both of their accomplishments and of his own desire to bring the business full circle one day by adding a small, single estate to the equation. In the meantime, he remains humble and industrious in the cellar, working alongside his younger brother, Giuseppe, cousins Maria Pia and Cristina, and also his wife Alda, whom he met in school in Milan.

A mainstay in Messina (also a mecca of Sicilian street food), sparkling wine remains a center of gravity for the Madaudo family - they produce a wide array of bubbles, spanning both traditional method and charmat. For their Grillo Cuvee, grapes are grown in the high, warm hills of the Agrigento region. (The base wine is then transported to their bottling facility in Messina.) This first love also influenced their choice of enologists: extremely well-known in Sicily, Vito Giovinco specializes in Sicilian sparkling wine and, as it happens, himself owns vineyards in the same two areas as the Madaudo's: Sambuca di Sicilia and the Contrada San Lorenzo cru on the north slope of Etna. Coincidence? Possibly... or perhaps they all know something the rest of us do not!