



Winemaker: Giuseppe Martorana
Generation: 2nd



Insolia IGT Sicilia

From the sun-drenched coastline of SW Sicily comes this beautiful white wine reminiscent of the more temperate white wine zones of Piedmont (Arneis) or perhaps the Rhone Valley (Picpoul). Winemaker Giuseppe Martorana, former police chief of his town and 3rd generation winemaker, has made a wine with grip and taut acidity that belies the latitude from which it comes, but still retains the ripeness that one would expect (and hope for) from Sicily. Perfect with fish, bird, and grilled chicken, this is an artisanal treat from one of Small Vineyards' original wineries!

WINEMAKER BIOGRAPHY

After a storied career in law enforcement, winemaker Giuseppe Martorana now produces small-batch Nero d'Avola with his youngest daughter, Giadda. They live and work on the sun-drenched coast of Agrigento - also home to countless Greek ruins - along Sicily's SW shore.

ENOLOGIST

Giuseppe Martorana



TASTING NOTES

Color Golden yellow
Nose Warm citrus, including hints of mandarin and lime leaf
Palate Clean yet mouth-filling; weight without wood
Finish Medium+, with taut, balanced acidity



VINEYARD & VINIFICATION

Vineyard Location Terre Siciliane IGT, Sicily
Vineyard Size 4 ha
Varietals List 100% Insolia
Farming Practices Organic (non-certified); dry-farmed; grapes picked by hand
Elevation 50-150 m
Soils Calcareous with medium clay content
Maturation Summary Bottled for 3 months
Alcohol 13.0 %
Acidity 6.4 g/liter
Residual Sugar 3.6 g/liter
Annual Production 4,800 bottles





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.

TERRE SICILIANE IGT

Translated as "Sicilian Lands", the Terre Siciliane IGT canvasses the entire region of Sicily. Created in 2011, it replaced the Sicilia IGT and was designed to sit just underneath the Sicilia DOC. With no aging requirements and virtually any style of wine permitted (red, white, rosé, sparkling, sweet), producers are afforded a wide array of freedoms. That established, the designation is limited in one primary way: as of 2017, the island's two main varieties, Nero d'Avola and Grillo, must be classified as Sicilia DOC. This leaves Terre Siciliane's focus on the region's other principal varieties, including whites like Cataratto, Insolia, Malvasia, Manzoni Bianco, and Zibibbo, alongside reds such as Frappato, Gaglioppo, Cabernet Sauvignon, Nerello Mascalese, and Syrah.

MARTORANA

For a few decades, Giuseppe led a storied career in law enforcement, working first with Italy's national police, the Carabinieri, then later becoming the police chief of his own Sicilian town. "Now," he grins, "I am retired." That last word also earns a laugh from youngest daughter, Giadda. "What he means is that now he works full-time in the vineyards!" Together, the father-daughter team manages 25 hectares, making them tiny by local standards. Unsurprisingly, 80% of their crop is devoted to Sicily's mainstay, Nero d'Avola. An additional 4 hectares are planted with Syrah and 1 lone hectare is set aside for tiny batch whites like Insolia.

Starting just across the street from the Mediterranean, Martorana's farm begins at an altitude of 50 meters, progressing to 350 meters higher on the hill. His younger vines (now some 25 years old) are planted lower down, where the soils are sandier and contain more clay. Giuseppe says this causes them to be a bit more abundant, so for his certified organic wines, he tends to rely upon his family's older vines (planted 35 years ago). Located higher up, this fruit benefits from chalkier soils, with yields that are less prolific. This micro-terroir also lends a touch more acidity to the wines, along with the greater concentration. As with many of our Small Vineyards estates, Martorana is averaging just 1-1.5 bottles per plant – truly low, especially for Sicily! Further setting him apart, Giuseppe never allows his grapes to overripen. In a place as warm and arid as coastal Sicily – where the winds are constant but rainfall scarce – it's easy to cultivate ripe fruit. Giuseppe takes the more interesting route however, pursuing wines of lower alcohol, with vibrant acidity and even minerality. Every year, he and Giadda demonstrate this restraint, producing reds that are loaded with bright berry compote, but never trend too sweet!