

The International Wine Review

June/July 2013

Report #37: The Wines of Sicily



Passopisciaro Owned by Andrea Franchetti of Tenuto di Trinoro in Tuscany, Passopisciaro is located on the slopes of Mt. Etna. The estate consists of 200 hectares with the vines averaging 80 years in age. Franchetti has 8 hectares of old vines at 650-1000 meters and follows organic viticulture with no herbicides or fertilizers. Franchetti made his first wines in 2001 which were blends of Nerello Mascalese with Merlot and Petite Verdot. However, by 2003 he decided he could make stunning wines without blending. The estate makes 2,300 cases annually, and the wines are all first rate. **Importer:** T. Edward Wines, Ltd. New York, NY

Passopisciaro 2010 Rosso Sicily (\$45) 90 A blend of the vineyards. Pale ruby-garnet (cooler year). Delicate floral-mineral nose. Lighter flavors with slightly firmer tannins, though quite elegant for drinking over the next 1-3 years.

Passopisciaro 2011 Guardiola Sicily (\$40) 91 The first vintage for this wine. Medium ruby-violet. Grown at 800m. Very pure black fruit, violet nose with graphite nuances. Integrated tannins, fairly full mid-palate and real sense of flesh make this a complete wine, based upon some of the oldest vines, some pre-phylloxera, that Passopisciaro owns. **2011 Passopisciaro Parcaria Sicily (\$90) 93+** From Contrada Parcaria, a south-facing vineyard at just 650

meters. Medium ruby-violet. Richer dark cherry and black berry nose shows less earthy-graphite scents. Deep flavors, with firm tannins are balanced by good fruit, yet this will need 5-8 years to soften and evolve, being a more powerful wine.

2011 Passopisciaro Rampante Sicily (\$60) 93 From Contrada Rampante at 950-1000 meters. Lovely medium ruby-violet color. Lively, elegant black cherry, lightly floral-violet perfume which adds an enchanting delicacy. High-toned elegant and fresh flavors, almost ethereal, though backed by firm tannins. The wine's high-wire balancing act between Pinot noir-like finesse of fruit and bouquet and Nebbiolo-like tannin will reward a few years aging, but perhaps better enjoyed now with roast duck.

2009 Franchetti Rosso Sicily (\$150) 91. Labeled with his own name, Franchetti Rosso is made from the distinctive if somewhat unknown Cesanese d'Affile grape that Franchetti brought in from its native area in the mountains about 25 miles east of Rome, with 20% Petite Verdot. An indigenous Italian variety transplanted to a different mountain area (1000m), the result is rich, fresh and distinctive, though large-framed! Deep ruby-violet color. Dense potent black fruit-cassis, and mineral-violet bouquet. Focused tannins frame quite full, layered fruit flavors, with the alcohol somewhat noted on the finish, yet overall quite balanced.