

Fires ravage Etna vineyards

7 Aug 2012 by Jancis Robinson

On Sunday morning the north side of Etna, where so many of the most important vineyards on this volcano in eastern Sicily are concentrated, was devastated by summer bushfires. Many acres of Mediterranean scrub, pine and beech forests in the local natural park were destroyed.

Unfortunately the hot sirocco wind was so strong that the local broom in the *contrada* (local word for a hamlet) of Guardiola were also burnt and fires reached the walls of the cellar of Passopisciaro (see [this video](#)), the Etna winery of Andrea Franchetti of Tenuta del Trinoro in southern Tuscany. The fires spread so fast that they also damaged some of Passopisciaro's Chardonnay vineyards at an altitude of 1,000 m, where they produce a wine they describe modestly as 'our Sicilian Montrachet'.

Barbara Santilli of Trinoro reports, 'luckily, the grounds around the vines were kept clean so the flames didn't destroy the plants. However the high temperatures could have harmed the grapes. It's still early to assess the damage and also the responsibilities. Nevertheless, the forest rangers and the firemen did their best to stop the fires with all the possible means.'

See Walter Speller or a report on all the current activity and issues in this hotbed of vinous activity in [Foti of Etna revisited](#)