

Decanter

Top volcanic wines

Decanter's tastings team highlight their top wines from volcanic terroirs, with an introduction by Andy Howard MW...



Tenuta delle Terre Nere's Calderara Sottana vineyard on the northern slope of Mt Etna in Sicily. Credit: David Silverman/Getty Images

TAGS: [Tastings Home](#)

The raw, destructive power of a volcano might not usually be associated with the production of distinctive, high-quality wines, but volcanic soils have added plenty of character to the wines featured below, including some from Etna, Santorini and Campania.

Why plant vines near a volcano?

The devastating effects of eruptions in Santorini (c.1600 BC), Vesuvius (79 AD) and the more regular – **and recent** – outbursts of Mount Etna provide sound arguments as to why winemakers should choose to plant their precious vines elsewhere. A seminar and tasting held by the Institute of Masters of Wine considered the diversity and elemental composition of volcanic soils, asking whether this imparted specific characteristics to the wines tasted. What became clear is that volcanic wines are highly terroir-oriented and that each region, sub-region or specific vineyard has a distinctive stylistic fingerprint.

Elemental composition, soil and bedrock structure and drainage combine with choices made by winemakers to add to the complex mix. Volcanic wines are highly terroir-driven and should be enjoyed in this context.

Although wines produced from volcanic soils are highly diverse, making stylistic generalisations impossible, many show elevated aromatics and a saline, mineral edge to the palate which lends the wines tautness and freshness, imparting a high degree of finesse and precision.

Top volcanic terroirs:

Etna
Santorini
Campania
Azores
Soave
The Canary Islands

(...)



(...)

Passopisciaro, Etna, Sicily, Italy, 2014

Explosive on the nose, showing power and forthright cherry and red-fruit aromas. Broad and fleshy for Etna, this is concentrated and tannic, chewy and forceful — an imposing style that has grandeur rather than finesse. Long.



€ 22.40

POINTS 91