

news

CABERNET FRANC BECOMES GROWER FAVOURITE IN TUSCANY

Rising temperatures and hotter vintages are encouraging winegrowers in Tuscany to favour planting Cabernet Franc over Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, according to Tenuta di Trinoro owner Andrea Franchetti.

“Cabernet Franc is a great ingredient in Tuscany – higher sun exposure is transforming its potential to make excellent standalone varietal wine,” Franchetti told *db*.

“Cabernet Franc is very rich and complex in style, and the grape variety is far more durable than Merlot, for example, particularly as it gets warmer in our changing climate.

“In the 21st century, Cabernet Franc is now substituting the role of Cabernet Sauvignon as being the prime red grape for Italy.”

Many of Tuscany’s most expensive red wines, including Ornellaia and Saffredi, are composed of Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot blends.

Yet according to Ornellaia’s estate director Axel Heinz, Merlot is increasingly struggling to adapt to the intense heat and drought of vintages like 2017, which featured heat spikes.

“Merlot is undeniably suffering. We have some Merlot planted on sandy soils, which do not benefit from the cooling influences inherent to our higher altitude terroirs, which are closer to the sea,” Heinz said.

The estate has rented a vineyard planted with Montepulciano, which performs very well in hotter conditions. One day, it could find its way into Ornellaia’s grand vin.

