

## The 15 Best Wines from Sicily's Mount Etna to Buy Right Now

Known for their minerality and high acidity, these Sicilian wines are becoming more popular in the U.S. Here are some outstanding bottles from Mount Etna to look for.

In recent years, the popularity of wines from the Mount Etna region, in Sicily, has risen dramatically, and for good reason: The land in which these wines are rooted is thoroughly unique, and has been shaped by forces that are still active: There was a major volcanic eruption just this past March. The resulting diversity of terroirs on the flanks of Mount Etna makes for a fantastic range of styles and expressions.

"Etna is a magical place, a place where the vines are on the slopes of an active volcano that with its eruptions make this place a changeable territory and the wine production very exiting," said Diego Cusumano, owner of the eponymous winery with his brother Alberto. He explained, "The semi-circular shape of Mount Etna, spreading from north to south, comes with many different combinations of lava, elevations, sun exposures, and proximity to the sea, resulting in different microclimates that we... call *contrade*."



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Antonio Rallo, owner and winemaker of Donnafugata, agreed, noting that, "The wines of the single districts in Italian called *contrade* represent Etna's Crus. They recall the cru concept of other prestigious areas such as Barolo or Burgundy, producing unique expressions, differing in composition of soil and microclimatic factors. The producer enhances the district's peculiarities through specific viticultural and enological choices."

Rallo said that, despite the often significant differences between the various slopes, lava flows, elevations, and *contrade* of Mount Etna, the wines tend to share a certain recognizable character. "All Etna wines are generally characterized by marked minerality and high acidity, which is on one hand [the] result of soils and climate, but also part of the main characteristics of the grape profiles of the indigenous Nerello Mascalese and Carricante."

No wonder the wines of Mount Etna have become so popular: They are deeply tied to their place of origin, express it in particularly delicious ways, and tend to be exceptionally food-friendly. Below are 15 bottles, both red and white, that I strongly recommend, listed alphabetically. And while I typically try to not double up on producers, so many of them craft wines from various terroirs on Mount Etna that it seemed to make sense to do so here.

is a reference to the soils in which the vines grow. It has a distinctly nutty aroma, but the palate is all coiled energy and mouthwatering acidity, with tart cherries joined by crunchy mineral and spice, as well as a hit of flowers on the finish. Bursting with character and elegance.

**2018 Tornatore Etna Bianco DOC (\$33)**

Floral aromatics follow through to the palate, which is honeyed and generous with Meyer lemons, yellow apples and yellow plums, and caramel, all resolving in a drying and mineral finish.

**2018 Vini Franchetti Contrada C Terre Siciliane IGT (\$90)**

Very stony on the nose, with spice and gunflint joining blood oranges and cranberries, all preceding a palate of presence and savoriness, with almost saline flavors of scorched earth, hot slate, cranberries, cherry pits, and bone broth. This will evolve through 2032 and beyond.

**2018 Vini Franchetti Contrada R Terre Siciliane IGT (\$90)**

Cherry pits and dried strawberries on the nose are all found within a framework of deep minerality, and lead to a palate of concentration and depth, with fabulously balanced acidity and a core of salinity. It's anchored by a distinctly meaty character—like bresaola and prime rib-blood—yet made generous with blood oranges and spice. A whiff of rose water rises on the finish. Drink this now or savor for the next 15 years.