

'20 ANNI' PASSOPISCIARO CELEBRATES TWO DECADES ON ETNA WITH A ONE-OF-A-KIND WINE



This year, **Passopisciario**, the Mount Etna producer that launched that area's wine renaissance, is celebrating the 20th year since its first harvest with a special-edition magnum of Nerello Mascalese, for collectors and connoisseurs of rare, one-of-a-kind wines.

Falling under the fascination of these black, volcanic-sand soils and intuiting, as early as the start of the millennium, their superb potential, Andrea Franchetti bottled his first Passorosso (then called Passopisciario) in 2001, a blend of lots from a number of parcels of old vines.

Franchetti won appreciation for first understanding—and introducing—the so-called Contradas, districts on the mountain, as true crus, then solidified his role as a benchmark by producing five of these exquisitely terroir wines. The value of that initiative was underscored and broadened by his creation in 2007 of the "Contrade dell'Etna" annual wine appointment. Etna's vocation for high-quality viticulture soon became recognised throughout the world, as did its powerfully magnetic attraction.

Today, Etna no longer needs an introduction. Its contradas offer fascinating readings of the volcano's historic eruptions and imprint their individual wines with strong personalities. To celebrate this intriguing land, an integral part of one of the world's most active volcanos, Passopisciario has bottled a magisterial cuvée of the finest lots from all the estate vineyards, a shimmering red quintessence produced in only 1,550 magnums. The label is spare and minimal, bearing the name "**20 anni**" (20 years), the winery logo, and the personal signature **Franchetti** on a white background. 20 anni is additionally unique in that it was produced solely in 2019.

20 anni crowns two decades of achievements on Mt. Etna, the distillation of intuitions, passion, expertise, and experience. Says Andrea Franchetti, "I wanted to create a cuvée of Nerello Mascalese from all the contradas of Passopisciario as an homage to this magnificent earth, to the years that have passed, and to the future that awaits us."

The 2019 growing season was ushered in by a capricious spring, which brought light freezes that set back vine growth and resulted in looser than normal clusters. By harvest, though, the grapes had achieved perfect balance between phenolic and physical ripeness, which yielded "wines with supple fruit and superb linearity" and well-calibrated alcohols.

20 anni brings together the seductive spiciness of Sciaranuova, the firm structure of Guardiola, the delicate florality of Rampante, the succulent red berryfruit of Porcaria, and the pungent vegetal notes of Chiappemacine, crafting an exquisite embodiment of the Passopisciario terroir.



Franchetti goes back in his mind to his initial encounter with Etna: "My first impressions when I arrived, in winter, were bleak. It seemed as though the volcano had been abandoned. Wineries were scattered loosely and in disorder over its slopes, amidst untended brush and dry-stone walls that disappeared up the mountain. The idea of restoring those exposed vineyards so high up there seemed absurd. And at that very moment, Etna erupted at the summit. On the other hand, being up there so high attracted me."

Today, those slopes vaunt a geometrical garden of vineyards, and their vines are major protagonists in a history with many pages yet to be written.

The Estate. Passopisciaro practices a precision viticulture obsessively respectful of nature, relying on 26 hectares of vineyards distributed over the north flank of Etna; most are planted to Nerello Mascalese, often un-grafted vines 80-100 years old, but there are Petit Verdot, Cesanese di Affile, and Chardonnay as well. In addition to Passorosso, Passobianco and the contrada crus, Passopisciaro's portfolio boasts the prestigious Franchetti cuvée, composed of Petit Verdot and Cesanese d'Affile.

Andrea Franchetti also owns Tenuta di Trinoro, in Sarteano in Tuscany's magnificent Val d'Orcia,

famous for its legendary Bordeaux blend named after the estate.