

**HUGH
JOHNSON'S
POCKET
WINE BOOK**

Hugh Johnson's Pocket Wine Book 2022

2021

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No.1 BESTSELLING WINE GUIDE

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Italy

More heavily shaded areas are the wine-growing regions.

Abbreviations used in the text:

Ab	Abruzzo	Mol	Molise
Bas	Basilicata	Pie	Piedmont
Cal	Calabria	Pu	Puglia
Cam	Campania	Sar	Sardinia
E-R	Emilia-Romagna	Si	Sicily
F-VG	Friuli-Venezia Giulia	T-AA	Trentino-Alto Adige
Lat	Latium	Tus	Tuscany
Lig	Liguria	Umb	Umbria
Lom	Lombardy	VdA	Valle d'Aosta
Mar	Marches	Ven	Veneto

In Italy, less is definitely not more. We're talking here not about weight or power – here, it's all about nuance and balance – but about grapes and, yes, confusion. Italy boasts over 550 officially recognized wine grapes. Even Italians get confused. There's a whole slew of similarly named green-, black-, red- and white-monickered varieties all over the country. You can see why: a grape has a bit of a green ("verde") tinge to it? Fine, let's call it Verdello. Or maybe Verduzzo. Or Verduchia, or Verdicchio, or Verdone, or Verdea. Wait a minute, this grape here has a slightly black ("nero") tinge: Okay, let's call it Nerello. That one over there; that will be a Nero. This smaller one looks like a Neretto to me; that other one, a Ner. But wait a minute: my Neretto is different to yours. So my grape is a Neretto di Bairo, yours is a Neretto di San Giorgio. And my Nerello is not yours, because it's from the plain of Mascali and lacks your foliage: so we'll call yours Nerello Cappuccio (from cappuccio, or "cowl", of leaves), and mine will be, logically enough, Nerello Mascalese...

And so it goes. The result is an array of wines of wildly diverse colours, aromas and flavours. Add blends, plus variations from myriad soils, exposures, altitudes, climates, clones and individual winemaking styles – and you realize Italy does exactly the same with wine as it does with its 500 olive cultivars, 400+ cheeses and 100+ (officially codified) pasta shapes. Variety is a way of life here. Be confused, by all means (and use the following pages to be less confused). And enjoy it.



Recent vintages

Amarone, Veneto & Friuli

- 2020 Veneto: balanced, gd quality, quantity. Friuli: rainy June, uneven, better for whites.
- 2019 Low quantity. Veneto: gd for Amarone, Soave. Friuli: fair quality.
- 2018 Optimal weather conditions. Gd for quantity, quality, esp fresh whites.
- 2017 V. difficult (non-stop rain); weedy Amarones a risk, green reds in general.
- 2016 V. hot summer; round but low-acid, big reds, chunky whites.
- 2015 Quantity gd, quality better; v.gd Friuli reds. Fresher than initially thought.
- 2014 Not memorable for Amarone, better Soave and Friuli whites, Valpolicellas v.gd.
- 2013 Gd whites. Reds, esp passito, suffered Oct/Nov rain/hail.

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Summit of Etna

Some of Italy's most exciting wines come from this famous volcano. Vines grow up to 1000m (3281ft) on si's e coast. *Contrada* is Si's way to express cru: differences in soil, altitude and age of lava flows. Top growers incl: Alberelli di Giodo, BENANTI ★ (r Rovittello, Serra della Contessa, w Pietra Marina), Calabretta, CALCAGNO ★ (r Arcuria, Feudo di Mezzo, w Ginestra), Cottanera (w Calderara, Zottorinoto), Graci (Arcuria, Feudo di Mezzo), GULFI (Reseca), I CUSTODI DELL'ETNA (r Aetneus, Saeculare, w Ante), I VIGNERI ★ (r Vinupetra, w Aurora), Le Vigne di Eli, PIETRADOLCE ★ (r/w Archineri, Barbagalli, Rampante, Santo Spirito), TASCA D'ALMERITA, (r Rampante, Sciaranuova, w BUONORA), TENUTA DI FESSINA ★(r/w Il Musmeci, w A' Puddara), TENUTA DELLE TERRE NERE ★ (r/w Caldera Sottana, Guardiola, San Lorenzo, Santo Spirito), TENUTE BOSCO (VignaVico), Tornatore (Pietrarizzo, Trimarchisa), VINI FRANCHETTI ★ (Guardiola, Rampante, Sciaranuova). Start climbing.

(...)

Franchetti, Vini Si ★★★→★★★★ ETNA estate (former Passopisciaro) run by Franchetti (see TENUTA DI TRINORO), contributor to fame of Etna. Outstanding Rosso Franchetti (PETTI VERDOT/Cesanese d'Affile) and NERELLO MASCALESE single-*contrada*. Best: Contrada G, Contrada S and Contrada C. V.gd Contrada R. New Contrada PC (CHARD).