

Wines tasted at the Sicilia En Primeur Presentation

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Some of Sicilia En Primeur's Wines

After visiting the Marsala region, we transferred to Mount Etna for the Sicilia En Primeur Tasting. Given the number of wines — 194 — and the time allotted — a day — I tasted a selection, picking wines and wineries that struck my eye from the catalog. I began with dry whites, and then tasted reds, so the wines are listed in the order in which I tasted the whites.

Again, because of time constraints, I concentrated on wines made from Sicilian varietals, and while this meant that I did not taste many of the international varietal wines that attracted attention as Sicily took its place on the world stage, it gave me the opportunity to at least get a feel for the indigenous varietals.

In particular, I was much impressed by Frappato, which I was not too familiar with; it's a red that is both lively and refreshing, with brilliant raspberry acidity and nice tart, almost crunchy fruit. In short, the sort of wine one sets out with food and needs to set out again much sooner than one might have expected. I also found the wines from Mount Etna, which are primarily based on various Nerello clones to be quite interesting, though in a more demanding intellectual key; I found them as a group to revolve more around

minerality and underbrush than fruit (which was there, to provide direction, but did not stand out), and enjoyed them, but a fellow taster who was also unfamiliar with them shook his head and wondered what the fuss was about. Finally, Nero D'Avola, which has attracted a great deal of attention due to its rich ripe fruit, soft acidity, and smooth powerful tannins, a combination that makes for an extremely approachable glass. When well handled Nero D'Avola is very nice, but it requires considerable deftness on the part of the winemaker, lest it become too soft and too ripe, and loose character.

The wines:

Arianna Occhipinti

Arianna Occhipinti SP 68 Bianco IGT Sicilia 2011

A blend of Albanello and Moscato.

Lemony yellow with brilliant lemony reflections and white rim. The bouquet is intense, with honeysuckle and clover honey mingled with citrus that opens into grapefruit with time, and slight spice; it's very clean and quite pleasant to sniff in a rather voluptuous key. On the palate it's bright, with lively grapefruit supported by bright grapefruit acidity and some greenish brambly tannins from grapes, which flow into a clean rather tannic flinty finish. Bracing, and very fresh, a wine that will work very well as an aperitif or with cheeses and egg based dishes, and though it does have the acidity to age well for a number of years, its current freshness is very nice.

90

Arianna Occhipinti SP 68 Rosso IGT Sicilia 2011

A blend of Frappato and Nero D'Avola.

Lively black cherry ruby with black reflections and cherry rim. The bouquet is moderately intense — it's just bottled — with jammy berry fruit supported by some floral notes and acidity with a slight mineral underpinning. Promising, but needs time. On the palate it's fresh and bright, with lively cherry and cassis fruit supported by bright ripe red plum acidity and by tannins that have a warm burr, and flow into a clean moderately tannic finish with a dusky bitter underpinning. Fresh and young, it's a perfect picnic or cookout wine, and will go very fast.

2 stars

Arianna Occhipinti Il Frappato IGT Sicilia 2010

Frappato

Deep black cherry ruby with black reflections and cherry rim. The bouquet is fairly intense, with cherry fruit supported by some jammy notes and moderate spice. Fresh. On the palate it's fairly light, with bright tart berry fruit that has a fairly pronounced cedary underpinning and is supported by bright brambly acidity, and it all flows into a long rather tart finish with underlying hazelnut notes. It's a bit more particular, and quite aggressive,

with a hint of oxidation too that you will either like or not. Because of its scrappy acidity it will work well with grilled meats, for example lamb chops.

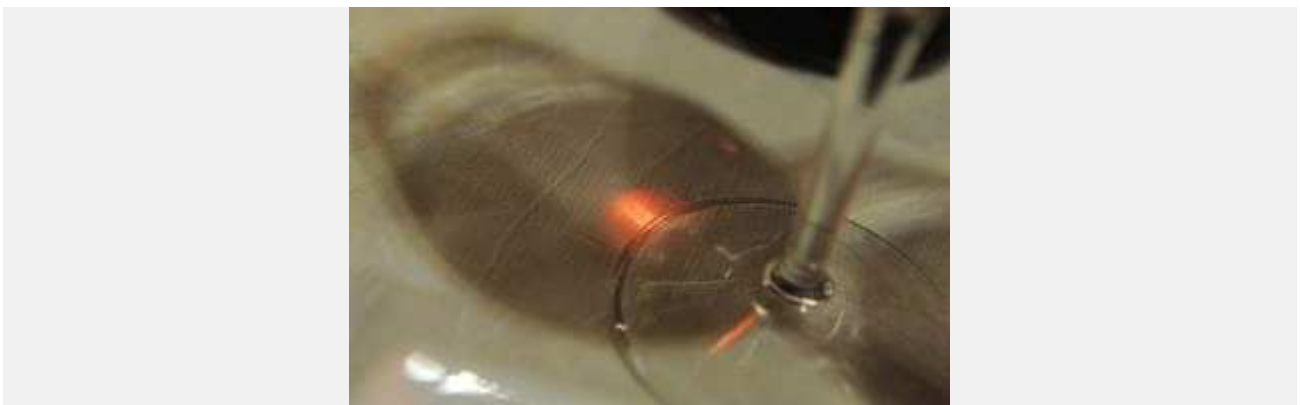
2 stars

Arianna Occhipinti Siccagno IGT Sicilia 2009

Nero D'Avola.

Lively cherry ruby with black reflections and cherry rim. The bouquet is bright, with jammy berry fruit supported by some sage and hints of rosemary, and underlying sour red plum acidity. On the palate it's medium bodied, with bright sour cherry fruit supported by fairly intense brambly acidity and by tannins that are light and fairly smooth, though they do have greenish bite to them, and flow into a clean rather flinty finish. Very much alive, a bright scrappy wine that will drink well with grilled meats and fattier roasts, and other dishes that beg a bright wine to clear the palate between bites. It's a wine that takes no quarter, and that you will either like or not.

2 stars



Reflections

Barone di Villagrande

Barone di Villagrande Etna Bianco Superiore DOC 2011

Carricante. Brilliant brassy gold with golden reflections and pale yellow rim. The bouquet is intense and savory with considerable gunflint and flinty accents supported by greenish vegetal accents and some lemony citron citrus acidity; as it warms it becomes more floral. On the palate it's bright, with rich lemony fruit supported by savory minerality that flows into a fairly long rather flinty lemony finish that gradually settles into flinty minerality. Quite pleasant, and will drink very well with grilled or roasted fish, and also with fish based pasta sauces and risotti and similar.

88-90

Barone di Villagrande Fiore IGT Sicilia 2010

Carricante and Chardonnay.

Lively brassy gold with greenish brassy reflections. The bouquet is fairly intense, with

moderate butterscotch supported by vegetal notes and fairly intense minerality and some greenish notes. Pleasant in a fairly rich key. On the palate it's ample and smooth, with fairly rich minerality supported by moderate acidity and some butterscotch, and flows into a fairly savory finish. Pleasant in a rich rather international key, and will work nicely as an aperitif.

2 stars

Barone di Villagrande Etna Rosato DOC 2011

Nerello Mascalese, Nerello Cappuccio, Mantellato.

Slightly dusky slightly orange pink with brilliant pink reflections and rim paling from orange overtones white. The bouquet is muted, though swishing brings up some berry fruit; it's bottle shocked at present. On the palate it's bright, with lively brambly raspberry fruit supported by brambly tannins and fairly bright flinty acidity, and if the palate follows the nose it will be pleasant in a fairly brash key and work very well as a summer wine, for cool dishes in the home or picnic and cookout dishes outside.

1 star

Barone di Villagrande Etna Rosso DOC 2010

Nerello mascalese, Nerello Cappuccio, Mantellato.

Black cherry ruby with black reflections and cherry rim with slight hints of orange. The bouquet is elegant, with brambly red berry fruit supported by deft greenish vegetal accents. Deft and quite harmonious. On the palate it's bright, with lively crushed cherry fruit supported by moderate mineral acidity, and by tannins that have a warm rather dusky burr, and flow into a fairly long crushed cherry finish with a pleasingly bitter mineral underpinning that gives way to vegetal tannins as the fruit fades. Considerable depth and elegance, and will work very well with red meats. Much more about finesse than power.

88-90

Barone di Villagrande Sciara IGT Sicilia 2008

Merlot and Nerello Mascalese.

Deep black cherry ruby with black reflections and cherry rim. The bouquet is fairly intense, with red berry fruit supported by cassis and some spice, and by slight underlying cedar with some vegetal accents. On the palate it's ample, with moderately intense red berry fruit supported by fairly bright sour berry fruit acidity and by tannins that have a dusky greenish burr coupled with underlying smoothness, and flow into a fairly long dusky greenish finish with a moderate amount of alcoholic warmth. It's smoother and softer than the Etna Rosso, though it does retain a degree of brambly aggressiveness that will make it a wine to consider only if you like the style.

2 stars

Baglio di Pianetto

Baglio di Pianetto Insolia Y IGT Sicilia 2011

Insolia.

Pale brassy white with brilliant brassy reflections and white rim. The bouquet is fresh, with floral accents and some white pear bitterness mingled with hyacinth and slight sea salt. On the palate it's bright, with fairly rich pineapple fruit supported by bright pineapple acidity and slight brambles, with hints of underlying sweetness that make it more ingratiating, and flow into a clean bright fairly sweet finish. Quite approachable, and is a wine that will work well by the glass as well.

2 stars



A century old Alberello vine

Benanti

Benanti Pietramarina Etna Bianco Superiore 2007

Carricante.

Brassy yellow with brassy reflections and white rim. The bouquet is rather mineral, with fairly bright acidity and underlying minerality. On the palate it's fairly bright, with lively lemony fruit supported by some rather bitter sour lemon acidity and some gunflint minerality, which flows into a bright rather mineral citric finish. It's mature, and pleasant though the bottle wasn't as fresh as I might have hoped.

2 stars

Benanti Edelmio IGT Sicilia 2009

Carricante and Chardonnay.

Brassy white with brilliant brassy reflections and white rim. The bouquet is moderately intense, with savory minerality and some wood smoke, mingled with some greenish vegetal accents. On the palate it's ample, with fairly rich mineral laced lemony fruit supported by some glycerin and savory accents that flow into a warm savory lemony finish with underlying gunflint that gives a slight burr. It's approachable in a slightly laxer key than some others, though it's not soft, nor is there residual sweetness. Acidity, rather, and it will

work well with foods.

2 stars

Benanti Rosso di Verzella Etna Rosso DOC 2009

Nerello Mascalese and Nerello Cappuccio.

Fairly deep black brick ruby with black reflections and dusty cherry ruby rim. The bouquet is moderately intense, with berry fruit supported by alcohol and flinty minerality with some balsamic accents. On the palate it's medium bodied, with moderately bright savory berry fruit supported by tannins that have a splintery brambly cedar laced burr and flow into a fairly long warm cherry finish with a bitter balsamic underpinning. It's not a wine I would think to drink far from the table, but it will drink well with foods.

2 stars

Benanti Serra della Contessa Etna Rosso DOC 2006

Nerello Mascalese and Nerello Cappuccio.

Deep black almandine with black reflections and slightly almandine rim. The bouquet is fairly intense, with an initial rush of cocoa mingled with berry fruit and spice, and some savory accents as well, and peppery alcoholic spice. Quite powerful. On the palate it's ample and smooth, with fairly rich crushed sour cherries that have slight peach pit bitterness to them, and are supported by moderate acidity and by tannins that have brambly accents and a dusky cedary graphite shaving underlie and flow into a fairly long bitter cedar laced finish. It's quite young, and needs time, but will never be a wine I would drink by the glass. With succulent red meats that beg something to clear the palate between bites it will work well, however, and has nice aging potential. The bottle I tasted at Benanti the next day showed better than this one, though this was by no means bad.

2 stars

Benanti Rovittello Etna Rosso DOC 2007

Nerello Mascalese and Nerello Cappuccio.

Deep black almandine with black reflections and almandine rim. The bouquet is fairly intense, with considerable graphite shavings and some mentholated accents mingled with some red berry fruit and underlying spice, and quite a bit of alcohol. On the palate it's ample and smooth, with fairly rich spicy cherry fruit supported by mentholated acidity and by tannins that are greenish, with graphite shaving bitterness, and flow into a fairly long rather powerful spicy finish. It's quite powerful and quite young, and though one could drink it now with a roast or stew, I think it will be more interesting in another 3-5 years. A lot of extraction, and you have to like that.

2 stars

Benanti Nerello Cappuccio IGT Sicilia 2006

Nerello Cappuccio.

Deep black almandine with black reflections and cherry rim. The bouquet is fairly intense, with hardwood ash mingled with berry fruit and savory notes; there's also a fair amount of

spice, and a strong vegetal underpinning. On the palate it's ample, with rich crushed cherry fruit supported by dusky tannins that have a cedary burr, and some graphite shaving bitterness, and by moderately intense berry fruit acidity. It's pleasant, though in a pumped up key, and if you prefer wines that revolve more around finesse than power you may like it less, though if you serve it with a steak it will make you happy.

2 stars

Benanti Nerello Mascalese IGT Sicilia 2007

Nerello Mascalese.

Deep black cherry ruby with black reflections and cherry rim. The bouquet is moderately intense and quite vegetal, with greenish accents mingled with graphite shavings that are fairly bitter, and some alcohol and spice. On the palate it's ample and smooth, and perhaps a little fruitier than the 30, with cherry and forest berry fruit that is slightly riper, and this makes it seem slightly softer; the acidity is moderately intense, and the tannins have a dusky rather bitter graphite shaving burr that continues at length into the finish. What I said for the 30 holds here too; there's considerable concentration and extraction, and also quite a bit of oak that has a profound influence upon the wine. It is pleasant enough, but you have to like the style.

2 stars

Caruso & Minini

Caruso & Minini Isola Catarratto IGP Sicilia 2011

Catarratto.

Brassy white with brilliant brassy reflections and white rim. The bouquet is fairly intense, with floral accents and minerality supported by sea salt and moderately intense acidity, and as it opens some mentholated notes and moderate crisp green apple. Quite fresh. On the palate it's ample and fairly rich, with minerality and some greenish accents mingled with a flinty underpinning and flows into a fairly long tart finish. Up front, and fairly direct.

1 star

Caruso & Minini Delia Nivolelli Syrah Riserva Delia Nivolelli DOC 2008

Syrah.

Pyrope ink with brick ruby in the rim, which pales to white. The bouquet is intense, with chocolate and mint, a combination that brings After Eight candied to mind, supported by some savory berry fruit and some underbrush. On the palate it's ample and intense, with moderate berry fruit supported by berry fruit acidity and by tannins that have a minty cast that echoes the nose, and flow into a fairly long minty finish with a berry fruit and cocoa underpinning. It's powerful and particular, and is not a wine to sip far from the table, but rather with hearty meats. It's also particular, and is a wine you will either like or not. Takes no quarter.

2 stars

Caruso & Minini Cutaja Nero D'Avola IGP Sicilia 2009

Nero D'Avola.

Impenetrable pyrope with cherry ruby rim Almost poured ink. The bouquet is fairly rich, with jammy berry fruit supported by cassis and some graphite shavings. Fresh and approachable. On the palate it's ample and smooth with rich cherry and cassis fruit supported by smooth sweet tannins that have some graphite shaving bitterness and flow into a clean fairly sweet jammy cassis fruit finish. It's approachable and will be easy to drink with white meats or light stews, and will do a nice job of supporting what it's served with; it will also work nicely by the glass.

2 stars

Cottanera



A Spatter Cone on Mount Etna

Cottanera Etna Bianco DOC 2009

Carricante and Catarratto.

Pale brassy white with slight greenish reflections. The bouquet is fairly intense, with warm vegetal accents and considerable sea salt, with underlying sweaty blonde, an aroma I associate more with sauvignon blanc than with Sicilian varietals, but that does appear here. On the palate it's bright, with lively lemony fruit supported by considerable savory minerality and an underpinning if gunflint that flows into a clean savory citric finish with gunflint underlying it all. Pleasant, and if you like the style, which is fairly brash, you will enjoy it.

2 stars

Cusumano

Cusumano Cubia IGP Sicilia 2010

Inzolia.

Deep brassy gold with brassy gold reflections and pale white rim. The bouquet is moderately intense, with cooked butterscotch mingled with flinty accents and some spice, and underlying bitterness. On the palate it's ample and rather charged, with moderately intense sour lemon fruit supported by butterscotch and some gunflint, and by moderate savory notes that flow into a fairly long savory finish with a gunflint underpinning. It's a bit

tired, with ample concentration but not as tight as I might have hoped, and somewhat lacking in brightness too. It has a somewhat dated feel to it, somehow, in the sense that it concentrates on power to the detriment of agility, and this is something I associate more with the 1990s/early 2000s than the current decade.

1 star

D'Alessandro Azienda Agricola Dalmin

D'Alessandro Grillo IGT Sicilia 2011

Grillo.

Brassy yellow with brilliant brassy reflections and white rim. The bouquet is bright and quite mineral in a brambly key, with quite a bit of sea salt as well., and hints of scalded milk too. Pleasant. On the palate it's quite mineral, with fairly bright mineral acidity and some brambly accents supported by gunflint bitterness that flows into a fairly long greenish gunflint laced finish with lasting sea salt as well. Approachable in a fresh slightly scruffy key, and will work well with fried fish and vegetables, or other rich summer dishes.

2 stars

D'Alessandro Catarratto IGT Sicilia 2011

Catarratto.

Brilliant brassy yellow with golden reflections and white rim. The bouquet is moderately intense, with minerality and slight oxidation mingled with greenish vegetal notes and underlying bitterness. On the palate it's bright, with lively lemony fruit supported by bright lemony acidity and some sea salt, and as the wine fades grapefruit also emerges, carrying at length. A pleasant direct summer wine that will drink well with grilled or roasted fish or white meats, and also has the acidity necessary for fried fish and vegetables. Expect it to go quickly.

2 stars

D'Alessandro Nero D'Avola IGT Sicilia 2010

Nero D'Avola.

Pyrope ink with purplish rim. The bouquet is moderately intense, with jammy berry fruit supported by some graphite shavings and slight bitter accents. On the palate it's fairly light, with moderately intense berry fruit — black currant and cherry supported by moderate acidity and by tannins that are fairly smooth. I'd have liked more richness to the fruit, which is a little thin, and surrenders to the tannins in conducting the wine.

1 star

Donnafugata

Donnafugata Anthilia IGP Sicilia 2011

Catarratto and other indigenous and international varietals.

Pale lemony yellow with brilliant brassy reflections. The bouquet is ample and rich, with powerful floral accents mingled with some sea salt and slight savory caramel with slight gunflint smoky notes. Pleasant complexity. On the palate it's bright, with lively mineral

laced lemony fruit that has some savory notes as well, with underlying gunflint. Delicate, displaying considerable finesse, and will work quite well as an aperitif.

88-90

Donnafugata Sherazade IGP Sicilia 2011

Nero D'Avola.

Impenetrable pyrope with purple rim. The bouquet is fairly rich, with berry fruit supported by jammy notes and also some balsamic accents with a warm underlying animal tang. On the palate it's full, soft, and rich, with bright jammy cherry plum fruit supported by deft berry fruit acidity and by tannins that are smooth and soft, and flow into a clean prune finish with slight dusky tannic underpinning. Pleasant in a powerful fruit driven rather international key, and also quite opulent; the name of the wine is quite fitting and if you enjoy the style you will enjoy it considerably. Well suited to being drunk by the glass.

2 stars

Donnafugata Mille e Una Notte Contessa Entellina DOC 2007

Nero D'Avola and Other varietals.

Deep pyrope with purple rim paling to ruby. Poured ink. The bouquet is intense and spicy, with jammy fruit supported by deft cedar and some sandalwood; it's rich in an opulent international key. On the palate it's ample and smooth, with fairly rich plum cherry fruit supported by moderate acidity and by tannins that have a dry greenish cedary burr and flow into a fairly long ripe fruit finish with a bitter cedary underpinning. The palate reflects the nose; it's quite international, and quite opulent, though I found the oak to have dried the fruit some. It's a wine that you will appreciate if you like this style. If you're more traditionally minded it won't work for you.

2 stars

Donnafugata Mille e Una Notte Contessa Entellina DOC 2004

Nero D'Avola and Other varietals.

Impenetrable black almandine with brick almandine rim. The bouquet is intense, with berry fruit supported by considerable greenish vegetal accents and some spice, and by grilled bell pepper as well, and some sea salt. On the palate it's is ample and dusky, with moderately intense prune cherry fruit largely overshadowed by greenish vegetal and bell pepper accents, while the tannins are powerful and rather vegetal, flowing into a fairly long somewhat drier than I might have liked gilled pepper finish. They don't say what the other grapes accompanying Nero D'Avola are, but I would guess Cabernet is one of the more important ones, and it overshadows the primary grape, performing a service that might have been necessary to help Nero D'Avola enter world markets years ago, but is no longer necessary. In this it has a feel similar to those of older style Supertuscans, which had a time and a place but in the past.

2 stars

A note: I hadn't realized during the tasting that Donnafugata was presenting two vintages of Mille e Una Notte — in selecting the wines I was looking at the varietal makeup more than the names — and in thinking about them now there is a very evident change in direction between 2004 and 2007, with the wine shifting away from Cabernet and towards the richer more seductive nature of Nero D'Avola. It remains quite international in feel, but is, I think, more pleasant in the 2007 rendition.



The Gardens of Naxos

Duca di Salaparuta

Duca di Salaparuta Corvo Bianco IGP Sicilia 2011

Inzolia and Grecanico.

Brassy white with slightly greenish golden reflections and white rim. The bouquet is moderately intense and rather pungent, with minerality more than fruit and some underlying bitter accents. On the palate it's ample with moderate lemony fruit supported by some sea salt and minerality, and by moderate acidity that is sufficient to provide direction, and it flows into a clean citric finish with savory underpinning. It's a simple up front wine, which doesn't demand but will support what it's served with, and will go quickly

1 star

Duca di Salaparuta Calanica IGP Sicilia 2011

Inzolia and Chardonnay.

Brassy greenish gold with brilliant greenish reflections and white rim. The bouquet is quite mineral, with some citric accents and slight savory notes. On the palate it's bright, with lively lemony fruit supported by gunflint bitterness and some brambly bitter accents that flow into a fairly long savory sour lemon finish with underlying gunflint. Pleasant, and bright, and displays nice character, will drink well with foods and be quite versatile.

2 stars

Duca di Salaparuta Corvo Rosso IGP Sicilia 2011

Nero D'Avola and Nerello Mascalese.

Black cherry ruby with black reflections and cherry rim. The bouquet is fairly rich, with red

berry fruit supported by some berry fruit acidity and slight vegetal notes; it's clean and fresh, in a fairly direct key. On the palate it's bright, with lively cherry fruit supported by sour cherry acidity and by tannins that have a warm slightly greenish burr, and flow into a clean slightly greenish cherry finish. Pleasant in a direct key, and quite fresh; it will drink very well with foods and also be quite versatile, working well with everything from hearty soups and pasta dishes through simple grilled meats and roasts. Expect it to go quickly.

2 stars

Duca di Salaparuta Calanica IGP Sicilia 2011

Frappato and Syrah.

Deep cherry ruby with violet rim. The bouquet is bright and fresh, with lively strawberry cherry fruit supported by wild strawberry acidity; it's quick to write but harmonious and pleasant to sniff in a lively fresh key. On the palate it's fairly light, with lively juicy cherry raspberry fruit supported by wild strawberry raspberry acidity, and by tannins that are smooth and soft and have a slight burr, and flow into a bright fresh berry fruit finish. Quite direct, and very easy to drink, in a lively tart key; it will work well with simple grilled meats, including fattier cuts such as sausages, and also be a nice cookout wine. Expect it to go quickly in the proper setting.

2 stars

Florio Aegusa Marsala Superiore Riserva Semisecco 1952

Tawny brownish Moroccan leather with greenish brown rim. The bouquet is rich, with powerful brown sugar mingled with walnut skins and dried dates, and supported by bright acidity, while there is also considerable alcoholic warmth, and with more swishing spice and almonds also emerge, as do dried figs and dried apricot acidity. Beautiful to sniff and with a great many facets. On the palate it's full and rich, with sweet dried apricot fruit laced with dates and some fig on the first sip, which then give way to alcohol and warmth, with walnuts and nut skins that go on and on. Beautiful, captivating, and why we get excited about old Marsala.

94-5

Feudo Arancio

Feudo Arancio Grillo IGT Sicilia 2011

Grillo

Pale brassy yellow with brassy reflections and white rim. The bouquet is moderately intense, with butterscotch laced lemony fruit supported by some greenish accents and slight spice. On the palate it's mineral, with moderate acidity and a slight feel of oxidation, which often comes with Grillo, and it flows into a warm citric finish supported by flinty minerality that carries into a sour lemon and flint finish. It's not really tight, but is approachable, and will drink well with grilled or roasted fish.

2 stars

Feudo Arancio Dalila IGT Sicilia 2010

Grillo and Viogner.

Brassy yellow with greenish brassy reflections and white rim. The bouquet is fairly rich, with pineapple fruit mingled with brambles and heather, and some honeysuckle as well. Bright and discretely voluptuous. On the palate it's fairly intense, with ample pineapple fruit supported by brambly flinty acidity that has a slight burr to it, and flows into a fairly long mineral finish with slight pineapple accents. It's a bit more complex than the straight Grillo, and riper in terms of fruit, and this is the Viogner's doing. Also a bit more graceful, whereas the Grillo is more muscular. It's a matter of which style you prefer.

2 stars

Feudo Arancio Nero D'Avola IGT Sicilia 2010

Nero D'Avola.

Deep black cherry with black reflections and cherry rim. The bouquet is muted at first swish; subsequent swished bring up some berry fruit and moderately intense spice. On the palate it's more interesting, with rich cherry fruit supported by greenish sour cherry acidity and slight sweetness, while the tannins are ample and soft, and flow into a clean cherry prune finish with a fairly bright tannic underpinning. Pleasant and direct, and easy to drink fruit wine that will work well at either table or by the glass. The nose does need another 3-6 months (as of April 2012), but it will be pleasant.

2 stars

Feudo Maccari

Feudo Maccari Grillo IGT Sicilia 2011

Grillo.

Ample pale slightly orange gold with brassy reflections and white rim. The bouquet is fairly rich, and mentholated with sweetish accents and tropical fruit with hints of candied citron as well. Opulent. On the palate it's ample and fairly soft, with dried apple fruit supported by minerality and flinty bitterness that flows into a fairly long rather flinty finish. It's pleasant and harmonious, but I found it lacking in acidity, and if you prefer wines that revolve more around acidity it won't work as well for you.

1 star

Feudo Maccari Saia IGT Sicilia 2010

Nero D'Avola.

Deep black cherry ruby with black reflections and cherry rim. The bouquet is fairly intense, with berry fruit supported by some cedary accents and greenish notes with underlying spice. On the palate it's ample, with fairly rich ripe berry fruit supported by tannins that have a distinct cedar underpinning and a degree of cedary dryness, and flow into a clean rather bitter cedar laced finish. It's obviously oaked, and I find the oak to distract from the varietal, which really doesn't need it. If you like the style you will enjoy it, because it is well

made, but I found the oak to be distracting.

1 star

Feudo Principi di Butera

Feudo Principi di Butera Inzolia IGT Sicilia 2011

Inzolia.

Brilliant brassy yellow with greenish brassy reflections and white rim. The bouquet is fairly intense, with heather and some sea salt supported by minerality and some white berry fruit acidity. On the palate it's bright, with peppery lemony fruit supported by greenish flinty tannins from grape and a fair amount of sea salt that flow into a clean bright lemony finish with slight underlying sweetness that makes it more approachable, while there is also peppery savory minerality to keep it on its toes. Bright, and will drink quite well with foods.

2 stars

Feudo Principi di Butera Nero D'Avola IGT Sicilia 2010

Nero D'Avola

Deep black cherry ruby with black reflections and cherry rim. The bouquet is fairly intense, with bright berry fruit supported by greenish accents and some spice with slight sandalwood as well. On the palate it's pleasant, with bright cherry plum fruit supported by fairly bright prune acidity and by tannins that are smooth and fairly soft, while there is also slight residual sweetness that makes the wine smoother and more approachable. It's the sort of thing one could drink at table or by the glass, and is pleasant though not tremendously complex.

2 stars

Feudo Principi di Butera Deliella IGT Sicilia 2008

Nero D'Avola

Deep cherry ruby; close to poured ink. The bouquet is intense, with rather jammy berry fruit supported by some mentholated accents and some spice. Pleasant in a rather charged key. On the palate it's ample, with ripe cherry plum fruit supported by lively red plum and wild cherry acidity that becomes quite warm in the finish, while the tannins are ample and smooth, and flow into a clean fresh sour cherry finish. Welcoming, in a rich fruit driven key, and though fairly direct does offer things to think about, and will drink nicely with foods.

2 stars

Graci

Graci Quota 600 Etna Bianco DOC 2010

Carricante and Catarratto.

Brilliant brassy yellow with brassy reflections and white rim. The bouquet is intense, and rather pungent, with an initial rush of struck granite supported by minerality and sea salt. Mineral more than fruit. On the palate it's ample and quite mineral, with warm mineral

laced lemony fruit that is supported by some flinty bitterness and flows into a fairly long flinty savory lemon finish. Minerality in a glass, and if you like the style you will enjoy it. If you prefer wines with more fruit, it will work less well for you.

2 stars

Firriato

Firriato Quarter Bianco IGT Sicilia 2010

Catarratto, Grillo, Carricante and Zibibbo.

Brassy yellow with brilliant brassy reflections and white rim. The bouquet is intense, and rather haunting, with honey and floral accents mingled with some vegetal notes and gunflint. Quite a bit going on. On the palate it's fairly intense, with savory lemon laced minerality that has a slight flinty burr, and flows into a fairly long savory finish.

Approachable, and will drink well with summer dishes.

2 stars

Firriato Ribeca IGT Sicilia 2008

Perricone.

Impenetrable pyrope with cherry rim. The bouquet is intense, with quite a bit of cedar, and some berry fruit, the overall effect is rather dusky and the wood has a powerful influence on the wine. On the palate it's rich, with powerful very ripe cherry prune fruit supported by greenish vegetal accents derived from oak, and by tannins that have a warm oaky cast and flow into a mentholated cedar laced prune finish. There is ample fruit, but I found oak to overshadow the wine, and would be very curious to taste it without, because I think it could prove more interesting and more distinctive.

1 star

Pietradolce

Pietradolce Archineri Etna Bianco DOC 2011

Carricante.

Brassy yellow with brilliant brassy reflections and white rim. The bouquet is fairly intense, with minerality and bitterness mingled with some acidity and wet cloth. Not as clean as I might have liked. On the palate it's fairly bright, with lively savory fruit supported by warmth and acidity that lead into a finish that echoes the nose.

1 star

Planeta

Planeta Cometa IGT Sicilia 2010

Fiano.

Brassy yellow with brilliant golden reflections and white rim. The bouquet is intense and quite ripe, with honeysuckle and aromas that bring a Moscato to mind mingled with greenish accents and underlying sweetness. Quite ripe, and international in key. On the palate it's ample and smooth, with ripe honey laced apricot fruit supported by warm apricot acidity with a flinty underpinning that flows into a long flinty apricot finish.

Elegant in a very international key, and in a way feels dated, it's a wine that has a 1990s feel to it, and while quite good has the opulence and excess that people made when they began to aim for quality and richness in Sicilian wine. If you like the style you will enjoy it greatly, but you have to like the style. If you do not, you will be positively impressed, but have a hard time finishing the bottle.

2 stars

Planeta Carricante IGT Sicilia 2010

Carricante and Riesling.

Brassy yellow with brilliant brassy reflections and white rim. The bouquet is pleasant, with minerality and some mentholated accents mingled with some brambly gunflint and slight eucalyptus. On the palate it's pleasant, with bright lemony fruit supported by lemony acidity and some flinty minerality that flows into a fairly long flinty mineral finish. Quite pleasant in a scrappy, zesty key, and if you like this sort of brightness it's a wine you could drink by the bucket. If you prefer softer wines or more sweetness, it won't work at all for you.

2 stars

Planeta Rosé IGT Sicilia 2011

Syrah.

Onionskin with brilliant onionskin reflections and rim paling to white. The bouquet is delicate, with some berry fruit supported by moderate acidity and slight minerality; it gives an impression of coming together still, and does have to develop. On the palate it's bright, with savory raspberry fruit supported by light brambly tannins that flow into a pleasant raspberry finish with slight hints of sweetness. Simple and direct, and easy to drink, what a rosé should be, and it will work well with picnics or cookouts that don't feature overly fatty foods.

2 stars

Planeta Plumbago IGT Sicilia 2010

Nero D'Avola.

Deep pyrope with cherry rim; it's close to poured ink. The bouquet is intense, and rather brooding, with berry fruit that takes its time emerging, becoming quite bright towards plum with time, and some mentholated accents with underlying bitter accents. Rich. On the palate it's bright, with lively cherry plum fruit supported by bright berry fruit acidity and by smooth sweet tannins that flow into a fairly long sour berry fruit finish. Pleasant, in a bright zesty key, and will drink very well with hearty red meats; by comparison with many it has brighter acidity that gives it more verve.

2 stars



Dusk over Taormina

Planeta Noto DOC 2009

Nero D'Avola.

Deep pyrope with black reflections and cherry rim. The bouquet is dusky, with mentholated berry fruit supported by some balsamic accents and underlying spice. Enjoyable. On the palate it's ample and rich, with fairly powerful plum fruit supported by moderate acidity and by tannins that are smooth and sweet; by comparison with Plumbago the fruit is a little richer, and the acidity considerably less evident, and if you prefer wines that aren't as brash you may like this better, though my personal preference falls for the other.

2 stars

Planeta Cerasuolo di Vittoria DOC 2010

Nero D'Avola and Frappato.

Bright black cherry ruby with black reflections and cherry rim. The bouquet is bright, with lively cherry fruit supported by pleasant floral and mentholated accents and strawberry acidity; it's very much alive in a pleasant zesty key. On the palate it's bright and rich, with lively cherry strawberry fruit supported by dusky bitter notes and wild strawberry acidity, and by smooth sweet tannins that flow into a fairly long warm finish. Very fresh and quite enjoyable, a lively fruit driven wine that will work very well with simple grilled meats and other summer foods, and also has enough acidity to match fried meats and vegetables. Expect it to go very fast.

2 stars

Tasca D'Almerita

Tasca D'Almerita Leone IGT Sicilia 2011

Catarratto, Pinot Bianco, Sauvignon, Traminer Aromatico.

Brassy white with brilliant brassy reflections and white rim. The bouquet is fairly intense, and rather pungent, with minerality and spice mingled with floral notes and some greenish accents. Difficult to pin down. On the palate it's bright and savory, with fairly lively lemony fruit supported by sea salt and some tangerine and grapefruit acidity that flow into a clean grapefruit laced finish. Invigorating, and the palate is more interesting than the nose,

which is still coming together as of this tasting. It's a wine that will work well with flavorful fish or white meats, and has the acidity necessary to stand up to fried fish or meats.

2 stars

Tasca D'Almerita Nozze D'Oro Contea di Sclafani DOC 2010

Inzolia and Sauvignon Tasca.

Brassy white with brilliant golden reflections and white rim. The bouquet is fairly intense, wood smoke mingled with some lemony citric notes and flinty notes, and some bitterness as well. On the palate it's ample and smooth, and softer than the Leone — less aggressive, with more languid lemony fruit that has some gooseberry accents, and flows into a clean tart rather mineral finish. Pleasant and approachable though the acidity in the finish means you won't like it if you prefer sweeter wines; it is softer and more approachable than Leone, and will work well as an aperitif.

2 stars

Tasca D'Almerita Le Bianche IGT Sicilia 2010

Vioigner, Semillon, Sauvignon Blanc

Brassy yellow with brilliant brassy reflections and white rim. The bouquet is fairly intense and quite ripe, with some butterscotch and ripe white berry fruit supported by some gunflint and slight flinty minerality. On the palate it's ample and rather flinty, with bright lemony fruit supported by a certain languidity and by slight greenish flinty tannins, while there is also flinty minerality, and it flows into a savory, lemony mineral finish that becomes flinty as the fruit fades. It's from international varietals but is very much a Sicilian wine, with the sun in a glass. Nice depth, and if you like the style, which is fairly aggressive, you will enjoy it.

2 stars

Tasca D'Almerita Mozia IGT Sicilia 2011

Grillo.

Greenish brassy white with brassy reflections and white rim. The bouquet is fairly intense, with greenish vegetal accents mingled with gunflint and grapefruit acidity and fruit, and some rosemary herbal accents as well. On the palate it's bright, with flinty grapefruit supported by peppery spice and some grapefruit acidity that flow into a long savory grapefruit placed finish. Quick to write but pleasant to drink in a fairly brash key, and if you like the style you will enjoy it.

2 stars

Tasca D'Almerita Tascante IGT Sicilia 2009

Nerello Mascalese.

Black cherry ruby with black reflections and rim paling to almandine pink. The bouquet is moderately intense, with some berry fruit and some greenish accents, but is still clearly coming together. On the palate it's ample and smooth, with rich cherry fruit supported by some greenish accents and peppery spice, while the acidity is deaf and more berry than

mineral, and the tannins are smooth with slight cedary notes, and flow into a fairly long cedar laced finish with berry fruit and some minerality. Pleasant though it needs time, a year or perhaps two, and will drink very well with succulent red meats.

2 stars

Tenuta Rapitalà

Tenuta Rapitalà Casalj IGT Sicilia 2011

Catarratto.

Brassy greenish yellow with brassy reflections and white rim. The bouquet is ripe, with crisp apple mingled with some banana — the first I've noted today — that suggests considerable ripeness, and is supported by some mineral accents. On the palate it's ample and fairly soft, with minerality more than acidity interacting with banana laced fruit, and flowing into a mineral finish. I'd have liked greater depth and verve.

1 star

Tenuta Rapitalà Grillo Tenuta IGT Sicilia 2011

Grillo.

Pale brassy yellow with brilliant brassy reflections and white rim. The bouquet is moderately intense, with minerality and some wet cardboard, which means the wine has yet to recover from being bottled. On the palate it's fairly bright, with lemony fruit supported by hints of banana and by some savory flinty accents that flow into a fairly long warm lemon laced finish with underlying flint. It's a bit laxer than I might have liked, and also a touch overripe. A little more tightness would have been nice,

1 star

Tenuta Rapitalà Piano Maltese Rosato IGT Sicilia 2011

Nerello Mascalese and Perricone.

Pale dusky pink with brilliant electric pink reflections and white rim. The bouquet is moderately intense, with some berry fruit supported by slight bramble, and still coming together. On the palate it's ample and rather soft, with moderate raspberry fruit supported by greenish accents and minerality more than acidity, and flows into a clean rather mineral finish. I'd have liked more brightness and acidity to perk it up.

1 star

Valle Dell'Acate

Valle Dell'Acate Zagara IGT Sicilia 2011

Grillo.

Brilliant brassy white with golden reflections and white rim. The bouquet is bright, with lively greenish accents mingled with citrus and some gunflint, with flinty notes as well. On the palate it's quite mineral, with moderately intense lemony fruit supported by flinty mineral accents that take the fore as it flows into the finish, which is quite flinty. If you like intensely mineral wines you will enjoy it, but you have to like this style. If you prefer wines

with more fruit you will like it less.

2 stars



Pastries in Taormina

Valle Dell'Acate Case Ibidini Inzolia IGT Sicilia 2011

Inzolia.

Brilliant brassy yellow with golden reflections and pale yellow rim. The bouquet is intense, with greenish accents and savory butterscotch supported by some mint and herbal notes. Quite a bit of oak. On the palate it's ample and soft, with savory lemon fruit whose acidity has been smoothed by oak, leaving flinty minerality and butterscotch to carry the show, and they do so well, with some bitter accents, flowing into a fairly long rather bitter savory butterscotch finish. It's got a lot of oak to it, and this gives it a 90s feel; oak of this sort is less common now. If you like the style it is well made and substantial, but you have to like the style.

1 star

Azienda Agricola COS

Azienda Agricola COS Cerasuolo di Vittoria Classico DOC 2009

Nero D'Avola and Frappato.

Deep black almandine with black reflections and cherry rim. The bouquet is fairly intense, with spicy red berry fruit supported by pleasant floral notes and some jammy accents. Welcoming. On the palate it's fresh and bright, with lively red berry fruit supported by tannins that have a slight greenish burr and by bright berry fruit acidity that flows into a clean fairly bright berry fruit finish with greenish vegetal accents. Quite fresh, and very easy to drink; it will be nice with simple grilled meats e.g. burghers made with good beef and good cheese, and will also be a good bet for a cookout. Expect it to go quickly.

2 stars

Azienda Agricola COS Pithos Rosso IGT Sicilia 2010

Nero D'Avola and Frappato.

Deep black brick with black reflections and almandine rim. The bouquet is fairly intense, with bright jammy cherry fruit supported by slight vegetal notes and fairly bright spice. Fresh and fruit forward. On the palate it's bright, with warm jammy fruit supported by

spice and by sour berry fruit acidity, while the tannins are warm and have a slight hazelnut skin cast, and flow into a warm slightly oxidative hazelnut and berry fruit finish. I found the hazelnuts to be somewhat distracting.

1 star

Azienda Agricola COS Nero di Lupo IGT Sicilia 2009

Nero D'Avola.

Brick ruby with black reflections and some orange in the rim. The bouquet is moderately intense, with savory notes and berry fruit mingled with some crushed hazelnuts as well. Somewhat oxidative. On the palate it's light, with brambly red fruit supported by moderate acidity and by tannins that have a brambly slightly bitter burr, and flow into a rather dusky finish in which berry fruit mingles with hazelnuts as well, and flows into a fairly long warm finish. It's quite simple, and though I wouldn't age it, it will drink now with simple grilled meats, and would also be a nice option for a cookout.

2 stars

Azienda Agricola COS Ramì IGT Sicilia 2010

Inzolia and Grecanico.

Brassy yellow with slightly cloudy brassy reflections. the bouquet is moderately intense and rather mineral, with flinty stony notes and some oxidative accents. On the palate it's ample and rather soft with flinty minerality prevailing over moderate lemony acidity, and feels more tired than it should.

1 star



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