

You are here: [Home](#) > [Blog](#) > [Features](#) > [Wine Regions](#) > Sicily seduces

Sicily seduces

by Britt Karlsson on DECEMBER 14, 2012 in [WINE REGIONS](#) {EDIT}

10 people like this. Be the first of your friends.

An island of wine, olives, food and sunshine in the Mediterranean

Sicily, the island, the sun, the wines, the olive oil, the food... The largest island of the Mediterranean Sea has many charms, much to make you want to go there. Britt Karlsson did and discovered a region with a little known but very dynamic wine production, spectacular landscapes and a unique gastronomy. Here's her story.

For more photography from Sicily take a look at this photo essay on BKWine Magazine: [Sicily: wine, food, vineyards, history, and landscape in pictures](#).

Sicily seduces. The largest island in the Mediterranean has a very special charm that urges you to return. Maybe it is the location. North Africa is not far away. Or the spectacular mountainous scenery that culminates with Mount Etna, sitting proudly in the eastern part of the island.

Or it could be the Greek heritage, so evident when you admire the temples of Agrigento and the adorable coastal town of Syracuse, where you can enjoy a grilled fish in one of the harbour restaurants.

Never be in a hurry when you are out driving!



A Greek temple on Sicily, copyright BKWine Photography

One thing, however, is certain. It is easy to be seduced by the local wines. The reds, the whites, the sweets... They are all getting better and better. It was long since Sicily was synonymous with Marsala.

Sicily is a mountainous island. Never be in a hurry when you are out driving! Only 14% of the island is flat. It is hot and dry, except around Etna where it actually rains 1,000 mm a year.

Thanks to the mountains, the wine producers can easily find cool areas for their vines. "Our vineyards start at 350 meters and go up to 800 meters. The high altitude gives freshness and delicate flavours," says Laura Orsi, winemaker at Tenuta Regaleali, located almost in the middle of the island. The estate is run by the family Tasca d'Almerita and is a quality reference in Sicily.



BKWine Magazine on Facebook

You like this.

727 people like **BKWine Magazine**.

Linnéa

Eспен

Ignacio

Wendy

Toni

Facebook social plugin

TRAVEL+ LEISURE *Click here!*

"World's Top Wine Tours"

RECENT POSTS

- [Sicily: wine, food, vineyards, history, and landscape in pictures](#)
- [Dr Loosen: delicious wines from the Mosel Valley](#)
- [River deep, mountain high – sparkling wines from Trentino](#)
- [Organic wines in fancy restaurants](#)
- [The new classification in Saint Emilion challenged by chateau owner](#)

LATEST COMMENTS

- [Förföriska Sicilien | BKWine Magazine on Sicily: wine, food, vineyards, history, and landscape in pictures](#)



The vineyards and landscape at Tenuta Regaleali in Sicily, copyright BKWine Photography

The black soil of Etna

From Regaleali we go straight east, towards Etna, Europe's highest active volcano. And one of Europe's most spectacular wine regions. This is the land of nerello mascalese, a local grape planted on the slopes of the volcano in the black lava soil.

The vines look like small gnarled bushes.

One of the first in modern times to realize the quality potential here was Andrea Franchetti. In 2000 he created his Tenuta di Passopisciaro, located on the northern side of Etna, 1000 meters above sea level. The vines are 100 years old and trained in traditional *alberello*. They look like small gnarled bushes.

Nerello mascalese thrives here in the dark lava soil.

The soil is very fine and allows the roots to go deep down. Hot days and cool nights provide a long growing season and a harvest which can be as late as the end of October or even November.



Black lava rock soil on Etna, copyright BKWine Photography

The land of nero d'avola

We continue a little further south, towards Syracuse and Ragusa. Small sturdy olive trees follow us wherever we

- Sicily seduces | BKWine Magazine on Sicily: wine, food, vineyards, history, and landscape in pictures
- Sicily: wine, food, vineyards, history, and landscape in pictures | BKWine Magazine on Sicily seduces
- Dr Loosen: delicious wines from the Mosel Valley | BKWine Magazine on A good bottle of Mosel – A tasting with Ernst Loosen
- Mousserande viner från Trentino i Italien | BKWine Magazine on A sparkling display in Trentino – Tasting Trento DOC

TAGS

appellations Austria biodynamic BKWine
 BKWine Brief **BKWine Pick**
 BKWine TV blogs books
 Bordeaux Burgundy business
 Champagne competitions France fun
 grapes internet Italy journalism
 Languedoc marketing organic Paris
 politics Portugal primeurs regulations
 restaurants Rhone sale of winery shops
 South Africa **statistics** Sweden
 Systembolaget technology Tuscany vinification wine
 bars wine market wine newsletter wine shows
 wine tastings wine tours

BKWINE TWITTER

A photo essay: Sicily: wine, food, vineyards, history, and landscape <http://t.co/T7aPt257>
 about an hour ago

Dr Loosen: delicious wines from the Mosel Valley <http://t.co/WsWOppDD> 2 hours ago

River deep, mountain high – sparkling wines from Trentino, by @ sdgeorge1974 <http://t.co/QhKc1P48> 3 hours ago

"Les experts de l'UE veulent pouvoir continuer à encadrer les plantations" "Quelle formulation mensongère" <http://t.co/Jc7AAAtG> 3 hours ago

Näthandlarna – brett utbud med säte i Helsingborg <http://t.co/yU7zTTNj> fr
 @ ericssonmagnus 3 hours ago

Follow @bkwineper 3,465 followers

go. In Sicily golden olive oil is a vital part of the gastronomy. The local varieties are numerous. Nocellara is one of the best. The high quality oil has just the right spicy bitterness. To be enjoyed with almost anything you eat in Sicily.

We approach Ragusa. This is the neighbourhood of nero d'avola, one of the great grapes of Sicily. The wines are rich and full of flavours, especially in the district of Pachino, south of the Baroque town of Noto.

"A red wine to drink with sushi"



One of the buildings at the COS winery, copyright BKWine Photography

Between Ragusa and Vittoria we find Sicily's first and currently only DOCG, Cerasuolo di Vittoria. The grapes are frappato and nero d'avola. Frappato gives a cherry scented wine with a fairly light body and many Cerasuolo di Vittoria are made in a light, easy-to-drink style.

With low yields, however, you get more concentration. Il Frappato from Valle dell'Acate is certainly an unpretentious wine but very good with lots of red fruit. "A red wine to drink with sushi", says Francesco Ferreri, the wine maker, "but it also goes perfectly with mozzarella and tomato sauce."



Cerasuolo di Vittoria Classico from COS, copyright BKWine Photography

Orange blossom and amphorae

Sicily in the spring smells wonderfully of *zagara*, the orange tree's white flowers. In the courtyard in front of Valle dell'Acates wine cellar the scent is very strong. The property has four hectares of orange trees and not surprisingly they have created a white wine called Zagra, made from local grapes grillo and inzolia. It is an aromatic wine with fine, fresh mineral notes.

Tasting wines makes you hungry and we are lucky, we are not far away from one of the best restaurants in Sicily.

At the Gulfi wine estate the chef treats us to a memorable meal of local products, mostly from the sea. The bread is home made and we eat it with Gulfi olive oil made from the olive variety *tonda iblea*. Its fruity, peppery taste goes very well also with the swordfish, briefly marinated in the oil and lemon juice.

Amphorae preserve the taste of the terroir.

Before we leave the area of Ragusa area, we pay a visit to Giusto Occhipinti at his wine estate COS.

Giusto makes organic wines. "We have a good climate, we do not have to use any chemicals," he says. He ferments and stores some of his wines in clay amphorae. "It has a bit the same effect as oak", he says, "the wine breathes, but the clay gives no taste so we keep the taste of the terroir."



Grillo IGT Sicily ageing in cask, copyright BKWine Photography



A local fish elegantly served for lunch, copyright BKWine Photography

Chardonnay and riesling

We continue along the south coast and we drive past the silhouettes of the Greek temples of Agrigento. Soon we arrive at the estate of one of the stars of Sicily, the Planeta family.

The Planeta property is large and modern. The family is also large and many family members work together on the estate. The Planeta wines are often blends of local grapes and more famous international ones. They have had great success with their chardonnay wines, both pure as well as blended with grecanico. In the Etna region they make floral and fresh white wines from carricante. And we look forward to taste their riesling (!), recently planted at 900 meters altitude.



Vineyards at Planeta, Sicily, copyright BKWine Photography

And finally, a sweet Muscat

Sicily has always been known for its sweet wines. Marsala, of course, a fortified wine made from grillo, inzolia and catarratto.

But sweet wines are made all around the island, and on the Aeolian Islands and the Island of Pantelleria, delicious, sweet Muscat wines are made.

Wine growing on this bare windswept island is close to hardship.

One of the more famous is the Moscato di Pantelleria. Wine growing on this bare windswept island is close to hardship but the result is amazingly concentrated and flavourful wines. The grape is zibibbo, also known as muscat of alexandria. Occasionally made as dry but mostly luscious and sweet.

The sweet wines from Sicily are once again in great demand. And as we leave the island for now, we know that we will soon be back.

We already dream of local specialities like *pasta con fave*, *cannolo*, grilled sardines, fresh shrimps from Porto Palo, oursin, octopus, lamb stew... With a good glass of wine and a few sprinklings of olive oil.

All from Sicily. With memories of the sun.



A glass of luscious sweet Sicilian wine, copyright BKWine Photography

This article was originally published in a shorter version on Systembolaget.se, the web site of the Swedish wine and spirits monopoly.

These are only some of the treasures that you can find on Sicily. If it makes you keen to discover more of [the wines and food of Sicily then come on a wine tour](#) with BKWine. Take a look at our scheduled tours and custom designed wine tours.

More from BKWine on related subjects



Tenuta Regaleali – in the middle of Sicily



Sicily has an incredible range (and quality) of wine and food



COS – biodynamics and amphora in Sicily



COS, Sicily, amphora and biodynamics

BKWine Tours | the wine and food tour specialist



Sicilien är som en hel kontinent i en liten ö

BKWine Vinresor



Like 10



This post is also available in: [Swedish](#)

[Italy](#), [new](#), [Sicily](#)

← Château de Chantegrive, Graves | BKWine Pick

Fermentation thanks to wasps? →

Trackbacks/Pingbacks

[Sicily seduces | BKWine Magazine | Which Wine Is Sweet - December 15, 2012](#)

[...] The sweet wines from Sicily are once again in great demand. ... Originally posted here: Sicily seduces | BKWine Magazine ← Wine Preference May Indicate Personality, According to Wines With [...]
[Sicily: wine, food, vineyards, history, and landscape in pictures | BKWine Magazine](#) - December 17, 2012
[...] Read more on Sicily, the wine, the food, the olive oil and the region, in this article by Britt: Sicily seduces, an island of wine, olives, food and sunshine in the Mediterranean. [...]

Leave a Comment

Logged in as [Per Karlsson](#). [Log out?](#)

Submit Comment

Subscribe to comments:

Notify me of followup comments via e-mail. You can also [subscribe](#) without commenting.

You can [manage the subscriptions](#) of this entry.

ARCHIVES

Select Month

CATEGORIES

Select Category

SITE MAP

[BK Wine Site Map](#)

SEARCH

Search...



ALL BKWINE SITES

- **BKWine Magazine:**
www.BKWine.com
- **BKWine Wine Tours:**
www.BKWineTours.com
- **BKWine Vinresor (svenska):**
www.BKWineVinresor.com
- **BKWine Photography:**
www.BKWinePhotography.com

META

- [Site Admin](#)
- [Log out](#)
- [Entries RSS](#)
- [Comments RSS](#)
- [WordPress.org](#)