

## ***Randazzo, Province of Catania***

*Established: early 1900's*

*Owners: Massimiliano Calabretta*

*Winemaker: Massimiliano Calabretta*

*Production: 20,000 bottles*

*Hectares under vine: 10*

*Viticulture: Natural*

*Vegan Friendly*



Mount Etna is Europe's highest volcano and one of the world's most active. 'a Muntagna, as the locals call it, is rich in mineral components and the microclimate – cool nights, warm days and wide ranging temperature variations – endow the wines with extraordinary richness, minerality, fragrance and depth. After World War II many of the vineyards were abandoned until the 1990's, when a group of young winemakers started reviving the 100 plus year old gnarly vines.

Massimiliano Calabretta is the fourth generation of his family to produce wine on Mount Etna. Beginning in the early 1900's, the family made wine and shipped it north to supply their wine shops in Genova. Massimiliano is part natural winemaker/philosopher who, in his day job, is a Professor of Electrical Power Engineering, specialising in Nuclear Fusion.

The vineyards are located on the northern side between Randazzo and Solicchiata, all planted albarello, mostly 80+ years old and the majority on piede franco (ungrafted rootstock). No chemicals or pesticides have ever been used and the wines are fermented naturally. The downside is that quantities are low and the wines are highly sought after around the world.

### The vineyards and Contrada

The vineyards are located on the northern side between Randazzo and Solicchiata. They are all planted alberello (bush vines) and mostly old vines grown piede franco (ungrafted rootstock).

Like Barolo or Burgundy, Etna has a number of cru areas, called contrada. Contrade (plural) are defined by their elevation, soil and the various lava flows (type and age).

Calderara/Taccione (Randazzo): sandy soil with on a bed of stones. The wines need long ageing.

Passopisciaro (Castiglione di Sicilia): historical contrada of Etna able to express very deep & structured wines. The soil has more sand and less stones. Around 680 metres.

Solicchiata (Castiglione di Sicilia): higher elevation at 780 metres. A lot of lava sand, wines are elegant and perfumed.

### In the cantina

Natural yeast, minimal sulphur, no new wood and very hands off sums up the approach in the cantina. In addition, following a disagreement with the DOC as to what constitutes a 'typical' Etna Rosso, Massimiliano bottles everything as IGT Sicilia.

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## **Bianco IGT**

Made from 95%+ Carricante with a little Catarratto, Grecanico and Insolia that are mixed in the vineyard. One third of the vines are 60-80 years old. Steely intensity with lemon zest and juice with white flowers and pronounced minerality, this is crisp and dry with refreshing acidity.

## **Rosato IGT**

From the youngest vineyards in Calderara, this is 100% Nerello Mascalese and a deeper colour than most with strawberry and orange reflections. Its quite savoury with notes of blood orange, cranberry, olive and spice, the palate refreshing with a saline finish.

## **Gaio Gaio IGT**

From Calderara, this is a juicy unoaked red that is super refreshing. Crunchy red fruits with spice and floral notes, it's a great introduction to Nerello Mascalese, Etna and Calabretta.

## **Nerello Cappuccio IGT**

Nerello Cappuccio is typically blended with Nerello Mascalese and rarely made as a varietal wine. Compared to Mascalese it is more difficult to grow (susceptible to disease), ripens earlier, has more colour and less tannin. But at Calabretta it's a wine of intrigue and charm. Rich with perfumed red-black fruits and sweet floral notes, the palate is generous and soft but not without elegance.

## **Vecchie Vigne IGT**

The flagship wine and first made in 1997, there is nothing on Etna like Vecchie Vigne. From Calderara Sottana and Taccione and aged in botti for up to eight or nine years, the current vintage is 2014! Although the wine leans towards more secondary characters of leather, tobacco, earth and spice, there's also a freshness that is completely different to a bottle aged wine.

## **Sara IGT**

From Feudo di Mezzo in Passopisciaro, Sara displays all the energy and nervy backbone of Etna with fresh strawberry fruit, herbs and blood orange. The palate is almost racy in its freshness, finishing long and fine.

## **Nonna Concetta IGT**

From Contrada Passopisciaro and named after Massimiliano's grandmother, this is a tiny parcel (.4 of a hectare) of 100+ year old vines. Concetta has a core of sweet fruit that although concentrated, is far from heavy. Rich and ripe with notes of balsam and spice, there are on average less than 1000 bottles per vintage.

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