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## Palmento Costanzo “Contrada Cavaliere” Etna DOC Bianco

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**Winery:** Palmento Costanzo  
**Category:** Wine – Still – White  
**Grape Variety:** 100% Carricante  
**Region:** Etna/ Sicily/ Italy  
**Vineyard:** Contrada Cavaliere, Santa Maria di Licodia  
**Winery established:** 2011  
**Feature:** Organic  
**Awards:** 91 Vinous (2019)



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### Product Information

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**Soil:** Black, brownish volcanic sands and volcanic rocks. Rich in organic substances. Southern exposure.

**Elevation:** 950 meters (3,117 feet)

**Age of Vines:** up to 100 years old

**Plantation density:** on average 7,000 plants/ hectare

**Vinification:** Hand-harvested in the first week of October. Soft pressing and fermentation in stainless-steel tanks with indigenous yeast. Aged for 12 months in stainless steel and tonneaux in contact with the fine lees and 8 months in the bottle.

**Tasting Note:** Straw yellow color with green nuances, with an intense, rich and ample bouquet of orange blossom, citrus and tropical fruits with oregano and flinty notes. It is mineral and sinuous with a pleasant acidity and a sapid finish.

The Contrada Cavaliere was born from a desire to embark on a journey of discovery of the different slopes of Mount Etna, a multifaceted territory that amazes and delights us for its biodiversity and unique pedoclimatic conditions. Located in one of the districts on the southwest slope of the mountain near Santa Maria di Licodia, Contrada Cavaliere benefits from an arid climate, significant diurnal temperature variations due to its high elevation, and an increased number of sunlight hours. Contrada Cavaliere tells a distinct side of Etna’s story. It is the farthest vineyard area from the Ionian sea, with fine-grain soils that are structurally complex and very fertile. Here, generous and intense wines are born, with richer and more succulent flavors and an underlying enchanting harmony.

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### Producer Information

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A palmento is the traditional winemaking structure in Sicily. Regulations eventually led nearly all palmentos to be converted for other uses, such as for storage or restaurants, but since Palmento Costanzo is located within Mt Etna National Park, it remained untouched as a protected historical structure. Mimmo and Valeria are a Sicilian couple whose devotion to the traditions of Mt Etna led them, starting in 2011, to lovingly restore the palmento as a functioning winemaking structure once more.

The palmento is far from the only ancient treasure on this site, with vines that are up to 120 years old! Bush-trained in the “alberello” style, each piede franco vine is supported by the traditional chestnut poles. The vines are arranged in the quinconze system, the Italian word for the pattern seen in the dots on the five side of a die. A sensible geometry for fitting vines into a narrow mountain terrace, the arrangement also lets each vine see sun all day, without being shaded by its sisters. Close spacing--a meter and a bit apart--causes enough competition to send roots down deep into the cool, mineral-rich earth below. This training system also reflects the historic proportional grape blends; for instance, red grapes are arranged with four Nerello Mascalese plants surrounding a central Nerello Cappuccio.

Palmento Costanzo is on the north side of Mount Etna, near the town of Passopisciaro. The town’s name means “to walk the sciara,” referring to the rocky volcanic substance that makes up the winery’s structures as well as the vineyards’ dry stone terraces. A certain number of years after an eruption, yellow flowers called “ginestra” are the first signs of life that show it will be time to plant the vines. An inspiration for the color of one of their wine labels, the ginestra are also an excellent symbol for the spirit of rejuvenation endemic to Mt. Etna--and defined by Valeria & Mimmo’s labor of love.