
Palmento Costanzo “Contrada Santo Spirito” Etna DOC Rosso

Winery: Palmento Costanzo
Category: Wine – Still – Red
Grape Variety: 90% Nerello Mascalese, 10% Nerello Cappuccio
Region: Etna/ Sicily/ Italy
Vineyard: Contrada Santo Spirito, Passopisciaro
Winery established: 2011
Feature: Organic
Awards: 93 James Suckling, 94 Decanter (2019)



Product Information

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

Elevation: 720 -780 meters (2,362 – 2,560 feet)

Age of Vines: up to 100 years old

Plant density: on average 7,000 vines/hectare

Vinification: The best bunches from the oldest vines are carefully selected, following the manual harvest at the end of October. The wine is fermented in truncated cone-shaped oak vats with indigenous yeast. Malolactic fermentation fully runs. Aged for 24 months in French Oak barrels (Ovum) and 12 months in the bottle.

Tasting Note: With a brilliant ruby red color, a rich and elegant nose with hints of red fruits, cherry and nuances of spices and flint, it is enveloping in the mouth, with firm and well-integrated tannins, long and persistent with a pleasantly mineral finish.

Palmento Costanzo’s Contrada Santo Spirito comes from a selection of its oldest vines and brings the name of the district to which it belongs. It is a wine of great depth that authentically communicates the pedoclimatic conditions as well as the historical and cultural traditions of the Northern slope of the volcano.

Alc: 13.5%

Producer Information

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. Today they are joined by their daughter Serena as the next generation.

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 owns 18 hectares (44.5 acres), 12 hectares (30 acres) of which are in Contrada Santo Spirito, in the town of Passopisciaro, on the north side of Mount Etna. The town’s name means “to walk the sciarà,” 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.