
Palmento Costanzo “Contrada Santo Spirito” Etna DOC Bianco

Winery: Palmento Costanzo
Category: Wine – Still – Red
Grape Variety: 100% Carricante
Region: Etna/ Sicily/ Italy
Vineyard: Contrada Santo Spirito, Passopisciaro
Winery established: 2011
Feature: Organic
Awards: 93+ Vinous, 92 Wine Enthusiast, 90 James Suckling (2020)



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: Hand-harvest in the last week of September. Soft pressing and fermentation in stainless steel tanks and wood. Aged for 12 months in stainless steel and tonneaux on the fine lees and 12 months in the bottle.
Tasting Note: Straw yellow colour with golden nuances, with an elegant and complex bouquet with citrus hints predominated by white pulp fruits and hints of mineral notes. On the palate it is persistent, with a good acidity and a pleasant sapid finish.
Alc: 13.0%

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.