
Palmento Costanzo “Prefillossera” 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: 94 Vinous, 94 James Suckling, 95 Decanter, Bibenda Five Grapes (2019)



Product Information

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

Elevation: 750 meters (2,460 feet)

Age of Vines: The estate’s oldest vines, over 100 years old

Plantation density: on average 8,000 vines/hectare

Vinification: The best bunches from the oldest vines are carefully selected, following the manual harvest in the middle of October. The wine is fermented with indigenous yeast and prolonged maceration in 500L rotative French oak barrels. Aged for 24 months in 500 L French Oak barrels and 12 months in the bottle.

Tasting Note: Ruby red colour with a rich and deep bouquet of red berries and volcanic ash combined with intense balsamic and flinty scents. Powerful and persistent on the palate, with velvety tannins and a pleasant sapid finish.

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 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.