

*Pinot Noir
special*

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LOCAL HEROES

A new generation intent on showing the true potential of Sicily's indigenous grapes is transforming its reputation around the world. Stephen Brook and Mark O'Halleron introduce some of the island's outstanding producers



Feudo Montoni

Fabio Sireci, the owner of this remote organic property high in the hills of central Sicily, was surprised to receive a phone call some 10 years ago from renowned winemaking consultant Giacomo Tachis (*Decanter's* Man of the Year in 2011, see p75).

Sireci (pictured left), had never met Tachis, who had been examining the various styles of Nero d'Avola produced in Sicily. Not only did Tachis admire Feudo Montoni's wine, but he had found documentary evidence in a book on agriculture published in 1595 that Cammarata, the area where Montoni is based, was highly regarded back then for the excellence of its wine. 'My vineyards,' says Sireci, 'have very old vines, mostly propagated by massal selections. So it's quite possible that my Nero d'Avola could be a direct descendant of the vines admired more than four centuries ago. I farm organically, and the last thing I want to do is manipulate nature.'

The wine that excited Tachis was the old-vine selection, Vrucara. Sireci first made it in 1999 and ages it in older oak to preserve its purity of flavour. Although overshadowed by Vrucara, the estate's white wines are worthy of note too, benefitting from the vineyards' elevation; both the Grillo and Catarratto are lemony and vigorous. **SB**



A TASTE OF SICILY

Stephen Brook and Mark O'Halleron recommend a selection of Sicily's most exciting wines. See p108 for stockist details

Red



Feudo Montoni, Vrucara Nero d'Avola 2006
★★★★ 18
N/A UK www.feudomontoni.it
Aromas of plums, eucalyptus and mocha. Rich, textured and spicy, with acidity to give finesse, and great concentration and depth. Refined and long. **Drink:** 2012-2015. **Alc:** 13.5%



Firriato, Ribeca 2008 ★★★★★ 18
£19.99 Continental Wine & Food
Sweet, juicy black cherry nose with some oak. Concentrated and structured but elegant, with fine-grained tannins. Lifted, refined and long. **Drink:** 2012-2015. **Alcohol:** 14.5%



Gulfi, Neromaccari 2007 ★★★★★ 18
£31.99 (2005) Hanford, Planet of the Grapes, Vineking
Concentrated and rich with a ripe strawberry fruit and spice nose. Sweet and spicy palate of brambly fruit and good acidity to balance. **Drink:** 2012-2014. **Alc:** 14.5%



Morgante, Don Antonio Nero d'Avola 2006
★★★★ 18
£19.80 (2005) Nicholls & Perks, The Wine Treasury
Vibrant oaky nose, with cherry and plum fruit. Tight, concentrated and forceful, with fine acidity and length. **Drink:** 2012-2015. **Alc:** 14%



Planeta, Santa Cecilia Nero d'Avola 2007
★★★★ 18
£19.28-£21.75 Carluccio, Exel, Hallsam Cellars, Secret Cellar, Slurp, Swig
Lush cherry nose, chocolatey yet elegant. Suave and spicy with complexity and grip from the ripe tannins. **Drink:** 2012-2016. **Alc:** 14%



Tenuta di Fessina, Il Musmeci, Etna Rosso 2008 ★★★★★ 18
£31.90 Outis
100-year-old Mascalcese and Cappuccio vines produce fantastic concentration and notes of sweet red cherry, cranberry, freshly turned earth and aniseed. **Drink:** 2012-2016. **Alc:** 14%



Cusumano, Noa Nero d'Avola-Cabernet Sauvignon-Merlot 2006 ★★★★★ 17.5
£33 Harrods
Rich, plummy, oaky nose. Plump, concentrated and quite powerful, almost jammy but with ample acidity and spice. Good length. **Drink:** 2012-2015. **Alc:** 14%



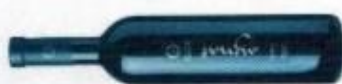
Donnafugata, Tancredi Nero d'Avola-Cabernet Sauvignon 2007 ★★★★★ 17.5
£25.45-£30 widely available via Liberty Wines
Very ripe black fruits nose with ample sweet oak. Rich, supple and concentrated, with firm tannins, solid and structured. Good length. **Drink:** 2012-2017. **Alc:** 13.4%



Gulfi, Nerojbleo 2008 ★★★★★ 17.5
£16.99-£17.75 Hangingditch, Old Forge Cellar
100% Nero d'Avola. Condensed, nutty tones on a concentrated nose of forest fruits and dried flowers. Strong and structured with plenty of drive. **Drink:** 2012-2017. **Alc:** 14%



Tasca d'Almerita, Rosso del Conte 2006
★★★★ 17.5
£39.95-£45.99 AdVintage, Berkman, Elite Wine, Harrods, Slurp, Swig, Wine Direct
Lush cherry and blackberry nose, very oaky. Fresh acidity enlivens dense, ripe fruit. Long, elegant finish. **Drink:** 2012-2016. **Alc:** 14%



Viticoltori Associati Canicatti, Aynat Nero d'Avola 2008 ★★★★★ 17.5
£14.84 Vinum
Lush, savoury black cherry nose. Full bodied, chocolatey and velvety, forceful but has ample acidity and freshness. Long, with a mocha finish. **Drink:** 2012-2015. **Alc:** 14.5%



COS, Frappato 2010 ★★★★★ 17
£14.95-£18.69 AG Wines, Bat & Bottle, Bottle Apostle, Caves de Pyrène, Joseph Barnes, Swig, Ultimate Wine Co, Vagabond, Zelas
Fantastic perfume with flowers and wild strawberry and amazing vitality. Fluid, smooth and charming. **Drink:** 2012-2016. **Alc:** 12.5%



Nicosia, Fondo Filara, Merello Mascalcese 2009 ★★★★★ 17
£10.95 Jeroboams, Laytons
Aged in steel, concrete, barriques and large casks, this wine has a balsamic nose and a breezy acidity with layers of red fruits packing a velvety punch. **Drink:** 2012-2015. **Alc:** 13%



Cottanera, Etna Rosso 2008 ★★★★★ 16.5
£27 Astrum
Poised and pure, with clean wild strawberry and red cherry aromas. Silky in the mouth, with precise red fruits complemented by a gamey edge. **Drink:** 2012-2014. **Alc:** 13.5%