

450+

WINES  
REVIEWED

OREGON  
PINOT NOIR

FRENCH  
BISTRO FARE

SICILIAN  
WHITE WINE

ENGLISH  
FIZZ

# WINE ENTHUSIAST

NOVEMBER 2020

TOP

# 100

Wines  
for \$15  
or less

# BEST

# BUYS

2020



\$6.99 US & CANADA

\$0.99US \$0.99CAN



Winemag.com

NIGHTHAWK  
BLACK  
RICH  
RED WINE BLEND



**Zibibbo** (Zee-BEE-boe), **Inzolia** (In-SOLE-eeah) and **Grecanico** (grek-A-NEE-koe)

Also called Moscato d'Alessandria, Zibibbo has been cultivated in Sicily since Phoenician times. It's found namely in the Trapani province, which includes the island of Pantelleria.

In the past, it was consumed mainly as fresh table grapes or raisins. As a wine grape, it's used traditionally for sweet, aromatic wines like Passito di Pantelleria.

Made with dried grapes, this celebrated dessert wine features aromas and flavors of honey, figs, nuts and dried apricots that are balanced by good acidity. Some firms like Donnafugata make dry versions that are crisp and highly aromatic. They boast aromas of citrus, yellow peach and white rose.

Inzolia, or Insoila, is another one of Sicily's historic white grapes. It's also found in coastal areas in Tuscany, where it's known as Ansonica.

Traditionally one of the three key grapes for Marsala production, it's often blended with Catarratto and Grillo in a number of Sicilian appellations. Known for its mild acidity, site selection and grapes harvested at ideal ripeness, but before acidity slumps, are crucial.

When made with precision, Inzolia on its own can yield bright wines with flavors of white stone fruit, salinity and a nutty aftertaste.

"Inzolia is considered the Cinderella of wine, often undervalued, so much so that it is difficult to find in purity, and is often blended with more aromatic grapes, like Chardonnay or Grillo," says Fabio Sereci, owner of Feudo Montoni. "Our 'Cinderella' at Montoni, [almost 2,000 feet] above sea level, grows in clay and sandy soil, giving us a wine with a strong aromatic impact and a sensuality on the palate accompanied by strong acidity, due to vineyard altitude. It's a Cinderella that becomes a princess."

Late-ripening Grecanico (or Grecanico Dorato) is planted across Sicily. DNA testing carried out in 2003 and 2008 confirms that the variety is identical to northern Italy's Garganega, the main grape found in Veneto's Soave.

Wines produced with Grecanico feature floral aromas and apple, pear and lemony flavors. They can have soft textures energized by tangy acidity and savory saline notes.

Located in Vittoria in the east, COS's Pithos Bianco is a fascinating expression. Fermented and aged in terracotta amphora, it's dry and smooth, with apricot, honey and lemon drop notes. Thanks to notable acidity, top Grecanico wines can age for several years or more.

**92** COS 2018 Pithos Bianco (Terre Siciliane); \$38. Polaner Selections.

**90** Feudo Montoni 2019 Fornelli Inzolia (Sicilia); \$23. Wilson Daniels Ltd.

**88** Donnafugata 2019 Lighea Zibibbo (Sicilia); \$22. Folio Fine Wine Partners.