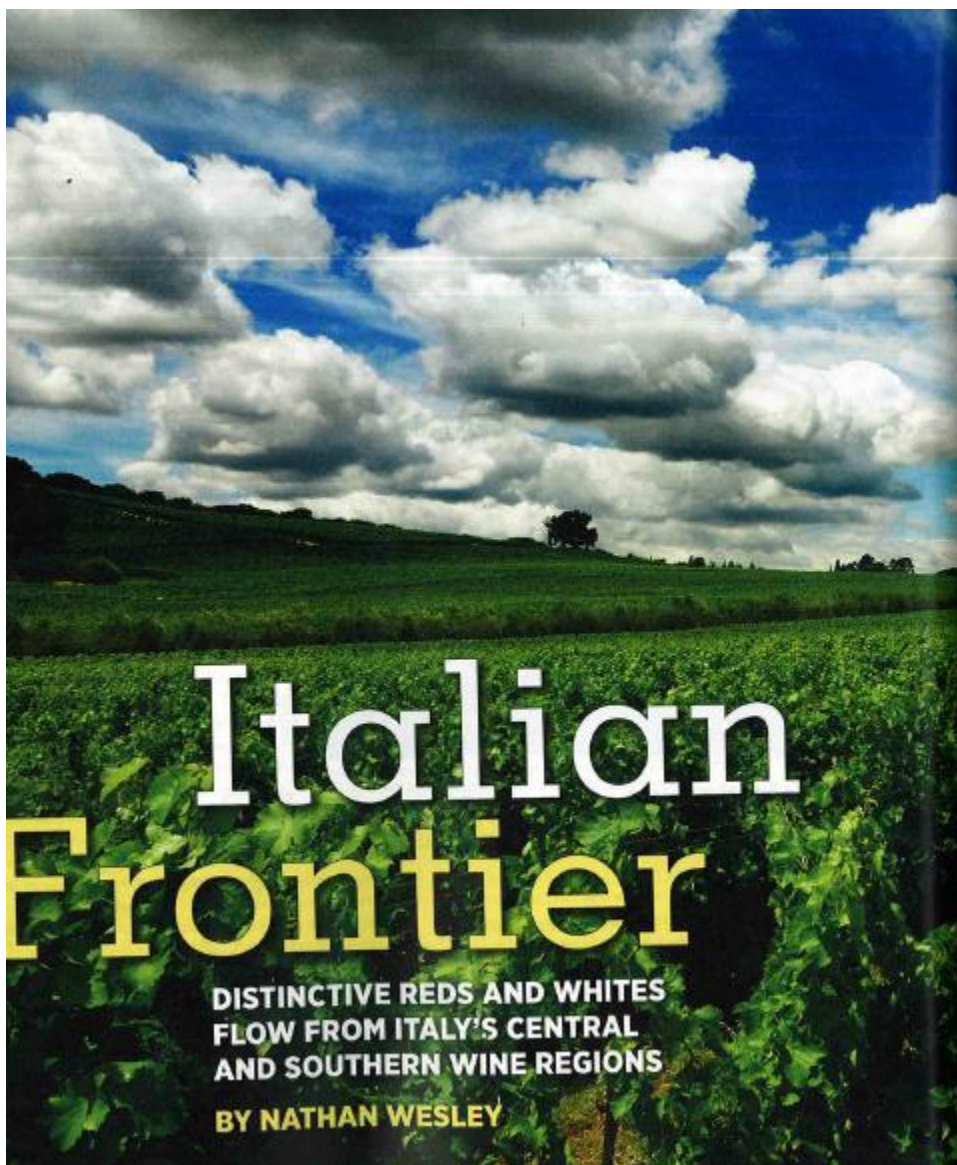




Wine Spectator

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CAMPANIA AND BASILICATA

Campania is well-known for its sunny, scenic coastline, but the heart of the region's wine production is inland, in the mountainous Irpinia subregion. Centered around the town of Avellino, vineyards range from 1,200 feet to more than 2,200 feet above sea level, where volcanic soils and long, cool summers combine to create ideal conditions for ripening the white Fiano and

Greco grapes and the late-ripening red Aglianico.

Fiano and Greco make up the top whites in Campania. Whereas whites from Fiano are elegant and chalky, featuring a core of green melon fruit, Greco is typically more assertive and aromatic, with spicy lemon-lime notes. Most of the best examples come from the Fiano di Avellino and Greco di Tufo DOCG appellations, respectively.

Donnachiara, which was founded in 2005, offers fine examples of each wine. The winery also bottles the late-harvest Fiano Campania Esoterico 2011 (94, \$23/500ml) and Greco Campania Ostinato 2011 (93, \$25/500ml), wines that technically fall outside of DOCG regulations but that push each variety's limit of concentration and complexity. "We want to be young and modern, but honor the tradition of our family," says owner Ilaria Petitto, whose family has a long history of grapegrowing in the area.



Producers Antonio Caggiano and Terredora di Paolo also craft excellent whites, especially from Greco. Caggiano uses a touch of oak to add smoke and spice, while Terredora di Paolo sourced the grapes for its Greco di Tufo Loggia Della Serra 2011 (90, \$21) from one of the highest vineyards in the region, fermenting and aging the wine on its lees in stainless steel to achieve a clean, precise expression.

Taurasi, the rich, earthy red made from Aglianico, is one of the country's last appellations to be harvested each year. The grape, which is usually picked in late October to early November, exhibits deep color, concentrated wild black fruits, earthy ash notes and full tannins.

Mastroberardino, a historic winery that was the region's only major producer until the mid-1980s, sets the benchmark with its compact and complex Taurasi Radici Riserva 2006 (94, \$75). The wine is aged 30 months in a mix of small *barrisques* and large casks and an additional 42 months in bottle before release. (For more on this producer and others in Irpinia, see "Southern Maestros," page 102.)

Quality and diversity are abundant throughout the Taurasi ap-



pellation today, making it one of the country's top sources of ageworthy reds. Collectors can also look to Salvatore Molettieri, Rocca del Principe, Contrade di Taurasi, Donnachiara, Feudi di San Gregorio, Quintodecimo, Antonio Caggiano, Colli di Lapio, Vesevo, Villa Raiano, I Capitani and Terredora di Paolo for outstanding bottles.

Aglianico is also the principal grape in Basilicata's main appellation, Aglianico del Vulture, situated at the foot of the active Mount Vulture volcano in the region's northern corner between Campania and Puglia. The terrain is especially rugged and dry, with large diurnal temperature swings created by hot African winds during the day and cool, mountain breezes at night.

Aglianico del Vulture is made using different clones than those employed for its Campanian counterpart. "Aglianico in Basilicata has thinner skins

and has to be treated more like Pinot Noir,” says Pierpaolo Sirch, general manager at Feudi di San Gregorio, which bottles a version and has also recently acquired local producer Basilisco.

In general, the wines emphasize the refined side of the grape and feature pure wild berry fruit, underbrush and mineral notes. With a finer grade of tannins than Taurasi, they’re more approachable when young, and they’re also considerably less expensive than most Taurasi versions.

Macarico made two top-scoring wines from the appellation in this report. Both its Aglianico del Vulture 2007 (93, \$38) and Aglianico del Vulture Macari’ 2007 (92, \$25) are ripe, modern versions, with licorice, tobacco and hot stone notes rounding out the finishes. For those looking for a more traditional take, Tenuta del Portale’s Aglianico del Vulture 2010 (90, \$20) shows ample game, spice and bramble flavors on a minerally frame.



Donnachiaro owner Ilaria Petitto makes concentrated, earthy reds from Aglianico in Campania’s Taurasi appellation.