

Lamoresca 'Nerocapitano' 2020

Producer - Filippo Rizzo

Provenance: Catania, Sicily

Farming: Organic - dry farmed

Grape(s): 100% Frappato (Nerocapitano)

Vineyard: 6 hectares of vineyards at 450 m elevation with different pockets of calcium and a iron rich clay, silex and sand.

Vintage: Filippo tells us 2020 was a wild but great year. Insane heat and drought during the summer. He hedged his bets and watched the forecast closely leading into harvest, opting to leave the grapes on late while waiting for some much needed rains which eventually did come.

Fermentation/ Aging: Destemmed and fermented in pastic 'tini' with twice daily punchdowns during fermentation and pressed using a manual basket press into concrete tanks for aging. Racked at least three times.

Fining/ Filtration: none

Sulfite: Small amounts added at bottling when necessitated by lab analysis and intuition.



The Producer:

In 2004, restaurateur Filippo Rizzo purchased an old vineyard of Nero d'Avola, his first step 'to make my passion my job.' 15 vintages later with 6 hectares under vine he smiles humbly and tells us "now, I begin to learn." Filippo is a dyed-in-the-wool neotraditionalist, honoring the Catanian highlands through traditional olive oil and wine. "I use the same technique that I used in the restaurant to make a good plate; you need good ingredients" and with the right raw material you can "work simple and clean in the cellar. We don't need a lot of technique." These are wines that are proud and extroverted but never boastful, made with old-fashioned methods and genuine handwork celebrating the charms of the Sicilian highlands.

The Vineyard

Filippo's 25 hectare farm is located in San Michele di Ganzaria in the southern corner of Catania. He began in 2004 with the acquisition of a 1 hectare vineyard of 50+ year old Nero d'Avola vines. He has purchased additional old vineyards of mostly Frappato and Nero d'Avola and since 2005 he has been planting additional vines including Vermintino, Zibibo (Alexandrian Muscat) and about 500 plants of Grenache, a favorite of Filippo's even though it's not traditional to the area.

The farm rests at about 450 meters elevation, a great deal higher up than the Vittorian terroir most commonly associated with Frappato and Nero d'Avola. There is a mix of different pockets of clay, sand and silex with the Frappato mostly planted on the sandier parts to help temper the ripeness. The farm exists in a microclimate defined by cold, acidity preserving winds that retain freshness in the wines.

In addition to vines, he has just shy of 10 hectares of olive groves of the Tonda Iblea and Moresca varieties as well as prickly pears. Every year he plants a little less than a half hectare of vines, the maximum allowed by the government.

The Cellar

Filippo always starts his wines with a pied de cuve, an early-picked spontaneous ferment used to 'seed' a larger fermentation to allow for greater surety without inoculating yeast or bacteria. He destems the hand harvested Frappato into plastic 'tini' for natural fermentation. At the end of fermentation (sometimes before if tannins are too intense) he uses an old-fashioned manual basket press, an ideal tool in Filippo's mind for softly pressing the must back to avoid pulling 'sharp tannins.' The wine is aged in concrete through the winter and is racked at least three times. He does not believe in filtering ever but he will sometimes use miniscule doses of sulfite at bottling in order to protect the wine for travel depending on pH and VA.

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