

# T H E W I N E R Y

## FLASH ETNA TASTING *with Alice Bonaccorsi* 15.05.22

A Winery tasting on a Sunday evening? We simply had to take advantage of Alice Bonaccorsi's trip to London. We have hopefully scooped her up from the RAW wine fair at Aldwych and hope to be at The Winery in Clifton Road at 19.00h. We will stay open a bit later than normal.

Living on a live volcano may seem nuts, but the growers on Mount Etna, Sicily, see it differently. The presence of "The Etna" is not some angry god of fire and destruction, dark, brooding and malignant but more a thing of Mother Nature, warm and fertile, gently spewing lava which will recharge and renew the soil with rich mineral nutrients. If you ask the locals what the loud daily siren is for, they will say "time to go to the fields to work". We suspect it's a test for, and a reminder of, possible eruptions. In any case, it's a remarkable place. "The Etna" is visible from far away, although whenever we visit, the peak is covered in cloud or mist.

Unusually for the northern hemisphere, the northern, north-facing slope is considered finer than the eastern or southern slopes (there are no vines on the west side). In the sweetest, sweet spot you find Val Cerasa (valley of cherries).

Long, hot summers with massive temperature differences between night and day, harsh, biting winters, lush, fertile, volcanic soils make the Etna a unique place to make wine.

Alice Bonaccorsi's family has owned land planted with vineyards on Etna's slopes since 1793. Alice trained as an agronomist and, with the help of her husband Rosario Pappalardo, made her first bottlings in 1997 at Benanti, the well-known Etna estate. Happy with the results, they bought their startling, terraced vineyard near Randazzo in 2000.

Now organic, wild yeasts and used oak barrels (never new ones) help the elegance and purity of the fruit and the volcanic terroir shine through.

### **Valcerasa Etna Bianco 2018, Alice Bonaccorsi (Sicily/Italy) ORGANIC 33.99**

The first is a fascinating white. The grape is Caricante, native to Sicily and mainly used on the Etna. The vines are old and gnarly, the soil is sandy and (unsurprisingly) volcanic. She picks quite late, in the middle two weeks of October.

We find her white wine oily, with hints of grapefruit and orange zest, good acidity and a savoury, almost salty finish.

### **Valcerasa Carricante 2019, Alice Bonaccorsi (Sicily/Italy) ORGANIC**

Alice has given us a couple of bottles of the next vintage.

### **Valcerasa Etna Rosso 2016, Alice Bonaccorsi (Sicily/Italy) ORGANIC 33.99**

This is the wine that brought us to her door. Old vine Nerello Mascalese 80% and Nerello Cappuccio 20% become ethereal and expressive on the cooler, northern side of the Etna between 750-850m in elevation.

Despite what the alcohol reading may suggest (14.5%), it has elegance and purity. There is freshness, good tannic structure and a long finish. It's a wine that can age effortlessly.

### **Valcerasa Etna Rosso 2017, Alice Bonaccorsi (Sicily/Italy) ORGANIC**

A chance to try the next vintage.

**LUNAR CALENDAR OBSERVERS** – today is a **Flower Day**.

Our following full **monthly tasting** will be on **Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> May** here at The Winery, Clifton Road.

