

Fattorie Romeo del Castello

Profile

Proprietors Rosanna Romeo and her daughter Chiara Vigo are taking Etna's historic Fattorie Romeo del Castello to a higher level.

The 14 hectare estate is surrounded by a 20 foot wall of petrified lava formed from an eruption in 1981, one of Etna's most vicious. The stream that forms the wall was headed directly towards the vineyards and house, but miraculously took an abrupt right turn before extinguishing itself into the Alcantara river. Though 15 hectares of land were scorched, luckily their 100 year old vineyard of Nerello Mascalese was spared. And to top it off, the wall of lava has modified the vines' exposure to wind, creating a unique micro-climate! On a lower plateau, young vines of Mascalese from massale selection have been planted over the last decade, for a total of 14 hectares at 700m elevation.

All of the vines are trained in albarelo (goblet), the traditional cultivation method of the region. In Chiara's beginnings, she was heavily assisted in the vineyards by [Salvo Foti's I Vigneri team](#) of workers, as well as Salvo in the cellar. The grapes are hand-harvested, fermented in open wood vats for *Vigo* and stainless steel for *Allegracore*, without yeasts, enzymes, or temperature control. Sulfur is used sparingly, if at all. *Vigo*, a Riserva made only in exceptional vintages, is aged in older oak casks for about 14 months then bottled without fining or filtration. The *Vigo* shows all the remarkable characteristics and potential of this perfect match of terroir (pure volcanic ash and lava flow) and a delicious grape variety only found in this corner of the world. How great are the soils here? A thousand year old olive tree survives in them.