

Napa Valley *Register*



The View from Italy by Chiara Giorleo

An emerging wine region in Italy: Calabria

About 2000 years ago Magno Megonio -refined centurion of the roman age- left a vine to his heirs through the oldest document about wine making and viticulture ever found; it was carved on marble columns and still today it is stored in Strongoli's Cathedral. We are talking about Calabria in the south of Italy. A less known wine region which is silently growing.

Let's make rumor about that, wonderful wines and, above all, wonderful people deserve to be communicated worldwide. Only 27,181 acres with a limited production, compared to other Italian regions, Calabria offers more than 100 indigenous grapes, the highest number in Italy.

Easy to pick my favorite wineries: Terre Nobili runned by the charismatic Lidia Matera and Ceraudo runned by the gentlemen Roberto Ceraudo with his agritourism and even a one star Michelin restaurant!

Lidia Matera is a strong Italian woman running her own business and producing few wines, one better than the other! An aromatic white wine with a perfectly balanced acidity "Santa Chiara", "Donn'eleono" a very fruity rosè and 2 different red wines: "Cariglio" a basic one, young and lighter and the other "Alarico" aged in barrique to obtain a more complex and bodied red perfect to be paired to the very hot red pepper of this land! But my attention is captured by the last wine, just released by Lidia: "Teodora". This is one of the few long aged wines in Calabria; although the strong character of their terroir and in particular the hot temperatures which offer very tannic (red) grapes they still do not believe in aged red wines. Lidia is demonstrating this is wrong: "Teodora" (100% nerello, local grape) ages 2 years in French oak barriques: "the right time to balance fruity and wood flavor" states proudly Lidia. She also has elegant labels and style.

On the other hand, Roberto Ceraudo: a wonderful man, strongly tied to his territory. He really cares about biodiversity managing to find a great balance between the typical character of the territory and the international style to satisfy all the palates. So, he produces a classic stainless white "Petelia" made by local grapes as well as the 2 Grayasusy rosè wines: only one of the 2 refined in French barrique and finally "Dattilo" a pure local and complex red. At the same time he also produces "Imyr", a Chardonnay aged in French oak for some months and a blend of Cabernet and the local Gaglioppo, light and fruity red. Not only, Roberto has invested a lot in his agritourism a

wonderful and quite accommodation surrounded by vineyards and a peaceful atmosphere perfectly completed by the fine restaurant who gained 1 star Michelin! One of his daughters in the kitchen is able to prepare sophisticated recipes from the entrée till the dessert. Roberto produces also a great oil, served lightly refrigerated to allow the customer to spread it on the bread.

Beyond some few exceptions, the wine tourism in Calabria is not very well developed yet. I like to mention another great Chef where I have enjoyed a great lunch too: Pietro Lecce and his La Tavernetta. Well managed thanks also to his professional son Emanuele.

They have one of the biggest cellars in Calabria: more than 1200 labels included the prestigious and rare Romanee Conti.