

# WINE



# TLL CL UB

## **DAMA DEL ROVERE 2016 SOAVE CLASSICO, ITALY**

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100% Garganega

Dama del Rovere was born with 2003-vintage in Brognoligo di Monteforte d'Alpone, a historical Soave Classico zone in the province of Verona. The winery's name comes from the small Statue of the Madonna, depicted on the bottles label, that lies in an oak-tree in Tremenalto area where we the family owns 4 hectares of vines planted starting in 1945. Soave wines are produced exclusively from the Garganega grapes which are native to Soave zone.

From its perch at the top of the world, Dama del Rovere sets itself apart from the Soave masses with high-altitude vineyards, strict attention to yields and vibrant, character-rich white wines that are the benchmarks of quality for the Soave Classico appellation.

The Pra family owns and works in one of the highest-altitude cellars in the entire Veneto, some 1,500 feet above sea level. Family-owned vineyards, dedicated to local grape varieties Garganega and Durella, also share this wind-swept, refined perch. At this altitude, it's easy to see just how much higher this family sits above the lower-land and lower-quality sea of simple Soave wines.



**JANUARY 2018**

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## VALLE DELL'ACATE 2016 VITTORIA FRAPPATO, ITALY

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100% Frappato

The Sicilian winery of Valle dell'Acate has a long and storied history amongst the top estates in Sicily, as the Jacono family can trace back their winemaking roots here to the nineteenth century. It is located in the southeastern corner of Sicily, on the elegant Bidini Manor in the hills of the Dirillo Valley. The estate comprises over one hundred hectares of land, both for grapevines as well as Sicily's famous blood oranges. Under the direction of the current head of the family winery, the talented and dedicated Gaetana Jacono, many of the vineyards have been replanted to the great traditional grapes of Sicily which are farmed organically.

Valle dell'Acate's Il Frappato bottling is comprised, no surprisingly, of one hundred percent Frappato, and aged in stainless steel tank prior to bottling to retain this varietal's lively red-fruited, highly-aromatic and floral profile. As is typical of this grape, the wine is light to medium-bodied and delivers a lovely base of earthy tones from the calcaire, sandstone and clay strata of soils that lie beneath the estate's vineyards.

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# WINE



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## PERILLO 2008 TAURASI, ITALY

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100% Aglianico

From the importer Oliver McCrum:

Taurasi can be glorious, one of Italy's most exciting big red wines, but there are few great examples. We have been lucky to have one, the exceptional small producer Contrade di Taurasi, and now Bacchus has really smiled on us: we are now importing Michele Perillo as well, another excellent small farmer and winemaker. He comes from Castelfranci, in the south-east corner of the appellation, about half an hour away from the town of Taurasi. His first bottled vintage was 1999, before which he sold fruit to other wineries. He grows all of his own fruit, and he vinifies Taurasi, Taurasi Riserva and Coda di Volpe, all of which are expressive, distinctive, carefully made, great examples of their type. Michele Perillo himself is modest, but his enthusiasm for his work is obvious, and our tasting in his cellar recently (2015) was a highlight of our trip to Campania; tasting huge young Aglianico can be bruising to the palate, but these wines were so good you didn't notice.

Three quarters of the Aglianico vineyards were planted in 1930, and are trained in a kind of pergola called 'raggiera', the remainder were planted in 1980. The vines are massal selection, not clones. The soil is a kind of clay, of volcanic origin. The grape is of course Aglianico; the form of Aglianico found in Castelfranci looks different from that of Taurasi, the bunches here are longer and looser, like a horse's tail ('coda di cavallo'). The altitude ranges from 470-500 meters (about 1,600 feet) above sea level, which is high for red wine grapes. The grapes are picked extremely late, in late October or early November, de-stemmed and crushed, then macerated at low temperature for three days before fermentation starts (using indigenous yeast). Maceration is for about 3-4 weeks, depending on the vintage, then the wine is aged in used barriques (the youngest is at least 5 years old) for 12 months, then large barrels (2,000 liter) for another 12 months. Perillo started buying big barrels in 2008. Michele's Taurasi shows the classic Taurasi flavors, red and black fruit, cedar/sandalwood/tobacco aromas and flavors, a savory beefy character, a fair amount of fine tannin (the comparison with Barolo in flavors, structure and ageworthiness is inevitable); what differentiates this from other Taurasi I've tasted is the exuberant fresh acidity, due presumably to the high altitude of the vineyards.



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