

A Great Sicilian Wine Nero d'Avola

Charles Scicolone (October 14, 2015)



Nero d'Avola is an indigenous grape variety of Sicily named after the small town of Avola in the southeast in the province of Siracusa.

The name means "black of Avola." Nero d'Avola is sometimes referred to by the name Calabrese (or 'from Calabria') but this probably derives from the corruption of a Greek-based Siracusan dialect name.

This is not the only explanation of how this confusion of names came about, but one thing is clear and that is that this grape has never been important in Calabria. Nero d'Avola is the most important and most planted red grape variety grown in Sicily. Because it is so popular, Nero d'Avola is cultivated



in other parts of the island and thrives in the hot, dry climate.

The training system for the vines is usually the espalier (trellis) method though some producers are moving away from this system. To make wine, Nero d'Avola frequently is blended with other native grape varieties such as Nerello Mascalese, Frappato and Perricone or with international grapes such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah.

It may be possible that Syrah and Nero d'Avola come from a common ancestor but this has yet to be proven. Wines made from Nero d'Avola can be drunk young when vinified and aged in stainless steel. These wines will have fresh red fruit aromas and flavors with a hint of spice. In the hands of some producers when the wine is aged in wood, it can be made into a wine with a lot of body and aging potential and have hints of raspberries, prunes and a touch of leather. Because of this range of styles, the price range from \$10 to \$40 a bottle. Depending on the way it is made, Nero d'Avola goes well with salumi, red meats, and cheeses.

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