A Great Sicilian Wine Nero d'Avola

Charles Scicolone (October 14, 2015)

Nero d'Avola is anindigenous grape variety ofSicily named after the smalltown of Avola in the southeastin the province of Siracusa.

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

This is not the only explanation ofhow this confusion of namescame about, but one thing is clear and that is that this grapehas never been important inCalabria.Nero d'Avola is the most important and most plantedred grape variety grown inSicily. Because it is so popular, Nero d'Avola is cultivated

inother parts of the island andthrives in the hot, dry climate.

The training system for thevines is usually the espalier(trellis) method though someproducers are moving awayfrom this system. To make wine, Nero d'Avola frequently is blended withother native grape varietiessuch as Nerello Mascalese, Frappato and Perricone or withinternational grapes such asCabernet Sauvignon, Merlotand Syrah.

It may be possiblethat Syrah and Nero d'Avolacome from a common ancestorbut this has yet to be proven.Wines made from Nero d'Avolacan be drunk young whenvinified and aged in stainlesssteel. These wines will havefresh red fruit aromas andflavors with a hint of spice. In the hands of some producerswhen the wine is aged inwood, it can be made into awine with a lot of body andaging potential and have hintsof raspberries, prunes and atouch of leather. Because ofthis range of styles, the pricesrange from $10 to $40 a bottle. Depending on the way it ismade, Nero d'Avola goes wellwith salumi, red meats, and cheeses.

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