

A wide-angle photograph of a volcanic landscape. The foreground and middle ground are dominated by rolling hills of dark red and black volcanic soil. Sparse green vegetation, including small shrubs and mosses, is scattered across the slopes. In the distance, a winding river or stream flows through a valley, surrounded by more green hills. A few small figures of people can be seen on a ridge in the middle ground, providing a sense of scale. The overall scene is dramatic and rugged.

MARCH 2026

CHEVALIER

VOLCANIC WINES



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When you think of lava flow,” says Rosa La Guzza of Vigneti Vecchio, “usually you think of death, destruction, fire. For us, lava flow is different. *Sciare*—lava flow, in our dialect—is full of life, of color. Even the ash is full of life for us.” If this sounds like making lemonade out of life’s lemons—or delicious wine out of igneous soils—it absolutely is. For generations, Sicilians in the vicinity of Mount Etna have adapted to the volcano’s frequent eruptions, making the most of the slopes’ high elevation and fertile, jet-black soils of decomposed volcanic rock. There’s no better proof than the thick, ancient vines of Nerello Mascalese, Carricante, and other indigenous varieties, some of them going back one hundred thirty years, farmed by Rosa and her husband, Carmelo Vecchio. Tasting their field blend of mostly Nerello Mascalese, you can almost see the black soil and feel the volcano’s deep rumble beneath your feet.

Living volcanoes like Mount Etna, though, aren’t the only ones that furnish unique terroirs and world-class wines. The remains of ancient, long-gone volcanoes in northern Italy, the Languedoc, and the Beaujolais have produced some of Europe’s most distinctive whites and reds.



In the foothills of the Italian Alps east of Verona, Davide Vignato farms fourteen hectares of mostly Garganega planted in soils composed of basalt columns originating from a small, extinct volcano that goes back forty million years. Davide’s organic and biodynamic practices—pioneering methods in the region—bring these ancient soils to life in his markedly stony and mouthwatering Venetian *bianco*.

Along the steep slopes of Mont Brouilly, meanwhile, the slate-blue volcanic stones known as *pierre bleue* litter Château Thivin’s soils and help give the domaine’s Gamay its famously flinty notes.

In Montpeyroux, Sylvain Fadat cleared an ancient volcanic amphitheater to plant his masterpiece vineyard Les Cocalières, which yields world-class southern reds.



And Vignedimare’s Scampato originates from a vineyard of pre-phyllloxera Corinto Nero planted over a century ago inside the crater of an extinct volcano on the Aeolian island of Lipari. At once smoky, wild, and elegant, this beautiful *rosso* embodies the tension of identities we love in volcanic wines.

— TOM WOLF

2024 VENETO GARGANEGA “EL GIAN”

◆ DAVIDE VIGNATO \$19

THE HILLS OF GAMBELLARA are home to a distinct terroir: an ashy soil of black basalt rock that comes from Monte San Marco, a dormant volcano. Five hundred meters away, you’ll find Davide Vignato’s winery, where, ever since helping his dad in the vineyards as a kid, he’s been getting his hands nice and sooty! To capture the purest expression of this corner of the Veneto, Davide is committed to organic and biodynamic viticulture, even becoming the first grower in the appellation to be certified organic.



Take one sip of Davide’s El Gian and you know immediately that its distinctively salty stoniness bespeaks a unique and exhilarating terroir. Bracing and floral, this *bianco* offers notes of herbs, citrus, and pear that make it a perfect match for all varieties of fresh seafood. Try it with *spaghetti nero* with Dungeness crab for an exquisite and regionally inspired pairing.

2020 TERRE SICILIANE BIANCO “LATO SUD”

◆ GROTTAFUMATA \$35

GROTTAFUMATA MEANS “SMOKY CAVES,” named for the caves formed by a nearby river that has eaten through the lava and the smoke from naturally occurring sulfur in the lava that steams up from the caves. For their wines, Mauro Cutuli sources fruit from three tiny vineyards on the southern slopes of Mount Etna. The blend for “Lato Sud” consists mainly of old-vine Carricante and Cata-ratto, and clocks in at a very affable 11 percent alcohol, presenting a subtly smoky aroma complemented by notes of yellow fruit, herbs, and wild broom. The ashy black volcanic sand in which the vines grow is home to abundant wild mint, onions, spinach, and other edible vegetation that Mauro likes to forage and cook into an ultra-local pasta. Don’t hesitate to look into other classic dishes from Etna as possible pairings—this stony *bianco* is the perfect foil to al dente fusilli coated in *pesto di pistacchio*, or bucatini with fennel, raisins, and anchovies.



2023 ETNA ROSSO “SCIARE VIVE” ◆ VIGNETI VECCHIO \$36

CARMELO VECCHIO AND HIS WIFE, Rosa La Guzza, did not come from afar to make wine on Etna: they are true locals, raised in the heart of the vineyards. Carmelo began working at the nearby Passopisciaro winery at a young age, and after fifteen years of hands-on experience, the time came to strike out on his own. From barely one hectare of vines up to 130 years old inherited from Rosa’s family, the couple took matters into their own hands: sustainable farming by hand, with the goal of achieving an elegant balance in the grapes; micro-vinifications in the tiny cellar beneath their home, with respect for tradition and terroir; and aging the wines in used barrels before bottling without fining or filtration.

This bottling made up mostly of ancient-vine Nerello Mascalese from the northern slopes of Mount Etna is named for the solidified lava flows (*sciare*) that cut across the landscape like jet-black scars. It captures the elegant, perfumed side of Etna, with bright notes of sour cherry and cracked pepper that come to life when the wine is served slightly cool. Give it some time to breathe if you can, then pour it alongside Sicilian-inspired fare such as ragù-stuffed *arancini*, grilled tuna steaks, or wood-fired pizza topped with fennel *salsiccia*.

2021 LANGUEDOC MONTPEYROUX ROUGE “LES COCALIÈRES”

◆ DOMAINE D’AUPILHAC \$42

IT TAKES A SPECIAL KIND OF VIGNERON to look out across France’s most esteemed appellations and vineyard sites, deemed so decades if not centuries before, and proclaim, “I am going to create a new vineyard just as special from scratch!” But then again, Sylvain Fadat of Domaine d’Aupilhac is no ordinary vigneron. In the 1990s, Sylvain identified a volcanic amphitheater high in the Montpeyroux hills, with soils of basalt, raw limestone, and marine fossils, as a unique terroir perfectly suited to making extraordinarily elegant wine from Syrah, Grenache, and Mourvèdre.

First, Sylvain had to move mountains to make this vineyard a reality—literally, by clearing huge boulders and some of the shrubbery that clung obstinately to the hillside. Then, he planted his vines, which are surrounded by a landscape teeming with wildlife and aromatic herbs. He was vindicated right out of the gate: his earliest bottlings from Les Cocalières hold up, after twenty years in bottle, as stellar reds. This *rouge* has just arrived directly from Sylvain’s cellar and benefits even more from the older vines and Sylvain’s deepened experience with this terroir. It is no exaggeration to say that this cuvée shows some of the greatest finesse of any red wine from the south of France.

2021 SALINA ROSSO “SCAMPATO”

◆ VIGNEDIMARE \$60

WHILE NINO CARAVAGLIO LIVES AND WORKS mostly on the Aeolian island of Salina, he sources these grapes from an extraordinary site on the neighboring island of Lipari. Planted in the crater of an extinct volcano that overlooks much of Lipari, these Corinto Nero vines date back over a century and even survived phylloxera!

Nino aged the wine for eighteen months in 500-liter oak barrels, and the result is a smoky and lifted *rosso* abounding with wild red fruit and minerality that evokes the volcanic soil. You won't taste another red like it this year.

2024 CÔTE DE BROUILLY “CUVÉE ZACCHARIE”

◆ CHÂTEAU THIVIN \$69

IT IS NO SURPRISE THAT CHÂTEAU THIVIN is the benchmark domaine of the Côte de Brouilly; everything about it is exceptional. Built in the fifteenth century on an ancient volcano that juts out steeply from the valley below, Thivin is the oldest estate on Mont Brouilly. Farmer Zaccharie Geoffray purchased the château with its two hectares of land at auction in 1877. His son Claude expanded the property over the next few decades, and *his* son, also named Claude, boosted the prestige of the zone in the face of the Great Depression when he played a pivotal role in the creation of the Côte de Brouilly appellation. With his wife Yvonne, he also helped to bring greater recognition to the entire region with the establishment of the Maison du Beaujolais in 1953. In 1976, Richard Olney took Kermit to visit on their first wine trip together. It was Olney's top recommendation in the whole Beaujolais region. The current generation of the Geoffray family continues their tradition. Today their grandnephew Claude, his wife Evelyne, and their son Claude-Edouard continue the tradition as staunch and proud defenders of the terroir of the Côte de Brouilly.

This rare cuvée represents a selection from ancient vines in two of Thivin's best vineyards. Raised in Burgundy barrels rather than *foudres*, it delivers extraordinary power and breadth that make it an ideal candidate for cellaring. The deep complexity of mature bottles matches that of much fancier Burgundy, but with a joyous freshness you can only get in top Beaujolais.





<p>2024 Veneto Garganega "El Gian"</p> <p><i>DaVIDE VIGNATO</i></p> <p>VENETO</p>	<p>Garganega</p>	<p>25-year-old vines</p> <p>Basalt</p>	<p>Serve <i>cold</i> 48–52°F</p>	<p>Citrus blossom, almond skin, tarragon</p> <p>Zesty, saline, crystalline</p>	<p>Drink now</p>
<p>2020 Terre Siciliane Bianco "Lato Sud"</p> <p><i>Grottafumata</i></p> <p>SICILY</p>	<p>70% Carricante, 30% Catarratto</p>	<p>40- to 100-year-old vines</p> <p>Volcanic sand</p>	<p>Serve <i>cold</i> 50–54°F</p>	<p>Stone fruits, yellow wildflowers, honeycomb</p> <p>Succulent, smoky, textured</p>	<p>Drink now</p>
<p>2023 Etna Rosso "Sciare Vive"</p> <p><i>Vigneti Vecchio</i></p> <p>SICILY</p>	<p>95% Nerello Mascalese, 5% indigenous varieties (<i>Minnella</i>, <i>Inzolia</i>, <i>Carricante</i>, <i>Grecanico</i>, <i>Catarratto</i>, <i>Malvasia</i>)</p>	<p>50- to 130-year-old vines</p> <p>Volcanic</p>	<p>Serve <i>cool</i> 56–60°F</p>	<p>Smoke, white pepper, brandied cherries</p> <p>Silky, delicate, expressive</p>	<p>Drink now through 2030</p>
<p>2021 Languedoc Montpeyroux Rouge "Les Cocalières"</p> <p><i>Domaine d'Aupilhac</i></p> <p>LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON</p>	<p>40% Syrah, 30% Grenache, 30% Mourvèdre</p>	<p>Vines planted between 1999 and 2002</p> <p>Limestone, basalt</p>	<p>Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 58–62°F</p>	<p>Black olive, lavender, roasted game</p> <p>Complex, elegant, souful</p>	<p>Drink now through 2035</p>
<p>2021 Salina Rosso "Scampato"</p> <p><i>Vignedimare</i></p> <p>SICILY</p>	<p>Corinto Nero</p>	<p>150-year-old vines</p> <p>Volcanic sand</p>	<p>Serve <i>cool</i> 56–60°F</p>	<p>Wild strawberry, sage, hibiscus, sea spray</p> <p>Juicy, energetic, chillable</p>	<p>Drink now through 2032</p>
<p>2024 Côte de Brouilly "Cuvée Zaccharie"</p> <p><i>Château Thivin</i></p> <p>BEAUJOLAIS</p>	<p>Gamay Noir</p>	<p>40- to 90-year-old vines</p> <p>Clay, <i>pierre bleue</i> (metadiorite)</p>	<p>Serve <i>cool</i> 56–60°F</p>	<p>Currant, leather, truffle, flint</p> <p>Classy, terroir-driven, structured</p>	<p>Drink now through 2040</p>

front cover: Mount Etna. © GAIL SKOFF

inner panel, left: Les Cocalières vineyard. © GAIL SKOFF

inner panel, top right: Basalt rocks in the vineyards. © DAVIDE VIGNATO

inner panel, bottom right: Vineyards in Sicily. © JOANIE BONFIGLIO

far left, top: Davide Vignato and his father, Gian. © DAVIDE VIGNATO

far left, bottom: Mauro Cutuli. © GAIL SKOFF

near left: Yvonne Geoffroy. © JIMMY HAYES

back panel, top: Carmelo Vecchio, Anthony Lynch,
and Rosa La Guzza. © JOANIE BONFIGLIO

back panel, bottom: Old vine at Vigneti Vecchio.

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Living and working alongside an active volcano certainly has its drawbacks, but also many advantages! Mount Etna is a young stratovolcano, born about 500,000 to 600,000 years ago, during the Middle Pleistocene. This means that we are on a perfectly active volcano that is constantly changing. We locals are not afraid of this, even though Etna reminds us of its omnipresence through earthquakes, lava fountains, and occasional eruptions; it is continuously releasing energy, sometimes in spectacular ways.

The never-ending shower of lapilli (tiny rocks formed by lava ejected in a volcanic eruption) and volcanic ash make our soils fertile and well drained. It is thanks to Etna that our terroir is so complex and layered: our island reaches heights up to 3,400 meters (11,000 feet) in altitude (its height varies due to eruptions). A high cone like this means working with countless variables: sun exposure, wind, temperatures, and, of course, the numerous lava stratifications, each with a different age, density, and mineral composition.



There is also an enormous diversity of grapes, from our main varieties like Nerello Mascalese, Nerello Cappuccio, and Carricante to lesser-known ones like Grecanico, Inzolia, Madama Nera, and more. The presence of many pre-phyloxera vines and the island's remote location have meant that each *contrada* (district) retains singular, inimitable characteristics.

It's impossible to convey in words all the richness and variability of such a small region, which I like to call a "wine continent." The volcano is both the foundation and the catalyst for our wines; Etna is a unique gem, with infinite facets. — ROSA LA GUZZA, VIGNETI VECCHIO

