

The Farmhouse Table



SICILY WINE TOUR – Spring, 2010

Catania; Saturday April 17 – Palermo; Monday April 26

Saturday, April 17: Day 1 Arrive Catania airport and transport to Tenuta Scilio Di Valle Galfina. Located in Linguaglossa on the northeastern side of Mt. Etna, the farmhouse and cellars date back to 1815 and are surrounded by organically cultivated vineyards. This beautiful agriturismo will be our home for our first 3 days in one of the most diverse and picturesque regions of Sicily. Get settled in and relax before we sample some of the wines from the Scilio estate. Dinner at the Valle Galfina farmhouse.

Sunday, April 18: Day 2 After breakfast we'll take an easy drive, about 20 minutes away, to the town of Randazzo. This medieval jewel has remained undisturbed by the eruptions of Etna. Possibly visit a coppersmith and stroll the narrow streets where the churches are built of blocks of lava. Then we're on our way to have a light lunch and a wine tasting at Passopisciaro Vineyards. We'll return to Valle Galfina for an afternoon cooking class. Sleep at Valle Galfina.

Monday, April 19: Day 3 Breakfast, then travel to the tiny town of Solicchiata, for a wine tasting/discussion with Frank Cornelissen. Frank uses local grape varieties from ancient ungrafted vines that express territorial identity. The opportunity to meet this controversial master promises to give you a completely different view of winemaking. We'll have time to relax at the farmhouse for a while before heading out to dinner on your own in nearby Taormina.

Tuesday, April 20: Day 4 After an early breakfast, we say farewell to our hosts at Valle Galfina and make our way to the southeastern part of the island. Our first stop will be one of the most fascinating places in Sicily, the ancient Greek city of Siracusa, founded by the Corinthians in 733 BC. We'll stroll through the market and historic quarter located on the island of Ortigia -- the heart of ancient Siracusa. After lunch, we will travel southwest to Palma di Montechiaro, where we'll be staying at the olive estate and agriturismo, Mandranova. Get settled, relax, and have dinner there at the farm.

Wednesday, April 21: Day 5 After breakfast we'll take a day-trip to the town of Caltagirone, known throughout Sicily for its colorful ceramics and majolica tiles. Our next stop will be the vineyard Feudo Principi di Butera for a cooking class featuring traditional Sicilian recipes along with a wine tasting. Dinner at Mandranova, and then off to bed.

Thursday, April 22: Day 6 Breakfast, then we'll tour the Mandranova estate, with the proprietors Guiseppe and Silvia di Vincenzo. Mandranova is known for fine mono-cultivar olive oil and other artisanal products. After lunch, you'll have a choice of relaxing by the pool or we can arrange a tour of nearby Agrigento—The Valley of the Temples. This is one of the most important archeological sites in the world, founded as a Greek colony in the 6th century BC. Dinner at Mandranova.

Friday, April 23: Day 7 We'll have breakfast at Mandranova and then head west to our next destination, the Baglio Donna Franca, located near Marsala with gorgeous views of the Egadi islands. This part of Sicily is closer to Tunisia than to the mainland of Italy so the food culture and architecture deeply reflect a North African Arab influence. This evening we'll dine at a taverna, enjoying one of the local specialties, il cuscusu—couscous flavored with fresh rock fish stock and seafood.

Saturday, April 24: Day 8 After breakfast, we'll explore the charming towns of San Vito lo Capo and Erice with lunch on your own. In the afternoon we'll return to Donna Franca for a tour of this unique winery, a cooking class, and dinner.

Sunday, April 25: Day 9 For our last day on the island, we'll take an exciting day- trip--- a drive down the coast to visit the ancient salt flats first started by the Phoenicians and still operating today as it did thousands of years ago. Then on to the city of Marsala, which takes its name from the Arabic Mars-al-Allah, meaning the harbor of God. The Marsala wine that you'll taste today is nothing like the wine you cook with back home. We'll have a light lunch and wine tasting at the Florio cantine in Marsala. Afterward we'll travel back through the countryside to the agriturismo to have an extraordinary farewell dinner.

Monday, April 26: Day 10 Morning transfer to Palermo airport. **Arrivederci to Sicilia!**