

BIRTH OF A NEW PROJECT

We are delighted to introduce the first wines of IDDA: the joint venture between Gaja and Graci on Etna, the highest active volcano of Europe.

Angelo has been intrigued with Etna since his friend, the oenologist Giacomo Tachis, first introduced him to its splendor in the late 90's. In his mind, the powerful image of the mountain has always remained alive. Etna, the sleeping giant, sometimes awake, and often grumbling; a royal figure wearing snow as an ermine fur on its shoulders.

Without intimate knowledge of the region, we would have never dreamed of starting a project on Etna. Moreover, at the time, we were quite busy with the new Pieve Santa Restituta project; in addition, Ca'Marcanda wines were just about to be released for their first vintage.

In 2015, Angelo Gaja and Alberto Graci met for the first time. As we got to better know Alberto and his family over time, our deep curiosity for their culture and land kept growing, and the desire of working together came naturally.

Toward the end of 2016, based on our mutual respect and love of the artisanal approach, we decided to form a joint venture, a first for both of our families.





“I believe that old age starts when the regrets are more than the dreams and Etna was something that I have been feeling under the skin for some time” says Angelo.

“The project is just beginning and it will move forward according to the nature of the wine; however Etna, like Langa, is a place where elegant, enigmatic and intriguing wines can be made. I also took into consideration the challenges of climate change; indeed, I find it important the fact that Etna has the highest vineyards in Europe and the harvest period is among the latest on the continent”.

Says Alberto : “Angelo and I share the same interpretation of Etna, and we will work hard to realize that interpretation. We are looking for elegance and electricity. Very few places on earth can make wines with those qualities, and Etna is one of them. We approach this venture with humility because we recognize that Etna is stronger than everything, and everyone else. Etna will dictate the identity of the wine we make and we will follow. We will follow the volcano”.

A NEW APPROACH: WHITE WINES ON THE SOUTHERN SLOPE

This joint venture of the Gaja and Graci families rests on our mutual curiosity and drive to always learn, grow and improve.

Etna has a remarkable history, so much so that it is the first region in Italy, after Barolo and Barbaresco, to have a *Menzione Geografica Aggiuntiva* classification for its red wines (CONTRADE): yet, when it comes to white wines, it's the first to have a MGA classification.

While the most developed and valued variety on Etna is Nerello Mascalese, covering 80% of the vineyards, we intend to focus mainly on Carricante. We believe in the bright future of Etna white wines and on Carricante's potential to develop great complexity and aging potential along with moderate alcohol and sharp acidity.

We have taken the unorthodox approach of focusing on the southern slope of the volcano, often referred to as the contrarian side of Etna. This largely forgotten region has a glorious past, from the Benedictine monks to Baron Spitaleri (the first producer to name Etna on a label, in 1866).

However, compared to the northern slope of the mountain which is well developed and has established a remarkable reputation, the southern side is relatively unexploited.

The southern slope allows us to explore a wide range of altitudes, exposures and soil types. With Carricante, a late ripening variety, we look for a profound and complex structure along with vibrant acidity.

Therefore, our collaboration represents an exciting re-discovery of the southern slope and a new learning and creative venture for both of our families: for Gaja, who has never farmed on Etna, and for Graci who has never farmed its southern side.

THE NAME AND THE LABEL

IDDA, in honor of Etna, is the name of our new adventure.

“Idda” means “she” in the Sicilian dialect, which is the term of endearment and awe with which Sicilians refer to her. Etna is more than a mountain; a breathing being with her own identity and personality, a quick-tempered, capricious, yet maternal and protective mother on whom her inhabitants depend on each day.

As the artist and intellectual Pier Paolo Pasolini put it: Etna is the place of the soul; an endless source of duality and contrariness: death and birth, holiness and profanity, snow and fire, light and darkness, paradise and hell.



The labels are evocative of multiple aspects such as the colors of the lava and of the sea, the tridimensional altitude of the mountain and the terraces of the vineyards.

The spiral is an ancient symbol that here captures cyclic continuity, expansion and development.

It is one of the most common geometric figures present in nature. In the universe everything seems moving in spiral: from cosmic development, human DNA and fingerprints, to shells, the flight of birds, the vortex of water and the lava's turmoil.

It is also a feminine symbol, related to fertility, the generative strength of the universe and the mystery of life.

ETNA SOIL CHARACTERISTICS

Compared to other regions of Italy, Etna soils are very young—some as young as 1000 years. They are strictly related to the constant volcanic activity and therefore are very complex and vary greatly in terms of depth and texture, even within the same parcel.

Soils are mainly composed of sand (70-80%), well drained but also very fertile, rich in iron and copper and low in limestone. Each vineyard on Etna is grown on land reclaimed from the volcano with great effort, by moving rocks and creating terraces. The sand and ash soil is so light that even mild inclinations would cause it to drift downhill.

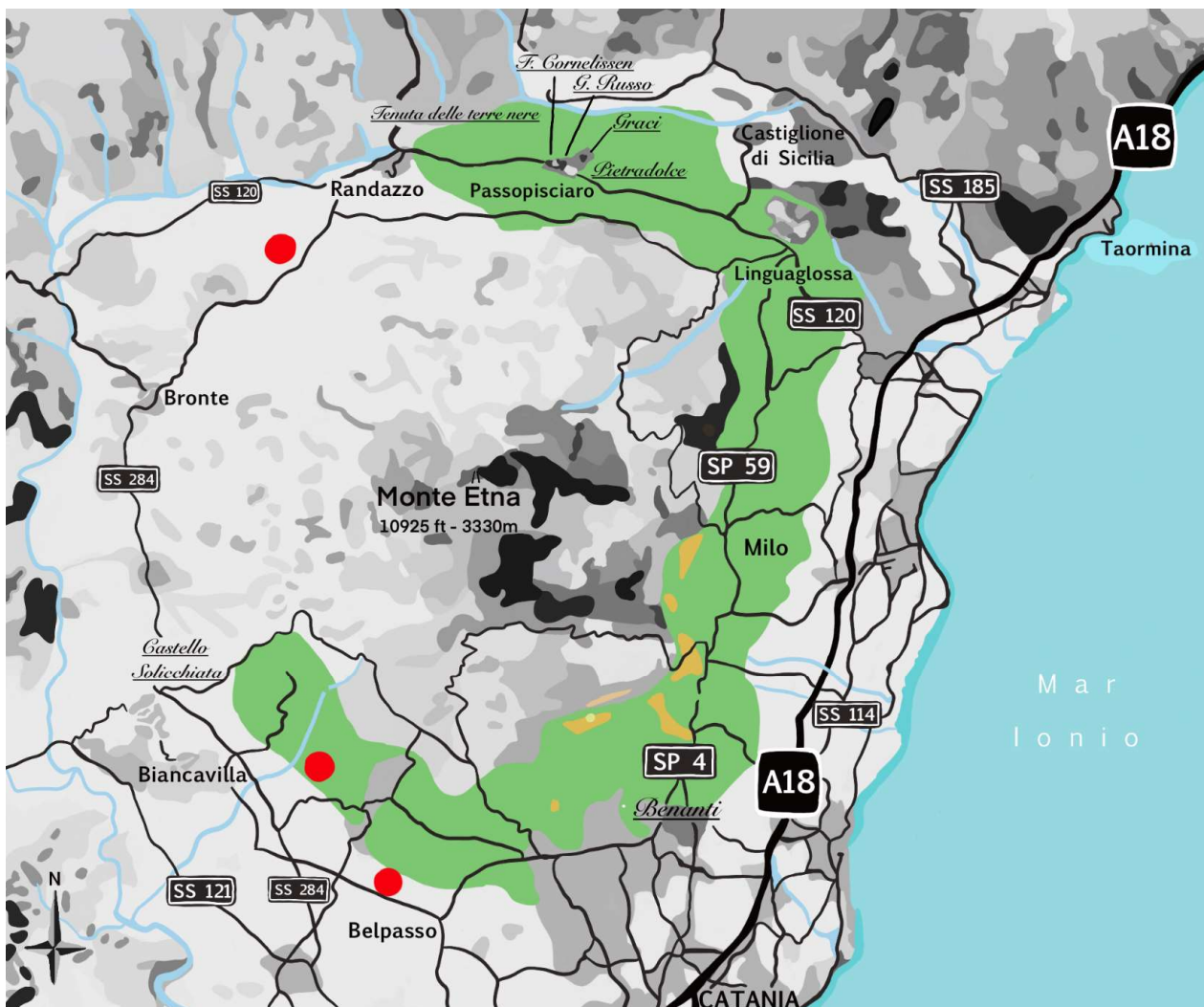
Soils are covered by layers of ash, lapillus and rocks of different size and shape: sediments from different explosive eruptions, or sediments of basalt lava flows (*sciara* in Sicilian) with different composition and thickness. There are also debris brought from defrosted rivulets and daily emissions of volcanic ash.



The new winery (rendering above) will be built in Belpasso, ready to welcome its first harvest in 2022. Until then, the wines will be made in Alberto Graci's facility in Passopisciaro.

OUR VINEYARDS

To discover different nuances, we intend to explore different sites (*Biancavilla, Belpasso, and Tartaraci*) with distinct soil characteristics and variations in temperature, altitude and sunlight.



- 1) BIANCAVILLA
- 2) BELPASSO
- 3) TARTARACI

BIANCAVILLA

This is the first plot of land that we purchased and it is the only site where currently vineyards are producing.

Altitude: 630 – 820 m a.s.l. (2296-2624 ft)

Total size: 21 ha (52 acres), of which 15 ha (37 acres) are planted with vineyards.

10 ha (24 acres) of vineyards planted in 1975 with Nerello Mascalese producing 2017 and 2018 IDDA Etna Rosso DOP

Marked in red on the map

1 ha (2,4 acres) of vineyards planted in 1975 with Carricante producing 2018 and 2019 IDDA Bianco Sicilia DOP

Marked in blue on the map

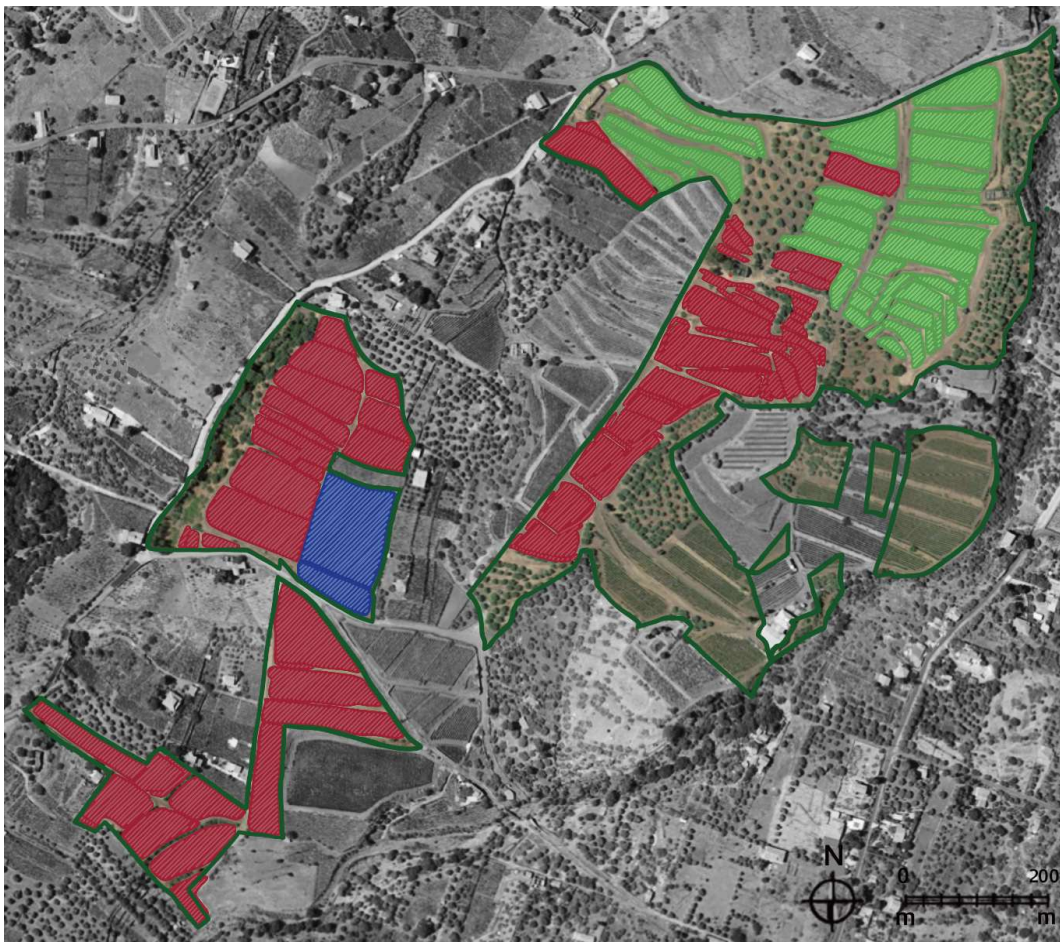
4 ha (9.8 acres) of vineyards planted in 2017 will be starting production this year. *Marked in green on the map*

Soil Characteristics: the soils in Biancavilla are among the oldest of the entire Etna DOC denomination (60.000 years old - Ellittico period)

The soil derives from an old lava flow; indeed its color is lighter than typical, indicating a longer oxidation process.

The pebbles are small and round, indicating an older state of decomposition.

It is a less fertile soil than Belpasso.



BELPASSO

Our land in Belpasso is called a “*dagala*”: an island of land created by diverging and converging lava flows, creating in the middle an island, like a jewel nestled into the rocks.

It is impressive to see how the fertile plot of land has been surrounded by an extensive wasteland of black volcanic rock with precious little growth.

Altitude: 600-620 m a.s.l. (1968 – 2034 ft)

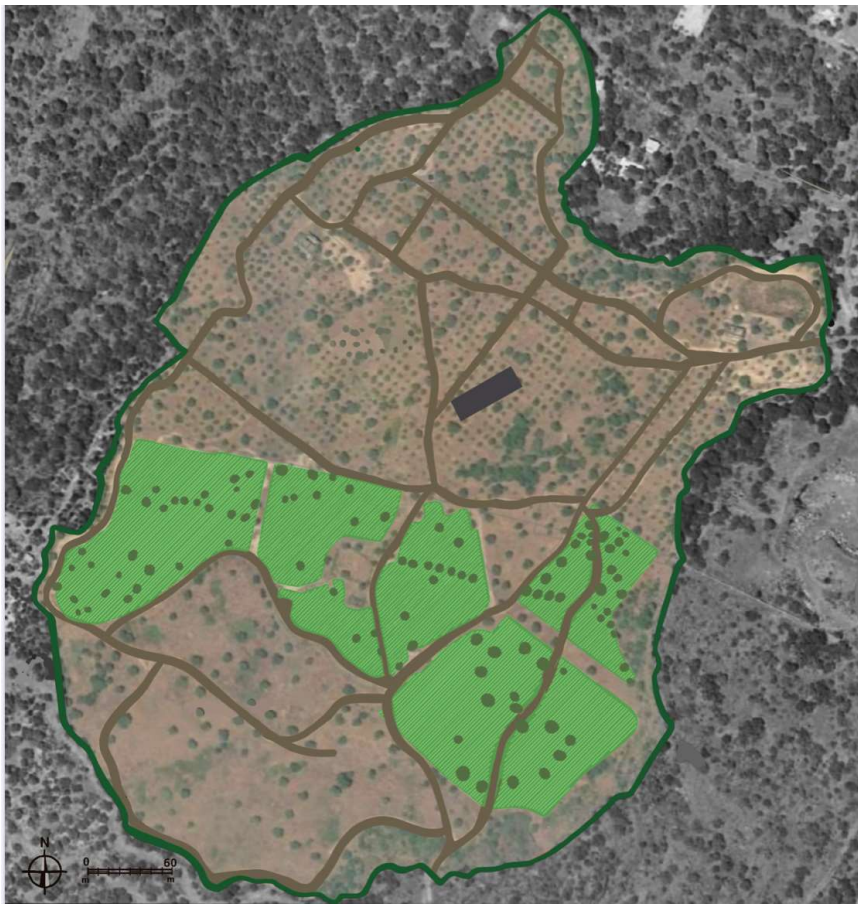
Total Size: 21 ha (52 acres) of which 4 ha (9.8 acres) have been planted with vineyards. It is not inside the DOC Etna.

4 ha (9.8 acres) planted in 2019 with Carricante, which will enter in production in 2022. *Marked in green on the map*

Soil Characteristics: High sand content (up to 80%) and rich in organic matter. The plot is like a big natural *clos* with 3 levels and 3 different textures of soil. In the highest part of the clos the color of the soil is blacker (and thus younger). In the middle the soil has a lighter color, is older, and less vigorous than above.

In the lowest part, there is more sand beneath, and above, jagged and irregular rocks.

It is generally a richer soil compared to Biancavilla, as being younger, it has more organic matter and larger and more porous rocks retaining more humidity.





BIANCAVILLA



BELPASSO

TARTARACI

Our plot is in the municipality of Bronte: Contrada Tartaraci once owned by the British admiral Lord Horatio Nelson and before that by the royal Borboni family.

It is the highest altitude land we have, windier and colder.

It is an extreme altitude for Nerello Mascalese but very interesting for Carricante.

This site is currently under evaluation. In it, we have found an abandoned vineyard with several dead vines and varieties planted together, mainly Nerello Mascalese co-planted with earlier ripening Grenache (that here becomes fine, light and transparent) but also Carricante with earlier ripening Grecanico and in very small part Minnella.

It will require restructuring in order to be productive.

Total Size: 5 ha (12 acres) of old and formerly abandoned vineyards we are putting back in production

Altitude: 970 m a.s.l. (3180 feet)



ETNA WINES AND GRAPE VARIETIES

Smokiness, vibrant acidity and rocky mineral notes are common for Etna wines, reminders of nearby sea, as well as the always smoky crater, the fire inside and the perennial snows above. The wines coming from Etna have a simplicity in its best sense and are rigorous and precise.

CARRICANTE

Carricante has a pure and graceful minerality with notes of anise and citrus and similar precursor aromas of Riesling and Chenin blanc. It has a distinct saline finish, a vibrant acidity, and at its best, has great aging potential. It is a very slow ripening variety and has a narrow window of perfect picking (too early shows no aromas, too late loses its acidity). While other varieties need de-leafing to achieve their best, the thick golden skin of Carricante is very sensitive to sunburn and must ripen in the shade.

NERELLO MASCALESE

Originally from the city of Mascali (on the seaside, near Taormina), this variety grows between 400 and 1000 m a.s.l (1312-3280 feet) on the slopes of Etna. Its color is light as Nebbiolo or Pinot noir, two varieties that shares its elegance, medium body and good aging potential. The perfumes are exuberant and marked by bloody orange, red fruit, rose, licorice are flint. Its skin is thin and very delicate to manage both in the vineyard than in the winery. It's a variety with a lot of vigor and has a very narrow time-window for perfect ripeness. It needs time to perfectly ripen, but must be quickly harvested to avoid spikes of sugar and potential high alcohol content at the expense of aging potential.

NERELLO CAPPUCCIO

As opposed to Nerello Mascalese, it has thicker skin that gives its classic rich and purple color. It also has richer notes of preserved fruit and ripe cherries. Planted much more sparsely, it thrives on the south slope of the volcano thanks to the warmer temperatures and drier winds that reduce the risks of powdery mildew, a disease to which Nerello Cappuccio is very sensitive.