

Sicily

La Casematte

The casematte or casemates overlooking Le Casematte's largest vineyard

Fast Facts

Vineyard surface:
35 acres (14 hectares)

Owner:
Gianfranco Sabbatino
and Andrea Barzagli

Winemaker:
Carlo Ferrini

Established:
2008

Location:
Faro Superiore

Province:
Messina



Le Casematte was founded in 2008 by Gianfranco Sabbatino and Andrea Barzagli, in Faro Superiore near Messina, Sicily. The duo is infectiously enthusiastic about all things Sicilian – but especially Sicilian wine. The winery's flagship wine is Faro DOC, a tiny often-overlooked 100% native appellation from the hills overlooking the Strait of Messina. Today the winery has 35 acres under vine.

THE HISTORY

While a young winery by Old World standards, Gianfranco has years of experience in the wine business, venturing out on his own with partner and ex-soccer player Andrea Barzagli in 2008. The pair opened their winery high atop the Strait of Messina, in Faro Superiore, where the hillsides can have a gradient of up to 70%. The winery's name comes from two casematte or casemates (a.k.a. pillboxes) from World War II, which served as observatories and defensive structures at that time. Today, in more peaceful times, the casemates watch over the largest vineyard, which is five acres in size.

Faro DOC received DOC status on December 3, 1976. The local wine, however, is ancient – the name itself comes from an old Greek population, the Pharii, who settled in this spectacular nook of the Mediterranean and grew grapes as far back as the 14th century B.C. Not only is Faro one of the

world's most ancient wine areas, but it is also one of the tiniest appellations in Italy.

It is located in the district of Messina, on the breathtaking Messinesi Hills wedged between two seas – the Tyrrhenian and the Ionian, joined by the Strait of Messina. Faro DOC is made exclusively from indigenous varieties that find their ideal home here in the Messinese soil, ranging from dark, compact, and slightly acidic at the higher altitudes and alluvial towards the coast.

THE TERROIR

Le Casematte's total surface under vine is about 35 acres at an altitude between 820 and 1,215 feet above sea level. Pristine and remote, these vineyards benefit from the constant sea breezes of the Strait of Messina, notably the Sirocco wind during summer. Large temperature swings give the wines excellent aromatic qualities and a freshness running through the whole range.

The soils are a mix of sandy, calcareous, and clayey soils that, when combined with the microclimate and location of the vineyards, give Gianfranco's wines fantastic elegance and with distinctive balance and harmony.



“PELORO” BIANCO TERRE SICILIANE IGT:

65% Grillo and 35% Carricante from vineyards in Faro Superiore, Messina, Sicily. The grapes are hand harvested in mid-September and vinification takes place in stainless steel. The wine is aged in steel vats and then in bottle for three months before release. Bright straw yellow in color. The nose boasts notes of white- and yellow-fleshed fruit, floral aromas of mimosas and chamomile, mineral aromas and Mediterranean herbs. On the palate, the wine is fresh and tangy with pleasant fruit and a long, invigorating finale heightened by lively citrus notes.



“PELORO” ROSSO TERRE SICILIANE IGT:

70% Nerello Mascalese and 30% Nocera from vineyards in Faro Superiore, Messina, Sicily. The grapes are hand harvested mid to late September. Vinification takes place in stainless steel vats. The wine ages in second-use French oak barrels for two months and in bottle for four to five months. Brilliant ruby red in color with violet reflections. The nose has generous aromas of small red berries, floral fragrances as well as carob, licorice and spice. On the palate, the wine has fresh acidity, rich fruity flavors, mineral notes, and vibrant tannins.



GRILLO IGP: 100% Grillo from a vineyard located in Buttera, Sicily. The grapes are hand harvested in mid-September. Vinification takes place in stainless steel. The wine ages in steel vats for six months and then in the bottle for two months before release. Bright straw yellow in color. The nose boasts notes of white- and yellow-fleshed fruit, floral aromas of mimosas and chamomile, mineral aromas and Mediterranean herbs. On the palate, the wine is fresh and tangy with pleasant fruit and a long, invigorating finale heightened by

lively citrus notes.



FARO DOC: 55% Nerello Mascalese, 25% Nerello Cappuccio, 10% Nocera and 10% Nero d’Avola from vineyards in Faro Superiore, Messina, Sicily. The grapes are hand harvested in mid to late September. The grapes under a long maceration on the skins in stainless steel. The wine ages in French oak for 18 months, concrete for 3 months, and bottle for six months. Dark ruby red with orange highlights, its intense, elegant and ample nose boasts

notes of ripe red berries and blueberries, Mediterranean scrub, and spicy notes like nutmeg and pepper. Well-balanced on the palate with firm tannins, a round, rich fruity flavor, and an elegant finale.



“ROSEMATTE” NERELLO MASCALESE IGT:

100% Nerello Mascalese from vineyards in Faro Superiore, Messina, Sicily. The grapes are hand-harvested in mid-September, and have no contact with the skins during vinification. The wine ages in steel vats and then in bottle for three months before release. Bright coral pink in color, the nose has notes of small red fruit like wild strawberry and red currant; flowery notes of Mediterranean herbs and minerality. Fresh and delectable with crisp fruit flavors and wonderful acidity. Light, refreshing and zesty on the palate with a lingering finish.



NERO D’AVOLA IGP:

100% Nero d’Avola from a vineyard located in Buttera, Sicily. The grapes are hand harvested in mid-September. Vinification takes place in stainless steel. The wine ages in stainless steel for six months and three to four months in bottle. Brilliant ruby red in color with violet reflections. The nose has generous aromas of small red berries, floral fragrances as well as carob, licorice and spice. On the palate, the wine has fresh acidity, rich fruity flavors, mineral notes, and vibrant tannins.