

La Dolce Vigna's

**12 LESSER-KNOWN ITALIAN WINES
TO TRY IN 2025**

RED

(ALL MEDIUM-FULL BODIED)

- Colli Euganei DOC
- Noto Rosso DOC
- Gaglioppo
- Carignano del Sulcis DOC
- Refosco del Penducolo Rosso

ROSATO

- Pugliesi Rosati

WHITE

- Erbaluce di Caluso DOCG
- Locorotondo Bianco DOC
- Friulano
- Campi Flegrei Falanghina DOC

SPARKLING

- Oltrepo Pavese Metodo Classico DOCG
- Lambrusco Grasparossa di Castelvetro DOC

La Dolce Vigna's 12 ITALIAN WINES FOR 2025

(IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

Colli Euganei Rosso DOC

Southwest of Padua, in the Veneto region, lie the Euganean hills. Interestingly, the wines from this area are made mainly from Bordeaux grape varieties (Merlot, Carménère, Cabernet Franc, and Cabernet Sauvignon). Here, they take on a unique character thanks to the mineral-rich volcanic soils. Love these well-balanced wines!

Gaglioppo

Derived from Ancient Greek for "beautiful foot" (abundant grape bunches), Gaglioppo is native to Calabria and one of Italy's oldest grape varieties (a natural crossing of Sangiovese and Mantónico). You can find it in many of the region's DOCs, but the most famous is Cirò Rosso. Red berries, underbrush, herbs and a full body in most wines.

Carignano del Sulcis DOC

This Sardinian wine is made in the island's southwest, where sandy soils, a maritime influence and old, ungrafted vines (many 100+ years), create powerful yet velvety expressions of the Carignano, which is most likely a Spanish import from its 400-year reign over the island.

Noto Rosso DOC

These wines usually become a favorite of my Sicily tour groups. On the island's southeast coast, in the sand and limestone-rich soils of Noto Valley, these full-bodied reds feature a minimum of 65% of its native star Nero d'Avola and generally exhibit notes of dark berries and exotic spices. There are both oaked and un-oaked versions.

Refosco del Penducolo Rosso

This red-stemmed indigenous grape variety from Friuli-Venezia Giulia is found in several DOC wines of the region. The wines made from Refosco are deep in color, full in body and have a high acidity and full force tannins.

Rosati from Puglia

Puglia holds the title for making the oldest bottled rosé in the country (Leone de Castris' Five Roses), which means they mean business about their *rosati*; honestly, I haven't met a Pugliese *rosato* I haven't liked. Whether it's made from Primitivo, Bombino Nero, Susumaniello, Negroamaro or any other native red grape varieties, they are always delightful.

Erbaluce di Caluso DOCG

Legend has it, goddess Albaluce ("Dawn light") gifted this grape variety to the Piemontese hamlet of Caluso. The sandy-gravelly soils lend the wine a pronounced acidity, while its typical tasting notes are wild flowers, herbs and apricot. Erbaluce also makes a wonderful dessert wine.

Locorotondo Bianco DOC

This is always a crowd pleaser for my Puglia + Basilicata tour groups. It's a refreshing blend made from principally two native grape varieties, Verdeca and Bianco d'Alessano, around the town of Locorotondo in Puglia's Itria Valley. It offers a little bit of everything: citrus, stone fruit, herbs, flowers and sea spray, alongside a nice acidity.

Campi Flegrei Falanghina DOC

The Phlegrean Fields (burning fields) are actually a large, 13-km-wide nested caldera located on the western outskirts of Naples in Campania. This terroir adds a distinct savory and mineral quality to Falanghina's typical citrus and floral aromas.

Friulano

One of Friuli's most iconic grape varieties, Friulano (previously Tocai Friulano) finds itself in many of the region's DOC wines, both monovarietal and blends. Genetically identical to Sauvignon Vert, it commonly is pale in color and offers aromas of green apple, almonds and white flowers.

Oltrepo Pavese Metodo Classico DOCG

Living under the shadow of Lombardy's other Classic Method wine, Franciacorta, Oltrepo Pavese deserves our attention. Made in the Pavia province just south of Milan, its DOCG rules state it must be made of a minimum of 70% Pinot Nero (Pinot Noir) and a maximum of 30% Chardonnay, Pinot Blanc and Pinot Grigio. Nice mineral-driven bubbles that don't break the bank.

Lambrusco Grasparossa di Castelvetro

I am on a Lambrusco kick and I love them all, but the darker, tannic Grasparossa is the one you want with a smorgasbord of its home region Emilia-Romagna's specialties like Mortadella, Prosciutto di Parma, Parmesan and fatty cheeses.