



TENUTA
DELLE
TERRE NERE

HARVEST REPORT 2015

The good news: One of our best vintages.

The bad news: Hailstorm on June 8th, damaged our **vineyards** in **Guardiola** and **Santo Spirito**.

Harvesting time: White grapes starting on September 24th – Red grapes starting on October 5th.

Analysis: 2015 started with a very cold winter, temperatures going below zero in January and February, with snow covering the vineyards three times between January and April (last snow was recorded during Easter!). Rainfalls above average. Hence the budding started two weeks later than usual, finally kicking in from the first week of May, with temperatures rising.

Between the end of May and mid-June, the temperature fell again, reaching below 10°C and rarely exceeding 25°C. And a low-pressure area arriving from North Africa contributed to make the weather more unstable leading to a violent hailstorm on June 8th which hit our vineyards in Santo Spirito and Guardiola, damaging leaves and fruit. The very next day, another hailstorm, of much lower intensity, hit Calderara, with little or no impact on production and quality.

In July waves of African heat blew over Sicily, temperatures reaching over 35°C. Towards the end of the month, a low-pressure area brought some rain which benefitted the plants, especially the younger ones, before climbing back to the characteristic summer values (35°C).

Another low-pressure area from North Africa hit Sicily during the first week of September, bringing thunderstorms and heavy rains - no damage was recorded on the plants this time – before going back to 35°C, quite unusual for this period of the season. In early ripening areas, these conditions yielded grapes with a below average acidity which, in turn, led to early harvesting.

Heavy rainfalls between the end of September and the first week of October, and the ongoing high humidity, determined a slower ripening, particularly in the old vineyards in the areas of late ripening (Milo alta, S.M. Licodia, Biancavilla alta, Randazzo). This caused the awakening of botrytis in some areas, especially where the “tignoletta” (*Lobesia botrana*) had kicked in. Even so, thanks to the excellent vineyards work during September, including systematic thinning, our vines came through in excellent health.

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In mid-October strong Scirocco winds blew over the Ionian Sea raising temperatures and humidity.

The effect was a stunningly rapid and pervasive botrytis attack. The grapes still to be picked, the very last and finest ones left to ripen as much as possible for our **Crus**, had to be most carefully selected. We suffered a loss of nearly 30% in those last few days, but the grapes harvested were of outstanding quality. Perfect ripeness and excellent acidity which, I believe, above and beyond their obvious strength, will yield aromatic finesse and overall elegance.

All in all, I expect our **Etna Bianco** to be very tasty, with a slightly opulent feel. The Etna Bianco Santo Spirito, which suffered the June 8 hailstorm, will be considerably less in quantity, but excellent in quality. It is already generous in its bouquet, though tightly woven on the palate. The Etna Bianco Calderara Sottana is reminiscent of our remarkable 2014, rivalling it in structure and mineral intensity. Very fine indeed.

The 2015 vintage, however, will be remembered for its splendid reds, all of them absolutely wonderful. Once again all our **Crus**, and particularly our **Calderara Sottana**, exhibit the marks of a grand vintage.

Our **Etna Rosso** 2015 displays a graceful and vigorous character: a wine full of sunshine and irresistibly charming.