



TENUTA  
DELLE  
TERRE NERE

## The 2014 Vintage

**The good news:** Recalling harvests past, it's difficult to see one equally satisfying. Perhaps 2011, a true blue-blooded classic. But the whites, although very fine, were not as complete as the 2014s appear to be. And the 2014 reds seem to enjoy finer tannins. Not only: whereas the 2011 produced less than 30 hectolitres per hectare, the 2014 averaged a healthy 36.

**The bad news:** none

**Picking started:** *Whites:* September 29 we began harvesting our first white grapes from the lower, earlier ripening altitudes sourced on the Southern slopes of Etna. After close monitoring, these were followed by more Carricante from our own vineyards. The white grape harvest lasted until mid-October. *Reds:* We started harvesting Feudo di Mezzo October 9th and continued on with a few interruptions all the way to October 27, finishing comfortably, the weather allowing us all the leisure we needed.

**Promising areas/contradas/grapes:** The finest Carricante we have ever tasted, the grapes simply exploding with lingering flavor. We do powerfully believe that this is the finest vintage ever for our whites, and the very first vintage in which we will finally bottle our Carricante from *Calderara Sottana* and *Santo Spirito* as single vineyard Crus.

**Challenging areas/contradas/grapes:** None

**Analysis:** A very mild winter followed by abundant spring rains, affecting the flowering with an acceptable quantity of coulure. This is how 2014 started. The late spring was temperate, and still quite rainy, with *oidium* pressure that we required some extra effort to control. The summer months were warm and blessed by a few good showers. The vines were never stressed, the panoplies emerald green until the very end. As August came around, and the expected *veraison* began, we were puzzled by its most unusual length. In fact, the grapes seemed never to want to turn color completely. Naturally, as far as the Nerello goes, this affected the tannins as well, which continued tasting harsh, with some exceptions, well into early October.

The Carricante followed a similar pattern: a slow ripening and a slow *veraison*. In this case, it was the sugar levels, which were very slow in rising. Both Nerello and Carricante, and the accompanying complementary white varieties, were unusually healthy. The load was really well balanced. Thinning was only necessary in a few particularly productive parcels.

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September days were cool, and the nights were cold. The white varietals slowly but surely continued ripening. Nerello grapes seemed to be more affected by the lack of warmth. Yes, Nerello's sugars were doing well, but the skins were slow to follow. October, however, was proving very generous, a veritable Indian summer. That did the trick alright.

Unquestionably, it will be a memorable vintage.

Equally important, not only were we able to wait for perfect ripening of all vineyards, but we were also able to harvest an extra 50% more grapes for our Etna Rosso 2014. Thus will allow us, with the 2015 vintage, to implement our 3-years plan to age our Etna Rosso in wood eighteen months, like our Crus.

Last but not the least, several years now of experience in microvinifying Rosato has finally led us to believe that the grapes from *Santo Spirito* are particularly suited to this wine. Therefore, from the 2015 vintage, (harvest allowing), our Etna Rosato shall be a single vineyard as well, promising to reach even greater heights.

“Another reason, another season for making whoopie!”

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