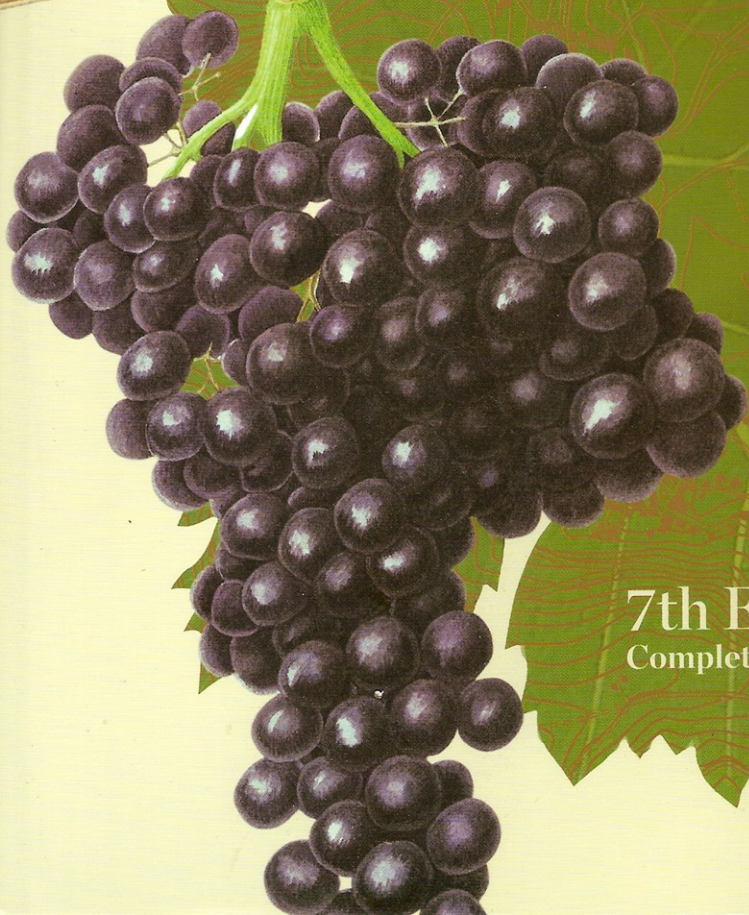


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THE WORLD ATLAS OF WINE



7th Edition
Completely Revised

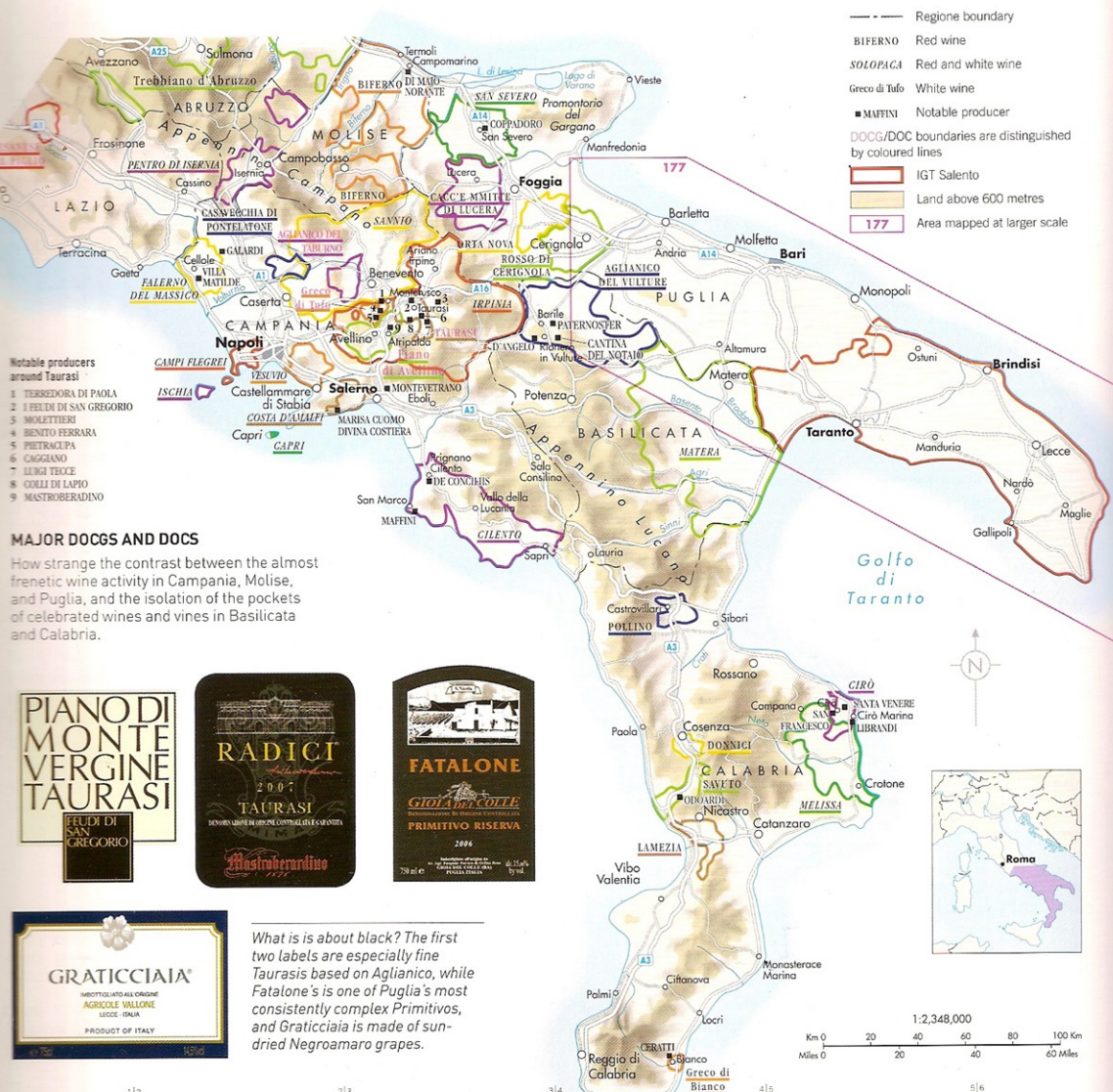
Southern Italy

In Roman times, it was the inland parts of Campania, particularly the province of Avellino east of Naples, which set the pace for the whole of Italy with the empire's most famous wines. Aglianico is one of Italy's greatest dark-skinned grapes, making wines with a powerful, obviously noble, brooding character. In the volcanic hills of the Taurasi DOCG zone, where it finds its finest expression, it can ripen as late as November and is naturally so high in acidity that the malolactic fermentation is no routine achievement.

The name of **Greco di Tufo**, a substantial white from inland Campania of remarkably original flavour, apple-peel fragrance, and mineral depths, shares the credit between its long-assumed Greek origins and the tuff rock on which it grows. In the same hilly province, Avellino, the classical Fiano grape makes a more delicate, subtle white, a wine that combines emphasis with firmness and a hauntingly floral scent. With age, it reveals powerful, smoky, stony notes. Both Greco di Tufo and Fiano di Avellino are now DOCG.

These are the established names of modern Campanian wine, but some encouragingly good wines are emerging from less expected areas. Naples' own DOC, **Campi Flegrei**, produces fine Falanghina, which is also the dominant grape in the white wines of **Capri** and the **Costa d'Amalfi** (both DOCs). In the Furore subzone of Amalfi, Marisa Cuomo makes some of Italy's most celebrated whites.

Centenarian vines of ancient varieties are common on this dramatic stretch of coast and its hinterland, the Tramonti Valley. **Lacryma Christi** whites and reds grown on the slopes of Mount Vesuvius are finally earning a reputation for more than just their name.



Basilicata, the region to the south, has only one significant DOC: **Aglianico del Vulture**, grown (with unusual skill for this part of the world) on the relatively cool slopes of an extinct volcano up to 2,500ft (760m), using its own distinct Aglianico. Less famous than Taurasi, it can often offer better value, although winemaking standards vary wildly. In 2010, the Superiore version of the wine was promoted to DOCG status. Aglianico is also grown on the Adriatic coast in the little-known region of **Molise**, where Di Majo Norante does an outstanding job – as this organic producer continues to do with his Montepulciano and Falanghina grapes.

On the east coast, in the wilds of Calabria, there is just one strong red of reputation, **Cirò**, made from the delicate, hauntingly perfumed Gaglioppo grape. The best-known producer is the family-owned firm of Librandi, which has been working hard to rescue such other local grapes as the Magliocco Canino, from which it makes the velvety Magno Megonio. Calabria's most original wine, however, may be the strong, tangy, and sweetly perfumed **Greco di Bianco** made around a village itself called Bianco, near the very tip of the Italian "toe".

Puglia's transformation

The wines of Calabria and Basilicata may be works in progress, but Puglia's wine scene has been radically transformed. Generous EU grants for pulling up vines have had mixed results, too, often at the expense of the low bush-vines yielding concentrated, interesting wine. Puglia is much the flattest southern Italian wine region, which makes it easy to work compared with its neighbours, but provides little in the way of altitude to afford relief from the unremitting summer heat.

Three-quarters of the region's output is still blending wine for the north (including France) or fodder for the producers of grape concentrate, vermouth, or the stills that dispose of Europe's embarrassing wine surplus. However, the proportion of Puglian wine made expressly for discerning drinkers has certainly been increasing. The flatland around Foggia in the north churns out undistinguished Trebbiano, Montepulciano, and Sangiovese, but some more ambitious bottlings have been emerging from producers based in **San Severo**.

Castel del Monte DOC, in the north of the "heel" of Italy mapped in detail above, boasts some modest hills and produces some notable dark reds based on its late-ripening Nero di Troia, especially Torrevento's age-worthy single-vineyard Vigna Pedale and Rivera's Cappellaccio. But most of Puglia's more interesting wines are made on the flat Salento Peninsula, where there may be no great variation in exposition and mesoclimate, but the vines benefit from the cooling winds that blow off both the Adriatic and Ionian seas. Today, thanks to much-improved

viticulture, the better grapes are rarely picked before the end of September.

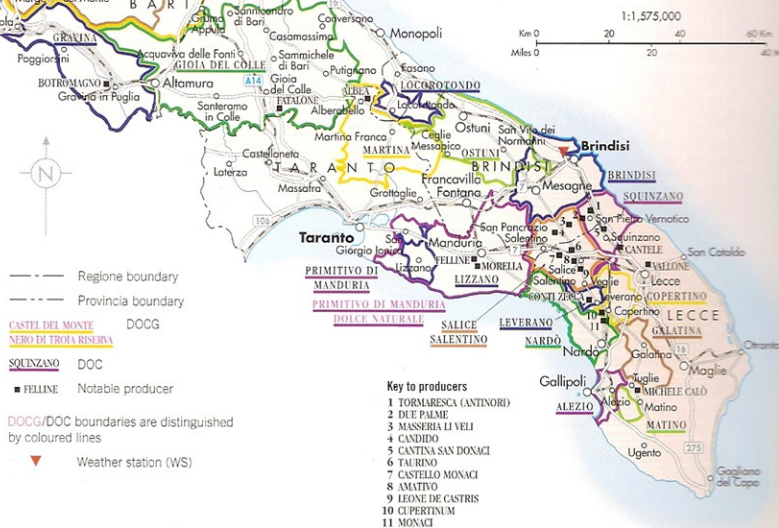
At the turn of the century, it was the peninsula's ability to provide such anodyne shelf-fillers as IGT Chardonnay del Salento that drew international attention, but there has been a perceptible increase in interest in Salento's local grapes. Negroamaro, "black-bitter", is the cautionary name of the principal red grape of eastern Salento, yet it can make attractive rosé and fruity reds for early drinking if it is not macerated for long or left too long in bottle. Its darker face is almost portlike, roasted reds in such DOCs as **Squinzano** and **Copertino**. Malvasia Nera, with different strains identified respectively with Lecce and Brindisi, is Negroamaro's usual blending partner and can add a certain velvet to the texture.

But the most famous Puglian variety is Primitivo – identical to California's Zinfandel and with its roots now established as Croatian – traditionally a speciality of western Salento, particularly on the red soils over limestone of Manduria and also in higher Gioia del Colle. Fiendish alcohol levels are the risk here. It takes the right hands to strike the voluptuous note. Fiano, Greco, and the perfumed Minutolo are being planted for white wines.

Pergolas such as these in Campania, being associated with overcropping, have been viewed with suspicion. But as temperatures rise, their use as grape sunscreens is starting to be acknowledged.

PUGLIA

On Italy's "heel", the hills that characterize the rest of the country suddenly disappear, with Gioia del Colle being one of the few wine zones with any elevation. Usefully cooling winds off both coasts are generally uninterrupted.



SOUTHERN ITALY: BRINDISI

Latitude / Altitude of WS
40.65° / 33ft (10m)

Average growing season temperature at WS
69.9°F (21.0°C)

Average annual rainfall at WS
22.5in (572mm)

Harvest month rainfall at WS
August: 0.8in (19mm)

Principal viticultural hazards
Rapid ripening, water stress, sunburn

Principal grape varieties
Negroamaro, Primitivo, Matvasia Nera, Nero di Troia

