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## Top 5 Italian Grape Varieties for Rosé

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
Italian varietals are a-plenty across the vast appellations of the country. And while most red grape varieties are made for red table wines, there's actually quite a few that are used for Rosé (or, *Rosato*, in Italian) production as well. In fact in our database alone, Italian wine reviewer Monica Larner has tasted 169 Italian Rosés spanning 22 different grape varieties. Of the 22 varietals she has tasted, the top five are Aglianico, Montepulciano, Negroamaro, Nerello Mascalese and Sangiovese.



Love Rosé? Then you'll enjoy the unique expressions that these five grape varieties produce. Here's a bit of information about each expression, as well as some classic, high-scoring wines we recommend that show off each varietal with style.

### **1. Aglianico | Top Regions for Rosé: Basilicata and Campania**

Aglianico is grown in the south of Italy, coming from the appellations of Basilicata and Campania. Larner states, "These Rosatos tend to be brighter in color and firmer in structure. The Aglianico grape has very high natural tannins and those come through, even when the wine sees extremely brief skin contact. I revert to these wines when I want to pair them with white meat or baked fish in a heavier cream sauce. You need that extra power to cut through those foods."

-  2013 Cantine del Notaio • Rosato Il Rogito (<https://www.robertparker.com/wines/Ax2pmokoXgD5X3LqM>)( \$17)
- 2014 Mastroberardino • Irpinia Rosato Lacrimarosa (<https://www.robertparker.com/wines/JwBt5BwRktWanHmCX>) (\$14)

### **2. Montepulciano | Top Region for Rosé: Abruzzo**

Hailing most famously from the Abruzzo DOC on Italy's eastern edge, the Montepulciano grape variety offers a distinct style of Rosé. "The Rosé category is extremely interesting," Larner says, "as Abruzzo is one of the first Italian regions to be so closely identified with pink-colored wines. These Rosés are slightly heavier, bolder and darker in color compared to other Italian regions associated with Rosé."

- 2012 Valentini • Cerasuolo d'Abruzzo (<https://www.robertparker.com/wines/yXjdJZpRoeFtMDmR>) (\$85)
- 2014 Torre dei Beati • Cerasuolo d'Abruzzo (<https://www.robertparker.com/wines/6eNhvB6kAdc2ceeXA>) (\$18)

### **3. Negroamaro | Top Region for Rosé: Puglia**

Like Aglianico, Negroamaro is another grape variety that calls southeastern Italy its home. And in the sunshine-filled appellation of Puglia, Larner notes that the "best-buy selections include crisp and acidic whites, floral Rosés, luminous sparklers and creamy dessert wines."

- 2012 Rosa del Golfo • Negroamaro Vigna Mazzi (<https://www.robertparker.com/wines/XPckdHYjz3broSxP4>) (\$30)
- 2015 Leone de Castris • Five Roses (<https://www.robertparker.com/wines/4u6ZTBawdtGDhbjie>) (\$14)

### **4. Nerello Mascalese | Top Region for Rosé: Etna**

Coming from Sicily, Nerello Mascalese is indigenous to the island and grows particularly well in the Etna DOC. And truth be told, the Etna terroir is perfect for producing refreshing Rosé, making it a premier region for the style. "I am absolutely excited and encouraged by the Rosato wines made on Etna with Nerello Mascalese," Larner says. "In fact, I consider these to be, by far, the best Rosatos made in Italy today; I probably wouldn't have said that 10 years ago. The work being done here is astonishing." About the style, Larner points out that "Etna Rosés are slightly sweet and tart, but what distinguishes them are those mineral, almost salty flavors that come from the blackened volcanic soils. Etna opens a whole new school when it comes to Italian Rosato, and the wines are getting better and better with each year I taste them. My prediction is that Etna will one day be recognized as Italy's number one Rosé wine territory." Now that's something about which to get excited!

- 2014 Pietradolce • Etna Rosato (<https://www.robertparker.com/wines/jPd2i7rBk6s8ubx6q>) (\$20)
- 2013 Calcagno • Etna Arcuria (<https://www.robertparker.com/wines/Jhjq4Zq4AmHPvKFis>) (\$25)

### **5. Sangiovese | Top Region for Rosé: Tuscany**

Producing quite a bit of Rosé—but some a mixed bag—is the famous region of Tuscany. And you guessed it—the Rosés here are made from the celebrated Sangiovese grape. But because the region is so steeped in its love for Sangiovese red table wines, Larner doesn't "foresee this culture changing to the extent that Tuscan Rosés will one day become a serious contender." She furthers, "This is a less-defined category with styles that range across the large region of Tuscany from the Coastal areas to the higher-altitude vineyards in the Italian Apennine Mountains. Sangiovese is well-suited to making Rosé, but the best grapes are usually reserved for the top-shelf reds that are so celebrated in Tuscany—with the exception of the Coast (where excellent whites are also made)."

- 2015 Tenuta Poggio Verrano • Vale in Rose (<https://www.robertparker.com/wines/8jDCmB5dkMDp9s9c7>) (\$20)
- 2013 Riecine • For Jasper Rosé (<https://www.robertparker.com/wines/HCifqbKxpi56yL7uR>) (\$26)

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