

A brief review of the wine industry in Corsica

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Viticulture in Corsica is a long story, going back to 600 BC. Around 1960 the vineyard area was about 30 000 hectares with a production of 2 million hectolitres.

And what about the Corsican wine industry in 2019?

In a nutshell:

- Total vineyard area: ±5750 hectares (figures 1, 2)
- 21% of the vineyard is organic (in comparison France is 9%)
- 290 producers
- 130 wineries
- 4 “caves cooperatives”
- 1 IGP and 9 AOP [From South to North: Sartène, Porto-Vecchio, Ajaccio, Ponte-Leccia (AOC Corse), Balagne (AOC Calvi), Casinca (AOC Corse), Patrimonio and Cap Corse (AOC Coteaux du Cap Corse et Muscat)].
- ±366012 hectolitres of wine for around 49 million bottles/year: 67% Rosé; 18% Red; 15% white and sweet wine (Muscat...)
- Emblematic varieties for top quality wines are:
 - o White: Vermentinu B (called Vermentino B or Rolle B)
 - o Red: Niellucciu N (originating from Toscane, seems to be a Sangiovese imported in Corsica XII Century) and Sciaccarellu N (called Mammolo in Toscane).

Interesting to note is that Corsica is attempting to develop its export strategy as the local market seems to be saturated (35% of the production); export to France is a decreasing market (45%) and the rest is sent to other international markets (20%).

Corsica produces quality and typical wines (figure 3). As examples, AOP Muscat du Cap Corse is famous, Domaine Arena produces top-quality Vermentinu and Niellucciu in AOP Patrimonio, and Clos de l'Alzetto really excellent Vermentinu and blend 'Sciaccarellu, Niellucciu, Grenache noir' in AOP Ajaccio (Carbonneau, pers.com.).

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Figure 1: The main AOP in Corsica and a view of a vineyard located on a slope (Patrimonio wine region).



Figure 2: Vineyard from the Patrimonio wine region facing the Mediterranean sea which allows the temperature to cool during the night at the ripening stage.



Figure 3: Example of bottle labelling (AOC Patrimonio)