

CURTO

The Curto family estate of 200 hectares (494 acres) is located in the territory of Ispica in the southeastern corner of Sicily, an area which straddles the two provinces of Ragusa and Siracusa, the heart of the zone of Sicily's finest Baroque architecture. The Curto have cultivated vineyards since 1670 (as demonstrated by an official dowry note, a notarial act signed by notary Vincenzo Paulino da Spaccaferno) and have a vast experience in various types of agriculture: the production of grapes for musts and wine, the cultivation of olives, citrus fruit, almonds, prickly pears, cereals, and vegetables.

In recent years, under the direction of Francesca Curto, the estate has concentrated its work on grapes and wine, with particular attention to the important potential of the Nero d'Avola grape. The climatic conditions of the 24 hectares (60 acres) of vineyards, situated in the Pachino zone, the finest area of all for the cultivation of this variety, are typical of the coastal regions of the central Mediterranean: warm to hot temperatures, scarce rainfall (which falls principally during winter months), and a certain regular light breeziness from winds off the sea. The zone's topography is dominated by the Iblei mountains to the north, a series of rugged high plateaus which gradually slope towards the Mediterranean. The soil, prevalently calcareous (Val di Noto is limestone and calcareous tufo), is rich in calcareous clays as well. The largest part of the vineyards are old, head-pruned, bush vines which yield no more than two tons of grapes per acre; a smaller, wire-trained section of the vineyards gives yields of three tons per acre.



Clockwise from top-left:

A close-up of the head-pruned (alberello) vines at harvest.

The fermenting tanks of the newly-finished winery in the Curto farm "Tenuta Sella".

"Tenuta Sella" from the outside.

The alberello system is ideal for the area, but the work in the vineyard is back-breaking!

