



HISTORY – SARDINIA

Sardinia has an ancient and important history of winemaking.

The island's central position in the western Mediterranean has enabled it to play a leading role in colonial expansion and trade since the times of ancient Mycaena. The Phoenicians, the Greeks and the Romans were responsible for the spread of viticulture and introduced new grape varieties which are still grown on the island today.

Recent historical, archaeological and geological research has drawn the conclusion that the "mythical" Atlantis was in fact Sardinia. Villages dating back to over 4,000 years ago have been discovered which include stone huts where grapes were crushed for making "holy drinks", most probably wine.

HISTORY – CAPICHERA

The Capichera winery began its story 25 years ago in the northern part of Sardinia, known as Gallura, opposite the island of Corsica.

The lands of the Capichera estate, owned by the family since the 19th century, were famous in the small community of Arzachena for the quality of their grapes and the wines they produced.

Vermentino, the traditional local variety, was used to make well-structured wines using small chestnut barrels.

In the mid-1970s the Ragnedda family planted new Vermentino vines and built a new winery for the production of fine wines.

Over the years the Ragnedda brothers have invested a great deal of energy in making Capichera a leading winery which produces fine quality wines.

Capichera is also accredited with the winemaking renaissance and revolution that has taken place in Sardinia.

Capichera's ideas, projects and results have had – and still have – considerable influence on Sardinian winemaking, the creation of new, good quality wineries and the improvement of quality in others, none of which would have happened without the stimulus of the prior experiences of a local wine producers, especially Capichera.

Everything we do at Capichera is the fruit of our passion for wine and our land, without mediation and without seeking help from international grape varieties. In fact, in difficult and unfavourable vintage years we have even chosen not to make wines (eg. Vendemmia Tardiva 2002).

Capichera is the only Sardinian winery to have voluntarily left the DOCG because it allows the use of different grape varieties in the blend!

We have always firmly believed that Sardinian grape varieties, used without blending, can produce great prestigious wines with definite typical features provided by the grape variety and the terroir.



WINES – CAPICHERA

In 1980 we sold our first bottle with the Capichera label: a monovarietal Vermentino which differed greatly from the white wines available at the time – richer, more stylish, with greater ageing possibilities, outstandingly typical with the aromas of the terroir.

Italy's top wine journalist Luigi Veronelli defined it as “a Mediterranean Montrachet”.

In 1990, after three years of small-batch fermentation, we made the world's first Vermentino fermented and aged entirely in barriques – “Capichera Vendemmia Tardiva”.

Well-known journalist Robert Parker recently described this wine as “the best Italian white wine made from native grape varieties and the best Vermentino in the world”.

The 1990 vintage was recently presented in London where, with great satisfaction, we demonstrated its incredible ability to age well without losing any of its fine qualities, which is typical of great wines.

In the Nineties we purchased old vineyards planted with Carignano, a native grape variety, and made our first red, Assaje, fermented in stainless steel vats.

Assaje also shares the qualities and features already found in our whites: elegance, structure and typicality.

In 2001 we built our new winery and began making another red, the Mantènghja, another monovarietal Carignano, fermented in French oak barriques for 18-24 months.

Currently our 50 hectare-estate planted with Vermentino and Carignano produces about 300,000 bottles per year, 60% of which are white and 40% red.

OUR PHILOSOPHY – NATIVE GRAPE VARIETIES

Vermentino (white) and Carignano (black) are native local grape varieties which have been grown in Sardinia for many centuries. Carignano was introduced by the Phoenicians while Vermentino arrived in the 18th century via Corsica.

Today Carignano is found in all the winemaking areas of the western Mediterranean. Vermentino is also grown in Liguria and Tuscany but the granitic soil of Gallura (northern Sardinia) is its ideal habitat.

The winery's philosophy today is the same initial idea that inspired the Ragnedda family's imagination back in the Seventies: making great wines of international standard exclusively from native local Sardinian varieties, unblended, without the use of international grape varieties.

This concept may not seem so unusual today because many Italian winemaking areas have now begun to make wines from native grapes. But 20 or 30 years ago, the presentation of a monovarietal Vermentino without the addition of Chardonnay or Sauvignon or other international varieties was a considerable and innovative challenge.

Today Capichera still tends to avoid trends and market fluctuations, remaining convinced that the promotion of native grape varieties like Vermentino and Carignano is the way to make prestigious wines that are unique in the world.

After lengthy experimental selections and small-batch fermentation over the years we have chosen to make just four wines: two whites (one Vermentino fermented in stainless steel, the Capichera

Classico, and the other in wood, Vendemmia Tardiva) and two reds (one Carignano fermented in stainless steel, the Assaje, and the other in wood, the Mantènghja). During this process we rejected other native varieties because, despite their high quality, they did not guarantee the stylish elegance typical of Capichera wines.



THE FUTURE

We have recently finished planting new Vermentino and Carignano vineyards, using rootlings selected by us and reproduced in nursery gardens exclusively for us.

This project began a few years ago with the selections carried out in the older vineyards (some one hundred years old) on plants which showed the best features for winemaking and would make the most typical wine. These plants were reproduced in specialised nursery gardens and we are very proud of all the new plantations because they are the fruit of research and work carried out over a ten year period.

In practical terms this will mean a further improvement of the quality of our wines in the near future, with absolute respect for the environment, since our vineyards have always been farmed using organic and biodynamic methods.

Our main objective is for our clients to experience unique sensations when they drink our wines, and also to hand down to our children a land which our work has preserved as pleasant and unspoilt.