



viticoltori del ponente ligure

## Ligurian Wines

Hemmed in between the Alps and Appenines which protect it from northern winds and the sea which ensures its mild climate, Liguria has few areas of level ground and has many short stream-like rivers. The patient, strenuous efforts made over many centuries have created a unique landscape with small plots of land maintained by dry-stone walling which were once cultivated with olive groves, lemon and orange orchards and vineyards, now largely replaced by greenhouses used for growing flowers and vegetables.

The surviving vineyards, scattered far and wide, still produce numerous local wines even outside the most traditional areas and the zones considered most suitable for producing D.O.C. wines. One of the distinctive features of grape-growing and winemaking in Liguria is the part-time nature of the work by people who own small pieces of land split into small plots. Wineries would not be profitable so they are rare and almost inexistent.

There are, however, remarkable cases of minute vineyards tended by passionately keen growers who, eager to achieve greater market success, have improved methods of cultivation and techniques to create high quality wines. The fragmented nature of the land under cultivation, the paucity of grapes (Ligurian wine represents 0.5% of Italian wine production) due to the nature of the terrain, the dry climate with occasional spells of drought, and arguably the individualistic character of Ligurians, have led to a vast range of products (85 types of wine have been identified) which stem from the excessive variety of grape varieties (about one hundred).

Some believe that the vine was introduced to Liguria by the ancient Greeks. Others argue that the Etruscans were the first to cultivate vines in the western part of the region. There is probably a bit of truth to both traditions even though the “alberello” system reflects the significant trace of Greek colonists. Other records date to the centuries between the late Middle Ages and the Early Modern Era.



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