

The Farmhouse Table



All food all the time

FarmhouseTable.com

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SICILY WINE TOUR - FALL 2009

Catania Sunday October 11--Palermo Thursday October 22

Sunday 11 October: **Day 1** Arrive Catania airport and transport to Tenuta Scilio Di Valle Galfina. Located in Linguaglossa on the northeastern side of Mt. Etna, the farmhouse and cellars date back to 1815 and are surrounded by organically cultivated vineyards. This beautiful agriturismo will be our home for our first 4 days in one of the most diverse and picturesque regions of Sicily. Get settled in and relax before we have a tasting of the wines from the Scilio estate. Dinner at the Valle Galfina farmhouse.

Monday 12 October: **Day 2** After breakfast we'll take an easy trip, about 20 minutes away, to the town of Randazzo. This medieval jewel has stayed untouched by the eruptions of Etna. Possibly visit a ceramic studio and stroll the narrow streets where the churches are built of blocks of lava. Light lunch and wine tasting at Tenuta delle Terre Nere Vineyards. We'll return to Valle Galfina for an afternoon cooking class. Sleep at farmhouse.

Tuesday 13 October: **Day 3** Breakfast, then a day trip to the tiny town of Solicchiata, for a wine tasting/discussion with Frank Cornelissen. Frank uses local grape varieties from ancient ungrafted vines that express territorial identity. This opportunity promises to give you a completely different view of winemaking with this controversial master. For lunch, we'll go to the Agriturismo Borgo San Nicolao for a demonstration and tasting of traditional cheeses and salumi, all "fatta in casa", at the agriturismo. After lunch we'll have an opportunity to taste another local wine at Passopisciaro vineyards. We'll have time to relax at the farmhouse for awhile before heading out to dinner either in Bronte or Taormina.

Wednesday 14 October: **Day 4** Our last day in the DOC Dell'Etna will take us south to the town of Viagrande for a wine tasting and lunch at Azienda Agricola Benanti. Those who are interested may take an excursion to actually explore Mt. Etna after lunch or you may just want to have a relaxing afternoon back at the farmhouse. You choose! Dinner out or at Valle Galfina before hitting the sack.

Thursday 15 October: **Day 5** After breakfast, we say farewell to our hosts at Valle Galfina and make our way to the southeastern part of the island. Our first stop will be one of the most fascinating towns in Sicily, Ragusa Ibla, a UNESCO Heritage city. Essentially Baroque, the town, on first sight is a jumble of houses, churches, and civic palazzi, piled on top of each other, clinging to a steep gorge. It is simply breathtaking. After a sampling of the delicious **Gelato** for which this town is famous, we will travel to Locanda COS located near Vittoria. We will have a splendid lunch at the Locanda and a tasting of their biodynamic wines including 2 of their superb DOCG Cersuolo di Vittoria. We will then travel south, all the way to the coast to Palma di Montechiaro, where we'll be staying at the agriturismo Mandranova. Get settled, relax, and have dinner there at the farm.

Friday 16 October: **Day 6** Breakfast, then we'll tour the Mandranova estate, and pick olives if you'd like, tour the olive mill, and a very special treat---taste freshly pressed olive oil. Guiseppe and Silvia di Vincenzo, the proprietors of Mandranova, produce fine mono-cultivar olive oil and other artisanal products from their farm. We'll then take a day trip to Butera for a wine tasting and lunch at Feudo Principi di Butera. Returning to Mandranova, we will join Silvia for a cooking class featuring Sicilian home cooking. We'll sup on what we've made in the cooking class and then off to bed.

Saturday 17 October: **Day 7** Today we will take a drive in the beautiful Sicilian countryside to the town of Grotte for wine tasting at Morgante. On the way back, we can stop at the Valley of the Temples near Agrigento and have a picnic lunch if the weather cooperates with us. The Valley of the Temples is one of the most important archeological sites in the world, founded as a Greek colony in the 6th century BC. The afternoon will be spent relaxing at Mandranova or if the weather is nice, a walk on the beach at nearby Marina di Palma.

Sunday 18 October: **Day 8** We'll have breakfast and then leave Mandranova heading west to Sambuca di Sicilia to visit Planeta vineyards. The vineyard "Ulmo" is part of the original Planeta home; the 17th century farmhouse stands between an Arab castle, the Arancio Lake and a mountain range. Traveling north we'll drive through the countryside covered in vineyards and olive groves to the agriturismo Baglio Fontana located in Buseto Palizzolo. The Baglio produces olive oil, honey, wine, and organic fruits and vegetables. There is also a spa on the premises for those wanting a little pampering using the Baglio's almonds, honey and local sea salt in their treatments. After a day of traveling, we'll settle in and have dinner at the farmhouse with some of the local wines of the region.

Monday 19 October: **Day 9** After breakfast, we'll take a short drive to the hill town of Erice, known throughout Sicily for its almond pastries and gorgeous views of the Egadi Islands. We'll explore this ancient town at our leisure before going to some of the local wineries and tasting the Erice DOC wines. We will chose from nearby wineries such as Casa Vinicola Fazio, Barone di Serramarrocco, and Firriato near the town of Trapani. This part of Sicily is closer to Tunisia than to the mainland of Italy so the cuisine deeply reflects the Arab influence. This evening we'll dine at a taverna enjoying one of the local specialties of the area, il cuscusu---couscous flavored with fresh rock fish stock and seafood.

Tuesday 20 October: **Day 10** We'll have breakfast at the farmhouse, then decide if anyone would like to drive into Palermo to do some city sight seeing and shopping....possibly stopping in the lovely seaside village of Scopello on our way back. If you prefer, you may choose to have a quiet day relaxing at the agriturismo indulging in a spa treatment or maybe a cooking class, or just sitting by the pool reading a book. Tonight we'll have a special dinner out at a nearby trattoria.

Wednesday 21 October: **Day 11** For our last day on the island, we'll take an exciting day trip--a drive down the coast to visit the ancient salt flats first started by the Phoenicians and still operating today as it did thousands of years ago. Then on to the city of Marsala which takes its name from the Arabic Mars-al-Allah, meaning the harbor of God. The Marsala wine that you'll taste today is nothing like the wine you cook with back home. We'll also visit and have a light lunch and wine tasting at Donnafugata vineyard in their lovely "Sala della Botti" at their cantine in Marsala. Afterward we'll travel back through the countryside to the agriturismo to have an extraordinary farewell dinner.

Thursday 22 October: Morning transfer to Palermo airport **Arrivederci to Sicilia!**