

How do you experience wines in connection to terroir, culture and history? Angela Scott offers a personal tour through Maze Row's collection

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IN WINE, WE FIND LIFE

In wine we seek truth, craft and the passion of discovery. In life, we seek to build a community connected by a love for wine and wine culture. We are Maze Row Wine Merchant. We inspire a culture of fine wine discovery, a life that talks of people and their sense of place, of truth, craft and endeavor. An enriching journey, encompassing heritage, terroir, culture and philosophy. Through our curation of wines, stories and immersive experiences, we share the best of life with the adventurers, the bon vivants, the passionate connoisseurs.



Cover page and next: Sicilian vineyard
Tornatore's wines embodies the connection
of the family to their land and Mount Etna

There is a dampness, the mustiness of the earth and leaves combined that release when I step onto the soil. As my foot sinks into the soft earth, the wet moss bounces back with my touch and branches snap under my feet. A deep inhale and I know I'm home, Oregon.

Terroir isn't just sun and soil: it's a feeling, a connection that lives deep inside of many of us. It is a calling, knowing that you are home. You know instantly when you encounter someone with the same love and connection to land and place, which is what I experienced on meeting Pietro Ratti for the first time in 2016.

As head of the revered Piedmont winery, his enthusiasm and confidence for Barolo are undeniable. I had visited this part of Italy before and walked through the Barolo vineyards, but this time it was different. I could feel a connection, a passion, a knowing — a love for the land. You could sense it standing above Conca (one of the oldest sub zones of the Barolo district and Ratti's first land), viewing the inverted shape of the vineyard where Pietro's father, Renato knew there was something special about this land. The landscape and soils of Barolo can be mapped and distinguished. Yet, what truly expresses the concept of terroir is this connection, the feeling that this land and its people have been intertwined for hundreds of years.

Barolo stakes its existence against a single variety, Nebbiolo, which leaves no room for error. And it is through this path that you can experience the land and its people in a single expression. Ratti's Barolo, made from the Rocche dell'Annunziata cru vineyard, best articulates this connection with terroir. It is both intensely aromatic and delicate, then comes the power, which slowly sneaks up to let you know this wine will be able to live a long life.

Meanwhile, another of Maze Row's producers, the family run Tornatore's wines are a true expression of Sicily, and in particular Mount Etna. When you spend enough time in the forest, knowing the smell of rain and the mountains, it is that single sliver of sunlight piercing through the trees that calls to your soul. You crave the brightness of the light, the feel of the sun warming your skin and the wide-open sky. Sicily in the summertime delivers this exact feeling.

Arriving for the first time to experience Tornatore is akin to being among family. The warm greetings embody the connection of the Tornatore family to their land and specifically Mount Etna. Living in the shadow of an active volcano is rare for most of us, but the commitment to their land and wines is backed by generations tied to the area known as Castiglione di Sicilia.

In such a landscape, creating terroir-driven wines brings a different level of commitment, one that the owner Francesco Tornatore and his son Giuseppe have had the vision to embrace. Driving up to the vineyard in the contrada of Pietrarizzo on the northside of Etna, you pass a wall made of volcanic rocks, the fine earth layering dust as you move through it.

This intimate connection with the land is vividly expressed through Tornatore's wines, which are a precise reflection of the sun, minerality of the soil, and the roots of a family whose DNA is embodied in the land. A great example is the Pietrarizzo Bianco and Rosso, which offer aromatics that jump immediately out of the glass, then comes the precision of a lean wine showcasing the minerality of the Etna soil.

These regions and families work hard to bring life to the land they love through the lens of winemaking. They are an expression of living graciously, loving fiercely and drinking with passion.





Montalcino winery Argiano has instituted a focus on terroir-driven wines and with a scientific approach to soil mapping the vineyards

TASTING FOR TERROIR

Terroir-driven wines connect with the winemaker and their land. It is through this intimate knowledge that they truly are stewards of their place. From Italy to Oregon, Angela Scott shares her favourite vintages.

PIEROPAN SOAVE DOC CALVARINO

Italian winery Pieropan was the first to label a wine Soave, the first to age a Soave before release, the first to make a single-vineyard Soave (1971 Calvarino). Run by brothers Andrea and Dario Pieropan, the estate's wines are deeply connected to the terroir which is primarily volcanic. The exception is La Rocca, a vineyard which is influenced by white chalk. Created in 1978 this is truly an expression of the capabilities of Garganega as a single varietal. I love the richness of this wine, which can be easily substituted in the place of a classic chardonnay. One of my favourite meals I had with this wine was veal scallopini piccata with shaved truffles on top. The Calvarino remains a sommelier's beloved white wine; set aside, this wine is even better with some age. I'm holding onto a bottle of 2016 to enjoy with some Kusshi oysters.

ARGIANO RESERVA BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO

One of the finest old wines I've experienced is a 1978 Argiano Reserva Brunello di Montalcino. It retained its textural quality and was alive on the palate. What I loved the most was that this wine still showed qualities of freshness and aspects of fruit. It was balanced and not overtaken by the oak for its age. This is what I am expecting from Argiano Vigna del Suolo Brunello di Montalcino 2016. Argiano's CEO and winemaker, Bernardino Sani, has been putting his heart and soul into the land, completing an in-depth soil mapping of all the vineyards. From that arises the Vingna del Suolo, a cru Brunello that comes from six select plots which contain high levels of limestone. The 2016 vintage beautifully expresses the land through this wine with both power and finesse.

CAMERON CLOS ELECTRIQUE AND ABBY RIDGE PINOT NOIR

If you can find a bottle of Cameron wine don't think, just buy it. A renowned producer with a classic Burgundian expression from the Willamette Valley in Oregon, the Clos Electrique and Abby Ridge Pinot Noir best represent the vineyard and its terroir. Clos Electrique is hard to find in the sheer fact that it's only seven acres. The vineyard is located in the Dundee Hills and showcases all the passion of his work and respect for the land using organic viticulture and dry farming. This wine shows the power of Oregon Pinot Noir. Abby Ridge is a juxtaposition of Clos Electrique. Coming from Ribbon Ridge, higher in elevation, it showcases the finesse and elegance of Oregon Pinot Noir.

WALTER SCOTT SOJEAU VINEYARD PINOT NOIR AND CHARDONNAY

You are always drawn to your home, which for me is Oregon Pinot Noir. A favoured region is Eola Amity Hills, which I have returned to over the years for some very special wines. This region is a little further south closer to Salem than Portland, and typically showcases beautiful floral aspects and minerality. Walter Scott is a producer I drink for its Chardonnays and expression of Pinot Noirs across soil types. Alongside Ratti's Rocche dell'Annunziata, at my ideal dinner table would be a bottle of Walter Scott's Sojeau Vineyard Pinot Noir 2016.



ARGIANO
CANTINA DAL 1580

One of Montalcino's most storied estates, Argiano is seeing a new renaissance with winemaker Bernardino Sani's refined and classical approach.



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