

DRINKING.

The Sicilian drink par excellence is wine. It is produced throughout Sicily and there are two main poles: that of Trapani in western Sicily and that of Etna in eastern Sicily.

Wine constitutes a significant part of Sicily's agricultural and gastronomic economy. The wines are mainly full-bodied ones with an intense bouquet and full of tannins that are exported to be added to 'weaker' wines from other European productive areas – they are the so-called blending wines. Today the wine produced and bottled directly in Sicily is a much better product and can be found high up on the list of Regional Italian wines.

There is no real tradition of producing distillates, like grappa, probably due to overly tannic herbs. This has given rise over the centuries to a flourishing industry of distillates of the alcohol produced from marc and destined for infusions and other things, rather than that of aquavits. However, many Sicilian wine companies have now added good quality grappa to their range of products.

Rosoli (sweet liqueurs) are the most typical spirits produced and drunk in Sicily. They are infusions of different fragrances in alcohol. A significant example can be found both in the restaurant at Case Perrotta and on sale in the shop.

In the south east of Sicily, in the Hyblaean Mountains, there is the age-old tradition of distilling honey to obtain a delicious liqueur. Today it is difficult to find, both because of the disappearance of the last few remaining alembics and because of new legislation which has banned its production.

In west Sicily in [Marsala](#), at the end of the seventh century, an English family called Woodhouse discovered the potential of the local wines by chance and started exporting them. After this, the Florio family, who had started producing Marsala, began distilling a Brandy that was successfully adopted by Sicilians after meals.

Until some time ago, drinking "Zammù" or aniseed, the old Arab habit transplanted in Sicily, was very popular. It was the Greek "Ouzu". The aniseed, extracted from fennel seed, is added in small quantities to ice-cold water making it cloudy and producing a refreshing drink in the hot summer sun.

In Catania there is another age-old habit of Arab origin, which has spread to the smaller towns along the 'Riviera dei Ciclopi': the refreshing homemade non-alcoholic drinks that can be found at one of the many 'chioschi' (kiosks) in the city. Each kiosk makes its own 'syrops' from local fruits or not and serves them, often mixing them, with cold water or soda water: lemon, mandarin, bergamot, chinotto and so on. One of the most popular and refreshing summer drinks is "Selz, limone e sale" (soda water, lemon and salt).

FOLLOWING [THE SICILIAN CONFECTIONERY](#)

