

An Ancient Grape Variety Aglianico

Charles Scicolone (December 03, 2014)



Aglianico is an ancient grape variety. It was first cultivated by the Phoenicians and later brought to Southern Italy by the Greeks 3,000 years ago when they colonized the area.

In Italy, Aglianico was first planted near modern day Pozzuoli and from there it spread to other parts of Campania and to Basilicata. Pliny the Elder wrote about it in his Natural History. Wine made from Aglianico was called Falernian and was highly regarded by the Romans.

The [Aglianico](#) [2] grape was known as Elenico (Italian for Greek) until the 15 Century when it began to be called Aglianico.

The name might also come from *vita hellenica*, Latin for Greek wine.

Today, Aglianico is grown mostly in [Campania](#) [3] and [Basilicata](#) [4] with plantings also in Puglia,



Molise and Calabria. The Aglianico grape does very well in volcanic soil and at altitudes of 300 to 500 meters. Aglianico is also used as a blending grape in Campania.

Aglianico reaches its highest expression in the form of Taurasi from Campania, one of Italy's great red wines, which can age for many years. In fact there are many who believe that the three great grape varieties in Italy are [Nebbiolo](#) [5], [Sangiovese](#) [6] and Aglianico. In Basilicata, Aglianico is used to make Aglianico del Vulture, a wine also with long aging potential.

Wines made from Aglianico are full-bodied with good fruit, tannins, hints of blackberries, leather and smoke. They go very well with braised dishes, such as brasato di maiale, tender pork shoulder simmered in wine with vegetables.

When purchasing the wine, note that if the word Aglianico appears on the label, the wine will sell for around \$20. If the label indicates Aglianico del Vulture or Taurasi, the wine can sell for \$50 or more.

For more information about cooking, go to charlesscicolone.wordpress.com [7]

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Links

- [1] <http://iitaly.org/files/rossodicostanza1417655249jpg>
- [2] <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aglianico>
- [3] <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Campania>
- [4] <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basilicata>
- [5] <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nebbiolo>
- [6] <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sangiovese>
- [7] <https://charlesscicolone.wordpress.com/>