



**BENANTI**

2020

*"Benanti's wine making history is synonymous with Etna wine making history. In fact, the hard work and excellent wines produced at this historic winery are what catapulted this unknown part of Sicily to the enological forefront. Benanti's wines are among the best made on the volcano today".*

**ROBERT PARKER/THE WINE ADVOCATE - MONICA LARNER, ITALIAN  
REVIEWER (october 2015)**

*"If Nerello Mascalese, Nerello Cappuccio and Carricante have become superstar grape varieties, along with Etna wines in general, credit needs to go to the Benanti family [...], who were by far the first to believe in this mountain viticulture. Today Benanti makes what might be Italy's best white wine, the Etna Bianco Superiore Pietra Marina, as well as the best version of the mono-variety Nerello Cappuccio, a wine that shows that this variety does not necessarily have to be play second fiddle to the more famous Nerello Mascalese".*

**VINOUS.COM - IAN D'AGATA, WINE WRITER E AUTORE DI LIBRI DI FAMA  
INTERNAZIONALE (dicembre 2015)**



# BENANTI

## **HISTORY AND PROFILE**

Benanti winery was founded in 1988 in Castiglione di Sicilia, on the northern slope of Mount Etna in Sicily, under the name “Tenuta di Castiglione”, by Catania-born Giuseppe Benanti, then aged 43, whose grandfather was a grower at an amateur level in the late 1800’s in his hometown of Viagrande, on the south-eastern slope of the volcano.

Giuseppe was an entrepreneur in the pharmaceutical industry but he was a countryman at heart, such that many years later (2011) he was awarded the title of “Accademico dei Georgòfili” by the prestigious, Florence-based homonymous academy, for his merits in the advancement of the development of the Etna wine region.

Despite the existence of an “Etna DOC” appellation (the first in Sicily, established in 1968), Giuseppe was well aware that no noteworthy, disruptive, high quality fine wine had yet been produced in the Etna region and that there was no experienced local enologist to turn to for advice and no existing producer that he could regard as a benchmark for the outstanding standard he had in mind.

Rather than rely solely on a “star enologist” from northern Italy or from abroad, he decided to hire a young local consultant called Salvo Foti, surely committed and talented but with no previous experience on Mount Etna. They then sought the support of prominent advisors from Piedmont – i.e. the enologists Marco Monchiero and Gian Domenico Negro from the Langhe region and Professor Rocco Di Stefano of the “Istituto Sperimentale per l’Enologia di Asti” - and from Burgundy (Professor Jean Siegrist of the *Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique – I.N.R.A.* - in Beaune) to oversee the early years of the winery. Monchiero then ended up consulting the winery until 2007.

Recognizing the diversity, uniqueness and historical suitabilities to specific grape varieties of the different slopes and sub zones of Etna, and valuing what the local growers had done for hundreds of years, Benanti purchased vineyards on the northern slope of the volcano (Rovittello, Castiglione di Sicilia, a premium area for the Nerello Mascalese variety) and established long term ties with a number of small growers in Milo, on the eastern slope (a superior area to grow the Carricante variety).

At that time Giuseppe Benanti was driven by a passion for the world of fine wine, a deep love for Etna, the desire to embark on a lifetime project for the second half of his life and by the ambition to set a new standard and unveil the full potential of the Etna wine region. He was keen to find out if the local *terroir*, coupled for the first time with man’s



## BENANTI

excellence-oriented and forward-looking work, was capable of yielding fine, elegant, potentially outstanding wines with a unique identity, from indigenous grapes.

In 1988 and 1989 Benanti conducted countless micro-vinifications, whilst bottling started with the 1990 vintage. At Vinitaly 1993 in Verona the winery introduced four Etna DOC wines, including Etna Rosso Rovittello 1990 (Nerello Mascalese with small quantities of Nerello Cappuccio) and Etna Bianco Superiore Pietra Marina 1990 (100% Carricante). Through the rest of 1990's, an innovative selection of "monovitigni", i.e. wines made with a single grape variety (Nerello Mascalese, Nerello Cappuccio, Minnella Bianca), was added, mainly for didactic and educational purposes.

The relentless, revealing and thorough ground work carried out throughout the 1990's proved to be extremely valuable in order to unveil the potential and the true essence of the Etna territory. In those years the winery also paved the way for the spreading of the culture and knowledge of Etna wines in the world by gradually entering markets such as the U.S.A., Canada, the U.K., France, Scandinavia and Japan, educating local sommeliers and wine professionals with the support of highly focused importers and obtaining visibility on several leading wine publications.

As Benanti's work with Carricante, Nerello Mascalese and Nerello Cappuccio gradually earned the appreciation of the global wine community, the subsequent arrival on Etna of other producers from 2001 onwards – some of which actually turned to Benanti for initial advice and even material help with research and vinification – contributed to generating increased visibility for the region by broadening the group of high profile growers fostering the local grape varieties.

In the first half of the 2000's Benanti kept bringing about more inspiring innovation to the region, e.g. by producing the first ever sparkling wine from Etna made with Carricante (2002) and conducting for the first time a 5-year long study on indigenous yeasts which eventually led to the selection and patenting of four strains (2005-2010).

Thanks to its innovative first-hand experience, its game-changing work and its consistent quality over 20 years, by the late 2000's Benanti earned a rock-solid reputation among wine professionals and enthusiasts. In the meantime, some of its wines attained true global notoriety, such as Etna Bianco Superiore Pietra Marina (Etna's most highly acclaimed white wine, from grapes grown in Milo on the eastern slope of the volcano), Etna Rosso Rovittello (the winery's first red wine ever produced,



## BENANTI

from the area of Rovittello on the northern slope) and Etna Rosso Serra della Contessa (introduced with vintage 1998 following the acquisition by Giuseppe Benanti of the homonymous estate on the slopes of the Monte Serra extinct volcanic cone in his grandfather's native town of Viagrande on Etna's south-eastern slope).

Since the end of 2012 the winery is run by Giuseppe's twin sons Antonio and Salvino, born in 1974, with their father providing continuous inspiration. After several years of part time contribution to the winery, they decided to make the winery their "reason to be". With a long term view in mind, they have further refined their father's vision and are working hard to take the winery to new heights, through a number of entrepreneurial decisions, such as for example:

- the promotion to the post of sole enologist of Enzo Calì, a full time employee of Benanti since 2004 (who gained a very solid experience with Foti and Monchiero until 2007 and with just Foti until 2011)
- the lucid decision to sell vineyards or parcels deemed non-strategic or sub-optimal
- the acquisition of new parcels and vineyards in strategic and superior sub zones on both the north and east slopes of Etna
- the planting of new vines in 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020
- the beginning of the process that will lead to the organic certification of the winery (Benanti has been practicing organic viticulture for several years)
- the upgrade of the winery's vinification facilities, with investments made in new temperature control systems, a new horizontal pneumatic press, new laboratory instruments, new vinification vessels, new large casks and more
- the set up of two new warehouses with a total capacity of 450 pallet spaces, with state-of-the-art temperature control equipment (one of which, with a capacity of 200 pallet spaces, is devoted to bottle-ageing and storage of back vintages)
- the establishment of an organized "cellar door" educational activity and incoming program at the winery, now considered a benchmark on Etna, to interact more efficiently with wine enthusiasts and professionals alike



- the establishment of new collaborations with several new specialized, like-minded wine importers around the world, often aided by Antonio and Salvino Benanti themselves

What started as Giuseppe Benanti's dream and challenge thirty-two years ago has now become an organized, though niche and family-run, winery relying on strong core competences and a rock solid reputation.

By reinforcing more and more the winery's traditional focus, boutique profile and artisan culture, coupled with renovated technology and a growing number of highly suitable parcels, Antonio and Salvino aim to make Benanti one of the most respected wineries in the old world within the next years. Their project is very much underway and a lot of hard work and personal resources are being devoted to it.

Having successfully completed a generational transition, and with an extremely clear vision of the future, the Benanti family winery is therefore not only an important piece of Etna's history and present, it is also very well positioned to be among the inspiring leaders of Etna's future development.

The winery's philosophy has not changed materially over the years and it has been refined and made more and more rigorous by Antonio and Salvino. It can be defined as a genuine devotion to the Etna DOC region and its multi-layered cultural and enological richness, made of three world class indigenous grape varieties and a multitude of terroirs with different combinations of elevation, volcanic soil type, sun exposure, rainfall rate, ventilation, age of vines and so forth.

Benanti's aim is to produce highly "territorial", elegant and balanced wines, with a typical volcanic soul and distinct character, refined and ageworthy. They are wines made to last, thanks to a careful vinification and ageing process, and to be appreciated over time.

In recognition of the quality of its work, Benanti was named Italian Winery of the Year by the Gambero Rosso/Slow Wine wine guide in 2007 and Top-100 Winery of the Year by Wine & Spirits magazine of the USA in 2012. It was also included in the "OperaWine, Finest Italian Wines: 100 Great Producers" list by Wine Spectator in 2015, 2019 and 2020. Over time, it has regularly been praised by Wine Spectator (USA), Wine Advocate (USA), Wine & Spirits (USA), Wine Enthusiast (USA), Vinous.com (USA), James Suckling



## BENANTI

(USA), New York Times (USA), Food&Wine Magazine (USA), SOMM Select (USA), Jancis Robinson (UK), Decanter (UK), Slow Wine (Italy), Bibenda (Italy), Gambero Rosso (Italy), Vinibuoni d'Italia (Italy), VITAE (Italy), La Revue du Vin de France (France), Forbes (USA) and others.

Total current production amounts to about 170,000 bottles, which can be enjoyed at selected restaurants and fine wine shops in Italy, the USA, Canada, the UK, France, Scandinavia, Switzerland, Russia, Japan, Singapore, China, Hong Kong, Australia and other markets. Demand exceeds supply so the entire production is usually allocated in a very selective manner.



# BENANTI

## **FACT SHEET**

<b>Name of the legal entity</b>	Benanti Viticoltori S.p.a.
<b>Brand</b>	BENANTI
<b>Established</b>	1988 (initially as “Tenuta di Castiglione”)
<b>First harvest</b>	1988
<b>First bottled vintage</b>	1990
<b>First wines to market</b>	Etna Rosso Rovittello 1990 and Etna Bianco Superiore Pietra Marina 1990, released at Vinitaly 1993
<b>Founder</b>	Giuseppe Benanti (born in July 1945 in Catania)
<b>Current producers</b>	Antonio Benanti, Sole Administrator, and Salvino Benanti (both born in May 1974 in Catania), sons of Giuseppe Benanti
<b>Enologist</b>	Enzo Calì (born in September 1975 in the Catania area), a full-time employee at Benanti since 2004
<b>Profile</b>	Family-owned and -run winery devoted to qualitative excellence
<b>Positioning</b>	Prestigious, historic winery, recognized as a pioneer of fine wine making on the Etna volcano
<b>Philosophy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- adoption of organic farming practices</li><li>- cultivation and use of indigenous grape varieties only</li><li>- expression of the entire Etna DOC region (N, E, S-E, S-W slopes)</li><li>- production of elegant and refined wines, with distinct typicity, character and ageing potential</li><li>- use of proprietary, patented selected indigenous yeasts</li><li>- use of Carricante as the only grape in white wines</li><li>- use of stainless steel, and no oak, for white wines</li><li>- use of stainless steel, and no oak, for “Nerello Cappuccio”</li><li>- extremely prudent use of neutral oak, mostly large casks and <i>tonneaux</i>, for Nerello Mascalese-based wines</li><li>- no premature release of wines into the market</li></ul>
<b>Current production</b>	approximately 170,000 <u>bottles</u>



# BENANTI

<b>Hectares</b>	28 hectares located in Castiglione di Sicilia/Rovittello (Northern slope), Milo (E), Viagrande (S-E) and Santa Maria di Licodia (S-W, managed since the mid 1990's)
<b>Cellar</b>	Via Giuseppe Garibaldi 475, 95029 Viagrande (CT), Italy
<b>Wine tastings</b>	Tenuta Monte Serra, Via Giuseppe Garibaldi 361, 95029 Viagrande (CT), Italy
<b>Percentage of export</b>	c.75%
<b><u>Main</u> export markets</b>	U.S.A., Canada, U.K., France, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Belgium, Russia, Japan, Singapore, Mainland China, Hong Kong, Australia and New Zealand
<b>Wines</b>	<p><i><u>“Traditional Method Sparkling Wines”</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>Noblesse</b>, Terre Siciliane IGT Spumante Metodo Classico Brut, (100% Carricante)</li><li>- <b>Lamorèmio</b>, Etna DOC Spumante Rosato Metodo Classico Brut (100% Nerello Mascalese)</li></ul> <p><i><u>“Traditional” (selection of grapes from different vineyards/slopes)</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>Etna Bianco Benanti</b>, Etna DOC Bianco (100% Carricante)</li><li>- <b>Etna Rosato Benanti</b>, Etna DOC Rosato (100% Nerello Mascalese)</li><li>- <b>Etna Rosso Benanti</b>, Etna DOC Rosso (c.80-90% Nerello Mascalese + c.10-20% Nerello Cappuccio)</li></ul> <p><i><u>“Contrade Selection”</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>Contrada Cavaliere</b>, Etna DOC Bianco (S-W Etna)</li><li>- <b>Contrada Rinazzo</b>, Etna DOC Bianco <u>Superiore</u> (E Etna) (100% Carricante)</li><li>- <b>Contrada Cavaliere</b>, Etna DOC Rosso (S-W Etna) (100% Nerello Mascalese)</li><li>- <b>Contrada Monte Serra</b>, Etna DOC Rosso (S-E Etna)</li><li>- <b>Contrada Dafara Galluzzo</b>, Etna DOC Rosso (N Etna) (100% Nerello Mascalese)</li><li>- <b>Nerello Cappuccio</b> (from Contrada Cavaliere), Terre Siciliane IGT Rosso (S-W Etna) (100% Nerello Cappuccio)</li></ul> <p><i><u>“Icons” (historical / single vineyard wines)</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>Pietra Marina</b>, Etna DOC Bianco <u>Superiore</u> (E Etna) (100% Carricante)</li><li>- <b>Rovittello Particella No. 341</b>, Etna DOC Rosso Riserva (N Etna) (<i>field blend</i> of c.90-95% Nerello Mascalese + c.5-10% Nerello Cappuccio)</li><li>- <b>Serra della Contessa Particella No. 587</b>, Etna DOC Rosso Riserva (S-E Etna) (<i>field blend</i> of c.85-90% Nerello Mascalese + c.10/15% Nerello Cappuccio)</li></ul>



# BENANTI

## **Future launches**

**Noblesse 48 Mesi**, Terre Siciliane IGT Spumante Metodo Classico Brut, to be launched in 2022.

## **Selected awards**

- Italian Winery of the Year, 2007 (Gambero Rosso/Slow Wine)
- Top 100 Winery, 2012 (Wine & Spirits Magazine)
- Included in the list "OperaWine, Finest Italian Wines: 100 Great Producers" by Wine Spectator in 2015, 2019 and 2020
- 12 Gambero Rosso "Tre Bicchieri" awards
- Several "Bibenda" and "Slow Wine" awards
- Several articles and excellent reviews on Wine Spectator, Decanter, Wine Advocate, Wine & Spirits, Wine Enthusiast, Jancis Robinson, Vinous.com, James Suckling, Food&Wine Magazine, SOMM Select, New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Gambero Rosso, Slow Wine, Bibenda, Vinibuoni d'Italia, La Revue du Vin de France, Gourmet Traveller Wine, Forbes and more