

FLORIO

MARSALA

1. THE ORIGIN OF MARSALA

2. THE FLORIO FAMILY
AND MARSALA

3. THE NEW FLORIO LINE

1.

THE ORIGIN OF MARSALA

1773-1928



STARTING WITH TWO FIGURES

AN ENGLISHMAN, A SICILIAN MAN AND A DONKEY

They say that, at the beginning of the 19th century, John Woodhouse Jr., son of the first Marsala merchant, traveled the countryside of Trapani on a donkey to taste local wines and find the most suitable ones for the production of fortified wines. He did not speak the Sicilian dialect, but his friendly nature won local growers who, upon hearing of his extremely attentive selection of wine lots, overcame their own suspicions and went to visit him at his baglio in Marsala, called Woodhouse «Factory Wine». They organized delegations that brought him wines for tasting, and, most importantly, gathered secrets and information on winegrowing and winemaking that would be useful to improve their work and enable them to offer a high-quality product which, once turned into a «wine used like Madeira», could be appreciated by the subjects of Queen Victoria and, consequently, by the rest of the world, given the vastness of the English Empire.



John Woodhouse

Even before Marsala became Marsala, Woodhouse and his donkey have drawn the character of the wine that would symbolize Sicily more than any other, using a single image. On the one hand, the *genius loci* of Sicily, a surprising land with outstanding vines, «robust» wines, a brilliant sun and the scent of the sea, enclosed in a raw form, one to be drawn up and teeming with potential. On the other, the English genius, the ability of British merchants – undoubtedly the sharpest, most intelligent and prepared of the time – to seize the opportunities of a new market and lay the foundations for its rational and profitable development, improving provision, logistics, shipments and, of course, the quality of Marsala.



The sailing ship Elisabeth by John Woodhouse

JOHN CHRISTIAN. THE BARREL MAKER OF MAN

There is another striking proof of how the English perfectly understood the importance of developing the Marsala trade starting from the improvement of the entire production. In the cemetery that the Woodhouses had built within the *baglio*¹ that was chosen to host their wine production (the first Marsala factory ever created, purchased in 1792 and built inside a former tuna fishery) the first tomb bore the name of John Christian, a barrel maker from the Isle of Man. Christian was just one of the hundreds of specialized artisans who, during the 19th century, chose to move from island to island to embrace Woodhouse's vision: to create an Italian "English-speaking" wine, one that could be appreciated by everyone and exported all over the world.

The barrel maker John Christian, who arrived in Marsala in 1787 together with John Woodhouse's sons (John Junior and Samuel) did not fully reap the accomplishments of his employers. But his tomb is the real proof that the English merchants chose to set up a high-level production right from the very beginning, surrounding themselves with professionals who could help them improve all the technological, enological and logistical aspects of Marsala production.

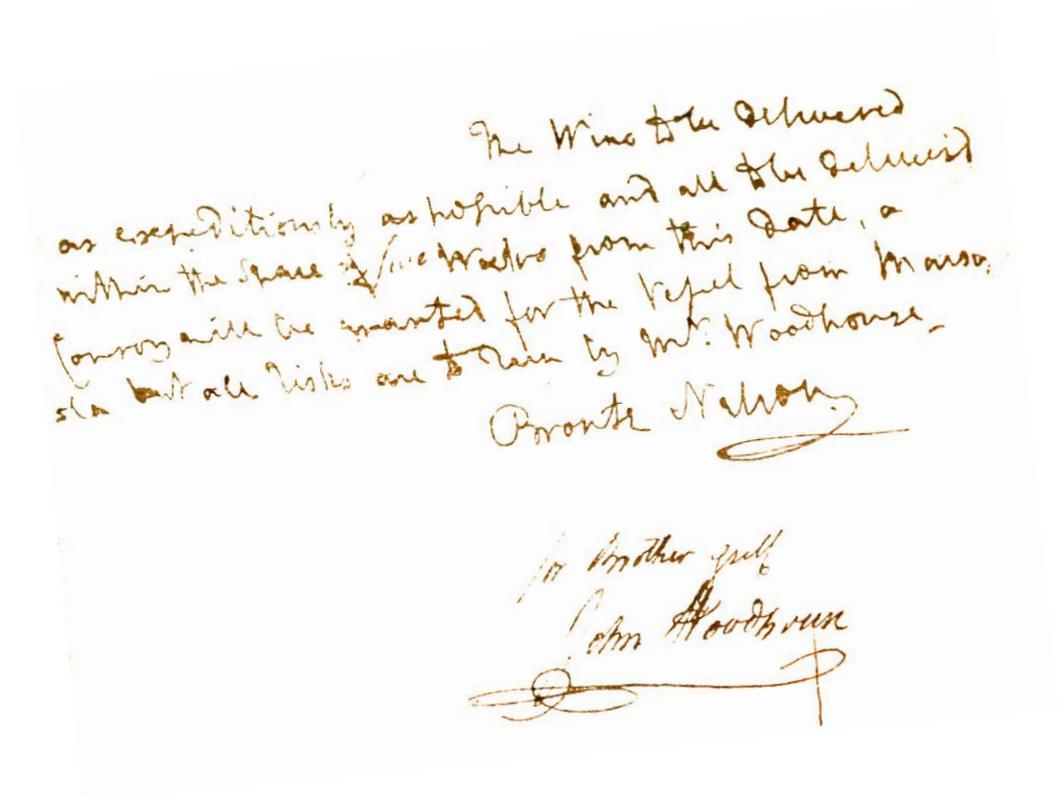
¹ In the area of Trapani, the *baglio* ("*bagghiu*" in local dialect) is an ancient agricultural structure with a rectangular shape, a large internal courtyard and fortified walls on all four sides, a typical feudal structure for a centralized management of the estate and the protection of crops from bandits. Given their large size, the spacious courtyards and warehouses, the *baglio* was chosen by the English for their «Factory Wines», where they produced Marsala.

MARSALA. THE ENGLISH- SPEAKING SICILIAN

There are numerous legends surrounding the origin of Marsala. Some are rooted in oral tradition, while others are more or less faded memories of the protagonists, collected in memorials or transcribed by copyists. Much of the information comes from company archives which have been severely damaged or became incomplete in the aftermath of World War II. But the remaining documents clearly reveal that **Marsala has English origins**: it resulted from their entrepreneurial disposition that is wisely intertwined with the viticultural vocation of Sicily, which endowed the pragmatic British spirit with the right “body” for the production of a special wine, one that can conquer markets around the world and grace the most prestigious tables of the time.

The British arrived on the western coasts of Sicily primarily during the so-called «English decade» (1806-1815), when King Ferdinand IV of Bourbon and his court, after fleeing from Naples and the Napoleonic troops, settled in Palermo. English merchants had already been present on the island for at least thirty years, especially in Messina, Palermo, Syracuse and Marsala.

It was here, around 1773, where **John Woodhouse** landed from Liverpool (1730-1813). He came to trade barrilla (soda ash used in the production of soap and glass), but was “conquered” by wine, which soon became his most famous product.



An excerpt of a letter by John Woodhouse about the Sicilian wine

THE EXCEPTION THAT PROVES THE RULE

THE FIRST SHIPMENT OF “MARSALA”
DATES BACK TO 1774.

Upon a closer look, it is likely that John Woodhouse had an **exceptional use** for wine, utilizing it as a complement to other goods. A reliable source from the 19th century² provides extremely precise data on that specific shipment. Woodhouse purchased 60 412-liter barrels of Sicilian wine, to which he added two gallons of brandy, amounting to 9.08 liters. In other words, the wine had been fortified by adding a little more than two liters per hectoliter. It is not certain if this shipment was a first attempt or the result of various tests, but the extreme precision with which the quantities and doses of alcohol are reported suggests that **Marsala was not created by accident**. John Woodhouse was definitely aware of his fellow countrymen’s predilection for fortified wines such as Madeira, Porto and Jerez, which Marsala had to necessarily resemble in order to be sold. Indeed, in 1833, when Vittorio Florio founded his first winery, the company name also said: «fabbrica per conciar vini nazionali all’uso di Madera» (“factory for curing wine used like Madeira”).

But there is one thing we can be sure of: the cargo of 1774 brought **surprising results** that, from being a mere exception, became the rule. Shortly thereafter, “Marsala” became greatly sought after and this led **John Woodhouse** (and dozens of other English businessmen) to turn from mere wine merchants into wine entrepreneurs who were ready to perfect the technique for the production of Marsala, in order to not only be similar to Madeira but even better.



Vincenzo Florio

² GIUSEPPE PUGLISI, La Sicilia e i suoi vini. Ragguagli sugli stabilimenti enologici siciliani, Palermo 1884

THE «BEST MARSALA WINE»

Woodhouse's biggest achievement came a few years later. As proven by the **contract** kept at Cantine Florio, dated **March 19, 1800**, Admiral Horatio Nelson, a hero of the British navy, chose to supply his fleet with Florio wine.

The «agreement» orders the Woodhouses to «supply the ships of His Majesty at anchor in Malta with 500 pipes (400-liter barrels) of the best Marsala wine, at the price of one shilling and five pence for every gallon». The «best Marsala wine» must have pleased Nelson and his subordinates since the Admiral himself wrote to his commander a few days later that he was very satisfied with the good deal and the quality of the wine: «so good to be worthy of gracing any gentleman's dinner table, it will be a godsend for our sailors».

BUSTING A MYTH? WHY DID JOHN WOODHOUSE ADD ALCOHOL TO THE SHIPMENT OF SICILIAN WINES «TO BE USED LIKE MADEIRA»?

The official reason maintains that adding distillate would have allowed a better conservation of the wine, halting the onset of refermentation and stabilizing the product during its voyage. Upon a closer look, the «robust Sicilian wines», if well made, could reach notable alcoholic content (even 18%), which, according to Stefano Zirilli from Milazzo (one of the most important Sicilian wine producers of the late 1800s), can be more than sufficient to «sail to the ends of the world». Zirilli thought that adding alcohol to Sicilian wines upon boarding was a «powerful mistake» because:

*[...] it poses the problem of not letting the wine absorb the alcohol, which is left lying on the surface, since alcohol is lighter than wine, giving it a spicy scent that spoils the natural bouquet*³.

Did the addition of spirits help in preserving the quality of the product, which had to face a long journey? Or was it purely the producer's desire to «cure» Sicilian wines and make them more pleasing to their recipients? This is the theory proposed by **Rosario Lentini**, one of the most long-lived and keen scholars of the history of Marsala. In his latest essay, *Sicilie del vino nell'800*, Lentini shows that Woodhouse did not act purely by chance or by using trickery. And that mixing alcohol with wine required attention and longer periods of maturation: it was not a last minute addition.

What we know for sure is that after the first and highly successful wine shipment, John Woodhouse and his son John Woodhouse Junior worked to rationalize the alcoholization process of Marsala by founding a proper «**Factory Wine**» with stills operating all day, employing skilled workers for the manufacture of barrels and a unit in charge of clarification and mixing of spirits with wine.

«I was told», as economist Paolo Balsamo – who had first-hand information from factory workers – wrote in 1804 «that the famous Woodhouse wines contained no less than twenty-five percent, or a quarter, of **excellent spirit**. This allowed the wine to last and endure the voyage, but also meet the taste of its buyers». If this was the case, concludes Rosario Lentini, the addition of alcohol was certainly a way to make the wine «be more appealing to the British who preferred wines with higher alcohol content, rather than having enochemical *purposes*»⁴.

³ STEFANO ZIRILLI, I vini di Milazzo, «La Campagna», anno I, n.6, 20 July 1871, pp.151-152.

⁴ ROSARIO LENTINI, Sicilie del vino nell'800, Palermo University Press, Palermo 2019, pp. 57.

THE ENGLISH DECADE

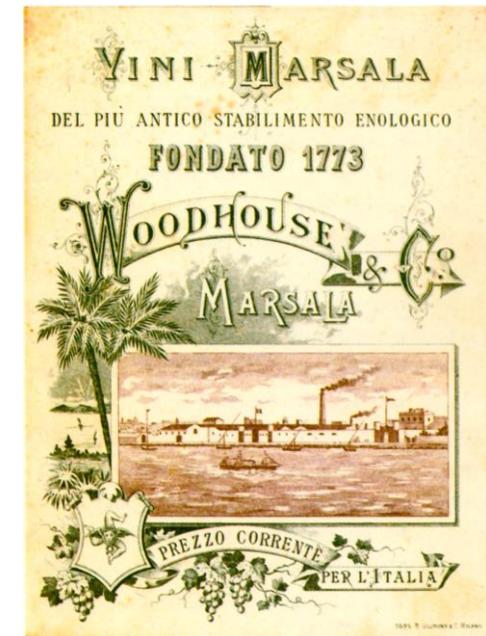
JOHN WOODHOUSE “INVENTED”
MARSALA, BUT THE ENGLISH
MADE IT GREAT.

While the first shipments were gladly received and the Woodhouse family was beginning to build a solid business based on fortified wines, the early 19th century offered an unprecedented opportunity for Sicilian wine to prosper. The war between France and England led Napoleon to enact the **Continental Blockade** in 1806, banning British ships from docking in any French port. During the embargo, one of the few ports that remained open was Sicily, the stronghold of King Ferdinand IV of Bourbon who, in 1806, fled to Palermo to escape from Napoleonic troops. Ferdinand IV accepted protection from the British who used their influence to turn Sicily into a **strategic outpost in the Mediterranean**. It was not just a military occupation, but a large-scale protectorate operation. The presence of England invaded all aspects of Sicilian social life, with far-reaching influence on politics, culture and the local economy, which was literally overturned by the new capitalist setting.



The **Continental Block** also indirectly favored Marsala, which was preparing to overtake wines such as Porto, Madeira and Jerez, products that have been cut off from British trade as they were under French influence. The «Marsala alternative» was an intentional necessity, at least according to the words of landowner Gould Francis Leckie, who resided in Sicily from 1801 to 1807. «The wine trade with Portugal, which is now entirely taxed and dependent on France», wrote Leckie, «could be relocated to Sicily without benefiting our enemies⁵».

Leckie's plea was not made in vain. After 1806, dozens of English merchants arrived in Sicily, ready to develop the new market: **James Hopps** and his sons, **Alexander Breck**, **Thomas Colett**, **Joseph Gill**, **Joseph Payne**, **Matthew Clarkson**, **John Lee Brow**. Among them was merchant Benjamin Ingham (1784-1861) and his nephew Whitaker, who registered the highest sales of Marsala in the world – at least until the mid-19th century – and played a leading role in the political and cultural life of Sicily well after the unification of Italy.



A Woodhouse Marsala label

⁵ MICHELA D'ANGELO, *Mercanti inglesi in Sicilia*, Giuffrè, Milano 1988, p.40

«IMPROVING» QUALITY

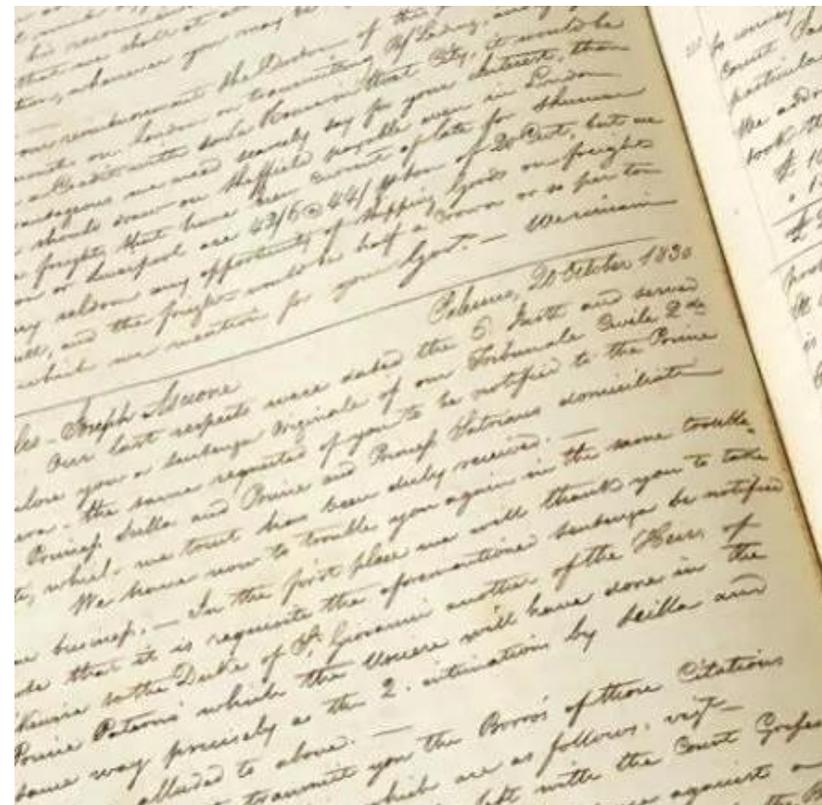
THE GREATEST CONTRIBUTION OF THE ENGLISH TO THE PRODUCTION OF MARSALA WAS THEIR RATIONAL, PRAGMATIC AND STRICTLY CAPITALIST SPIRIT.

The western part of Sicily, which had not known industrialization until then, now faced a sudden change. For the first few years, John Woodhouse only purchased, alcoholized and stored Sicilian wines; now, the new wave of **English merchants** aimed to produce Marsala on a larger scale, competing both in terms of quantity and quality. Marsala, which used to be a mere imitation of Madeira, was moving towards its emancipation by seeking a more defined and peculiar personality.

From the early 19th century, **the English's entrepreneurial drive** revolutionized and perfected the entire **Marsala industry**, starting with viticulture. The Woodhouse and Ingham-Whitaker families were the first to raise the quality of the harvests by establishing direct relationships with local growers.

Famous, almost legendary, was the donkey with which **John Woodhouse Junior** (son of the homonymous inventor of Marsala) traveled the area of Trapani in search of the best local wines, dispensing advice on viticulture and vinification. More scientific and well-documented was the work carried out by **Benjamin Ingham** who, from 1830 onwards, was interested in providing precise indications to his suppliers to «improve» the quality of their musts.

«He asks me to tell you», reads a letter from Ingham's nephew to Abbot Vincenzo Canale, who was handling the Marsala plants, «that he [Benjamin Ingham] relies on your influence on the locals to persuade them to not harvest before the grapes reach perfect maturation; this is essential for Marsala and for Sicily, considering the cutthroat competition currently present: should we fail to **improve quality**, we will certainly place after the last one».



A detail of Woodhouse registers

Ingham steadfastly reiterated the importance of perfect grape maturation and the production of excellent base wines, and, in 1837, he wrote *Brevi istruzioni per la vendemmia all'oggetto di migliorare la qualità dei vini* ("Brief instructions on harvest to improve wine quality"). This is a detailed guide containing advice on harvest and treatment of grapes, from pressing to fermentation, up to the conservation of wines in «stipe» (large barrels). Numerous aspects are covered: the harvest of «perfectly ripe» grapes to discarding «soggy and even immature» ones; the separation of red and white musts to their timely transfer into barrels in order to avoid fermentation in palmenti, which were large vats carved into the rock, used for crushing grapes; the separation of juice from the pressed wine to the filtration of the musts before the transfer to barrels; the constant washing of the *palmenti* for pressing («to avoid obtaining a sour taste»), to the correct way of preparing the «*stipe*» to keep the fermentation foam from spilling⁶.

Some of these «instructions» seemed basic and extremely obvious that it gave the impression of the area's underdevelopment in terms of winegrowing and an adverse attitude of local farmers who opposed the production of «good quality» wines. But they also showed the passion, skill and the gargantuan «**entrepreneurial teaching**» that the English merchants imparted in the area of Marsala. The economic resources of the merchant families served as credit institutions that enabled the launching of new activities: new vineyards were planted thanks to loans and concessions; specialized workers for barrel manufacturing arrived; the logistics of transporting the grapes from the fields to the «Factory Wine» and from the «Factory Wine» to the port of Marsala which became one of the most important Mediterranean ports, thanks to British investments and excise duties.

The growing success of Marsala on foreign markets led wineries to intensify capital investments for the modernization of plants, expansion of warehouses and, most importantly, the improvement of production and aging techniques, which were essential to produce high-quality and profitable Riserva wines.

As historian Rosario Lentini writes:

A new idea was gaining ground: in order to obtain the best results and be able to successfully place the product on Anglo-American and northern European markets, it was necessary to establish and maintain constant relationship with wine producers, organize wineries, produce Riserva wines and have a permanent group of barrel makers⁷.

But the most evident result of the invention of Marsala was the change in the land's layout. Where, towards the end of the 1700s, there were once uncultivated fields mostly dedicated to animal farming, in 1820, there were **vineyards stretching as far as the eye could see**, planted with grapes that were meticulously cared for, selected and transformed by one of the most active, profitable and technologically advanced industries in the world.

⁶ BENJAMIN INGHAM, *Brevi istruzioni per la vendemmia all'oggetto di migliorare la qualità dei vini*, in SALVATORE MONDINI, *Il Marsala*, Lazarus, Sorso 2021, pp. 21-24 (anastatic reprint of the 1922 edition).

⁷ ROSARIO LENTINI, *Un vino inglese nel cuore del Mediterraneo*, Douro 21, 2006, pp. 179.



THE FLORIO FAMILY AND MARSALA

AMONG THE LEADING WINERIES IN THE HISTORY OF MARSALA, FLORIO WAS THE LAST TO BE FOUNDED. BUT IN A RELATIVELY SHORT PERIOD OF TIME, IT BECAME ONE OF THE LARGEST WINERIES, SURPASSING THE ENGLISH COMPETITORS IN TERMS OF PRESTIGE AND SALES, AND ENDING UP ABSORBING THEM.

The history of Italian Marsala began in 1833, when Vincenzo Florio (1799-1868) purchased land located between the Woodhouse and Ingham-Whitaker factories. There was a clear goal right from the beginning: «to build a factory for the production of wines used like Madeira»⁸, which was how Marsala was called at the time.

The beginning was marked by hardships and profit was scarce, mainly due to the established English competition. But at the turn of the mid-19th century, the Marsala wines produced by Florio were beginning to wear the British monopoly down.

Vincenzo Florio had an ambitious project that he financed using the huge capital accumulated from trading spice, tuna fisheries, sulfur and a rapidly expanding merchant fleet.

Florio's ambition is confirmed by the **oldest description of their factories**, written by economist and future minister of the Kingdom of Italy, Francesco Ferrara, in 1845, who was then secretary of the Palermo Chamber of Commerce:



Antonino Leto, *Il Baglio Florio a Marsala* (detail), 1865-1870

⁸ Document preserved in the State Archives of Palermo and cited in ROSARIO LENTINI, / *Florio e la produzione del vino Marsala*, Nuovi Quaderni del Meridione, 1977, n. 57, pp. 18.

[..] Florio, the last baglio to be founded in Marsala, now actively competes for dominance (referring to the Ingham winery): [...] it is widely known that English consumers fully approve of the quality of Florio wines. They receive orders in increasing numbers day by day. And whoever has visited that orderly and persistent establishment cannot help but see undisputed progress. In Palermo, we cannot think of anything that could compare to the industries of Marsala; and we can surely say that there are no establishments in the island that could boast the same grandeur and importance. The length of its warehouses resembles the street of a big city; and upon knowing that those barrels crammed one on top of the other like columns of a regiment, are filled with wine, containing about 20 ounces per pipe (standard 420-liter barrel), a Sicilian traveler cannot help but wonder if this really was Sicily. Needless to say, a large number of workers are employed here and there is a Lancastrian order that governs its workers, one that is similar to what travelers say about the great English factories. We must not be surprised to also see steam engines which, in other parts of our country, could be found in separate establishments (...)⁹

Florio was therefore similar to a **contemporary factory**, equipped with the best machineries of the time, managed according to precise production standards and most

importantly, fully geared with all necessary precautions for the “tanning” of Marsala, which includes the complex processes of alcoholization and aging that are the foundation of its prestige.

While the fleet successfully entered the American, British and European markets, Florio’s Marsala **conquered Italy**, a rapidly growing market that was ignored by the British. Earned profit was reinvested in expansion and technology, and at the height of 1880, Florio «wine factory» had now reached the size of a state-of-the-art wine complex, with direct access to the sea, large warehouses for storage, wine aging and an alembic still for the distillation of spirits to be used in the production of Marsala.

This is how Giuseppe Puglisi recounted his visit to the renovated Florio factory, then chaired by engineer Giuseppe Gordon:

Among the thirteen warehouses for wine storage, five deserve a special mention. One is 15 meters wide and 160 meters long; the other four are not as wide and are 205, 207 and 211 meters long. On either side of the main entrance are two spacious areas, one serves as residence for the employees while the other houses the administration offices. At the end of a vast oblong atrium stands the owner’s elegant two-story building; it is completely separated from the rest by two small streets on either side and another spacious atrium behind it. Further on and right next to the second entrance is another building, which is used partly as the Director’s residence and partly as a guesthouse for friends who accompany or visit the owner when he is in Marsala, as a holiday house or for the annual inventory. [...] Aside from the aforementioned atriums and two streets used for communications, to the left of the large, uncovered atrium are two other covered ones: there

⁹ FEDERICO FERRARA, *Marsala*, in «Giornale del Commercio», Palermo, Stamperia Reale, 1845, n.21, pp 2-3.

are two vast spaces, one houses the bottles while the other houses ironworks. To the right of the main atrium is a warehouse where a large alembic for the distillation of spirits can be found; then, we find another room where the steam engine is located and, further on is a large shed that houses the barrel makers. ¹⁰

As stated, the factory carried out activities related to wine production and, in 1884, **steam machines** were used for the construction of the barrels and staves; while cleaning was done using a machine «invented by Mr. Vito Barracco, a former employee of the factory [...] who shakes the barrel and makes it turn in all directions»¹¹.

Due to the unfortunate destruction of the company archives during World War II, we can have a glimpse of the grandeur achieved by Cantine Florio compared to Woodhouse and Ingham from the taxes due to the Municipality of Marsala. In 1883, Florio was the second highest taxpayer of the area, just behind Ingham but placing before Woodhouse, whose fortune was slowly dying out ¹². In the last decade of the 1800s, Florio's production was close to **500,000 hectoliters**, most of which were sold in wooden barrels, while the most excellent ones were bottled ¹³.



Florio's winery in the 1800s

¹⁰ GIUSEPPE PUGLISI, *La Sicilia e i suoi vini. Ragguagli sugli stabilimenti enologici siciliani*, Palermo 1884

¹¹ Ibidem.

¹² Budget of the Municipality of Marsala for the year 1883, in ROSARIO LENTINI, *Florio e la produzione del vino Marsala*, Nuovi Quaderni del Meridione, 1977, n. 57, pp. 18.

¹³ 1903 - *La Sicilia Industriale, Commerciale e Agricola*, Bontempelli e Trevisani, Milano 1903.

THE END OF THE MARSALA «DYNASTIES»

WOODHOUSE, INGHAM-WHITAKER AND FLORIO.

From 1773 until the early decades of the 1900s, Marsala was undoubtedly dominated by these family dynasties who invented, perfected and brought it to global success, more than any other Italian wine had ever done. But the unification of Italy (1861) and the turn of the century brought in a tough crisis in the world of wine which, together with the extinction of these families, heavily hit Marsala wine.

The first blow came from the “new” Italy, which imposed massive **taxes on alcohol**, placing Marsala among luxury liquors. Another blow was inflicted by **phylloxera** which arrived in Sicily in 1893 and brought a massive collapse of wine production. Finally, between 1880-1919, there was an **overproduction of Marsala**, which could no longer find adequate outlets on the reference markets due to political instability, increasingly protectionist excise duties and a change in the preference of consumers: the 1920s have seen the massive invasion of Marsala-like wines produced elsewhere and passed off as authentic despite their poor quality.



While the wine market suffered a global collapse, the historic families of Marsala slowly faded away. The **Woodhouses** were almost completely gone, while the successors of the Inghams, the Whitakers, who became naturalized Sicilians and then Italians, had mainly dealt with culture and patronage of the arts. Even the **Florio family**, despite numerous attempts to relaunch Marsala, was facing an unbearably prolonged crisis.

In 1924, the Piedmont brand Cinzano took over Florio and, a few years later, in 1928, did the same with Woodhouse and Ingham-Whitaker, bringing together the three most prestigious «Factory Wines» in the history of Marsala under a single company (now owned by **Duca di Salaparuta**).

THE ORIGIN OF MARSALA: TIMELINE



1773

JOHN WOODHOUSE, THE PIONEER

John Woodhouse, from Liverpool, arrived in Sicily to trade soda ash.

1774

THE FIRST SHIPMENT OF MARSALA

John Woodhouse sent history's first Marsala shipment. Upon closer look, he aimed to sell his countrymen a wine similar to Madeira but produced from Sicilian wines with added alcohol. It was a success and, a few years later, the Woodhouse family moved to Sicily to launch a stable production and create a commercial base between Marsala and England.

1800

SUPPLIERS OF THE ENGLISH FLEET

Admiral Horatio Nelson chose to supply the fleet with Woodhouse wine. The «agreement» ordered the Woodhouses to supply British ships anchored in Malta with 500 pipes (400-liter barrels) of the best Marsala wine. The name «Marsala wine» appears for the very first time in an official document: until then (and for many years to come) it was referred to as «wine used like Madeira» or «Sicily Madeira».

1803-1810

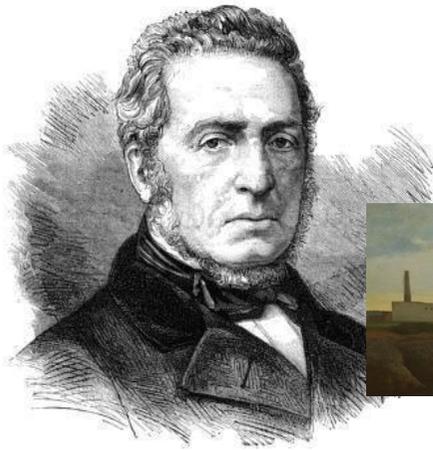
«FIT FOR THE ENGLISH MARKET»

Geologist George Bellas Greenough, during a visit to the Woodhouse factories, noted that he drank a wine that «is not different from Madeira». William Henry Thompson, in his travel memoirs dating back to 1809-1810 wrote «[Mr. Woodhouse] is, I believe, the only person who makes wine fit for the English market».

1806-1815

THE ENGLISH DECADE

The Continental Block, ordered by Napoleon, favored trade between Sicily and England by limiting the supply of wine from Portugal and Spain. This was Marsala's golden era: dozens of English entrepreneurs reached western Sicily to establish «Factory Wines» for the trade and processing of Sicilian wines. During this period, the production techniques (the so-called «tanning») of Marsala wine were perfected and, thanks to the British Empire, Marsala arrived at the dinner tables of gentlemen all over the world.



1806

THE ARRIVAL OF THE INGHAMS

Following the Continental Block, Benjamin Ingham moved from Yorkshire to Palermo. Together with his children and nephews, the Whitakers, he launched the most important Marsala factory, at least until the Florio family.

1823-1833

WINE LOVED BY THE BRITISH

Domestic consumption of Marsala wine in England multiplied four times: it went from 79,686 gallons in 1823 to 312,993 in 1833. English trade periodicals praised Marsala's superiority compared to the more famous Spanish and Portuguese wines.

1833

THE CHALLENGE OF FLORIO

Vincenzo Florio acquired land on which he built the first Italian Marsala winery. The plot is located between the Woodhouse and Ingham «Factory Wines». This marked the beginning of the competition to become the leading trader of Marsala, which also led to the development of its quality and production techniques.

1837

IMPROVING QUALITY

Benjamin Ingham drew up «Brevi istruzioni per la vendemmia all'oggetto di migliorare la qualità dei vini» (*Brief instructions on harvest to improve wine quality*), a guide for his wine suppliers aimed at improving the quality of the musts used for Marsala production.

1838

THE FIRST JOURNEY TO THE EAST

Captained by Vincenzo Di Bartolo, from Ustica, the *Elisa*, a vessel equipped by Benjamin Ingham, was the first ship to sail to the East carrying a cargo of Marsala, in search of new commercial outlets.



1845

GROUNDBREAKING FLORIO

Francesco Ferrara, economist and future Minister of Finance of the Kingdom of Italy, described Florio as one of the most modern wine factories in Sicily, the only one that could compete with the Ingham-Whitakers.

1862

GARIBALDI'S WINE

Giuseppe Garibaldi, during a visit to Cantine Florio, tasted a round and sweet Marsala. His commendation created the Garibaldi Dolce (G.D.) line, which roughly coincides to the *Superiore* type.

1885-1900

TAXES, PHYLLOXERA AND OVERPRODUCTION

Tightened tax policies on alcohol damaged profits for Marsala producers. Aside from the massive taxation, the scourge of phylloxera destroyed much of the Sicilian vineyards at the end of the 19th century. In the meantime, consumers' taste also changed, making it more difficult to sell Marsala, which faced a crisis of overproduction.

1920-1928

THE END OF THE MARSALA "DYNASTIES"

The most important Marsala family dynasties (Woodhouse, Ingham-Whitaker and Florio) faded away. Between 1924 and 1928, the Piedmont brand Cinzano took over the three Marsala wineries, bringing them together under a single company, now owned by Duca di Salaparuta, which continues the centuries-old tradition of Marsala under the «Florio» brand.

2.

MARSALA

FLORIO

REDEFINING

MARSALA

FLORIO
1833

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MT



RISE FROM THE CRISIS

THE DEPARTURE OF THE ENGLISH AND THE END OF THE FLORIO DYNASTY BROUGHT UPON A CRISIS IN THE WORLD OF MARSALA.

Towards the end of the 1920s, the most famous – and acclaimed – fortified Italian wine was struggling to find its place within the new global order, with the looming threat of strong competitors on domestic and foreign markets, which have been both devastated by the two world wars. An industrial attitude dominated Marsala production, which set aside the traditional long refinement period in favor of more “ready” wines, which were often flavored and used as an ingredient for preparing desserts and diverse dishes rather than being drunk and tasted.

During the 90s and following Florio’s passage to Illva di Saronno (through the subsidiary Duca di Salaparuta), Marsala production resumed with a new vision.

The **extensive investments** made by the new management contributed to bringing important and positive changes in terms of operation and quality. The historic Florio cellars underwent restoration, and the winemaking process has been thoroughly revised. The idea of Marsala as a noble meditation wine was brought back: a wine with immense potential for evolution, the result of years of constant technical improvement and, most importantly, **a product of time**, which governs the art of fortification and refinement.

Today, Florio is the ambassador of Marsala in the world, an unmissable landmark that enables to truly discover this iconic product of Sicilian winemaking and an important component of the island’s socio-economic fabric. **Marsala has been rediscovered** right from its historical foundations and developed through **new winemaking techniques** that enhance each stage of a complex creative process that gives life to an exceptional product.



WINEMAKING LISTENING AND THE LIQUID ART OF MARSALA

FLORIO'S NEW PHILOSOPHY IS BASED ON A «WINEMAKING LISTENING», ONE THAT TURNS THE PRODUCTION PROCESS INTO AN ART, THE EXPRESSION OF AN INTIMATE AND DEEP CONNECTION TO EACH OF THE ELEMENTS THAT MAKE UP THE LIQUID ART OF MARSALA.

A form of **winemaking** that **embodies the constant dialogue** between nature and technique, between vineyard and cellar, between potential for evolution and intuition. One that is capable of adapting itself, its techniques and procedures to bring out the true **expression** of Marsala.

The time needed to reach maturation; the “intensity” of pressing; the contact between alcohol and wine; the refinement in wood and their location within the cellars: Florio has adopted a **holistic approach** that views Marsala in its entirety, creating the perfect synergy between each part. Every decision is the fruit of a concise discourse between Marsala, the Agronomist and the Enologist, each one influencing the other in determining the routes that lead towards the full maturity of the final product, which is the combination of realizations and practical resources.



«**Winemaking listening**» is a daily navigation through the art of tasting, experimenting and reexamining. It is a **delicate** and, at times, **harsh** path, as it always requires coming face to face with a wine that is without limits, a future wine that redefines itself year after year.

Florio's new enological approach is primarily the result of a **newfound awareness**. The complete acknowledgment of Marsala as a unique creation, one that cannot be brought to conform, endowed with an invaluable history and a peculiar personality. A wine that, through the years, can recount its marvelous journey sip after sip, season after season, encounter after encounter.

THE HARVEST: BALANCE AND EXTREMES

THE FIRST “LOVELY ENCOUNTER” THAT GIVES RISE TO MARSALA TAKES PLACE BETWEEN THE VINEYARDS AND ARISES FROM THE PERFECT SYNERGY BETWEEN TERRITORY, VINEYARD AND AGRONOMIC TECHNIQUES.

Sicilian Grillo grapes – the native variety that is most suitable to produce Florio Marsala – grow in the area of Trapani, along the so-called “*Fascia del Sole*” (lit. “The Sun Belt”), located between the 32° and 41° parallel, where some of the most famous fortified wines in the world also come from. The abundant sunlight, the Scirocco and Mistral winds and the influence of the sea create a coastal environment that deeply shapes the nature of the vine, creating the ideal environment for the production of wines with high alcohol content, marked flavor, as well as broad and intense aromas.

The grapes used for Marsala cannot be grown using common cultivation techniques but by **employing «hard» agriculture**, one that urges the grapes to bring out their best. In order for the Grillo grapes to withstand the long years of aging and the encounter with alcohol, they must build a robust structure and a certain character similar to that found in red wines.



That is why harvests are usually done in a later period, patiently waiting for the bunches to reach **over-ripening**: this is when sugar and polyphenols contained in the grape reach **the highest levels of concentration**. The fresh and crisp soul of Grillo, one that is found in everyday wines, will turn into an exceptional product with a solid structure, marked by hints of seaweed and salt, and endowed with an elegant style.

The result sits halfway between **extreme and balanced**, excess and harmony, between power and elegance, the only one to ensure future Marsala wines the resilience required to withstand time.



VINIFICATION

EXTREME VITICULTURE REQUIRES AN
EQUALLY «EXTREME» WINEMAKING PROCESS,
BUT ONE THAT IS ALSO CAREFULLY MEASURED
AND FAR REMOVED FROM THE RULES OF
CONTEMPORARY ENOLOGY.

Grillo grapes are crushed using the **press**, the only tool that can fully extract the organoleptic properties of overripe grapes, giving them the courage to face their «Marsala adventure» without losing their identity.

Letting the vineyard express itself using a press is not a simple task: it requires excessive awareness, absolute control and a sense of limit. But it is a **measured excess**: one that captures the grape's soul and leads it to **fermentation in concrete**, where constant oxygenation is directed to produce Grillo wine characterized by a bright golden color, a rich and savory character, an alcohol content exceeding 15% and the intense scent of the sea.

A LOVELY ENCOUNTER

AFTER FERMENTATION, THE WINE IS READY FOR ITS «LOVELY ENCOUNTER» WITH ALCOHOL, WHICH WILL PROFOUNDLY CHANGE ITS NATURE AND INFLUENCE ITS EVOLUTION, DETERMINING WHICH TYPE OF MARSALA WILL BE PRODUCED.

The encounter between wine and alcohol marks the **true birth** of Marsala, representing its **union** as well as its **conception**. The event is registered in a *Verbale di Miscela*, a dedicated Report that assigns a distinct number which will be indicated on the label. This stage marks the transition from processes «yielding wine», defined by their agronomic season, to those «yielding Marsala», which correspond to the years that come one after the other while the wine ages in the cellar. This is the birth of a “new creature”, one that – after experiencing the sun and the sea – now thrives in a different environment made of wood, time and the slow and harmonious encounter with alcohol.

During this lovely encounter, the Enologist must make his most important decision: this is when he determines which type of Marsala will be made by trying to imagine the impossible: envisioning the wine’s future evolution. And like most of the other “stages” that make up the liquid art of Marsala, this lovely encounter stands halfway between the **empirical** and **realizations**. The Enologist tastes, listens to and feels the available batches of base wine. For each one he chooses the most suitable encounter with the elements he has at hand: **ethyl alcohol** obtained from the distillation of wine; *sifone*; cooked must.

For example, **Marsala Vergine** is the fruit of the encounter between Grillo wine and a small percentage of alcohol (the only addition allowed by the disciplinary for this type of Marsala); it then ages in the barrel for at least five years, which becomes ten for the *Riserva*.

Marsala Superiore, on the other hand, embodies the connection between wine, alcohol and *sifone* (also called *mistella*): it is a special mixture of musts suitable for yielding mutated Marsala, whose fermentation process is halted by adding the right amount of alcohol. Unlike Marsala *Vergine*, the *Superiore* type contains a higher sugar content and based on the residual sugar, it will be classified as *secco*, *semisecco* or *dolce*. Marsala *Superiore* ages for at least two years in wood, becoming a *Riserva* after four years of aging.

The **numerous** types of Marsala allow the Enologist to add **cooked must** depending on the result that he wants to achieve and the wine’s natural predisposition. The grapes musts used are suitable for the production of Marsala: the musts are reduced over direct heat to obtain the partial concentration of sugar and color. The addition of cooked must, which can be mixed in different quantities, aims to give Marsala a different shade of color and enrich it with pleasantly bitter flavors.

THE GEOGRAPHY OF AGING

WHEN VINCENZO FLORIO FOUNDED HIS FIRST FACTORY IN MARSALA, IN 1833, HE WAS PERFECTLY AWARE OF THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF THE SEA IN THE PROCESS OF WINE AGING.

He carefully thought of building a modern facility that was suitable for wine production as well as storage and aging, which he considered to be extremely important to ensure the quality of his product. Florio’s warehouses were very popular and each of their central

naves was said to look like the «street of a big city»¹⁴. It was an example of a meticulous and rational organization that aimed to make excellent use of logistics and bring the **influence of the sea to the barrels**, an element that has always played a key role in the final Marsala obtained.

As Stefania Auci writes in *I Leoni di Sicilia*, which tells the story of the Florio family:

[... it is no coincidence that the Marsala cellars were built near these low and sandy beaches. It is no coincidence that the sand enters the courtyards and the warehouses, piling above the barrels. The sea, the limestone in the sand and the constant temperature are what created this fortified wine, which was born by chance and has become the flavor of an era. The sand that settles on the terracotta tiles covering the salt is the same one that whirls between the bottles resting in the cellars. The sand carries grains of salt with it, which – in turn – carries the scent of the sea. The sand endows the wine with a certain dryness, a puzzling uncertainty and slight hint of the sea: without these, it would be just another sweet wine¹⁵.

After undergoing **renovation** in the 1990s, the cellars of Florio are back to their historic splendor. The cellar floors are dug directly in the **tuff** and are divided into four main sections, which sit at a mere 95 meters from the coast in its closest point: **Donna Franca**, **Caribaldi**, **Florio** and **Ingham-Woodhouse**. A surface stretching for more than 22,000

square meters, featuring a real «wooden forest» with over 3,000 barrels of different sizes (huge vats, barrels, kegs) containing more than 5.5 million liters of Marsala.

The size of the four sections and their respective distances from the sea create **four different and dynamic climatic environments** that enrich the elements employed by the Enologist, who utilizes the art of refinement, space and time to enhance the different personalities of Marsala. Just as the location of the bunches affects the ripening of the grapes, **the position of the barrels in the cellar is an integral part of Marsala's evolution**. But unlike the bunches, the barrels can be positioned in different points, in pursuit of the singular characteristics that Florio's geography can offer. As the sea draws nearer, the temperature decreases and the "brackish" humidity increases: Marsala wines acquire hints of seaweed and flavor. Towards the highest points of each cellar, the temperature and lower level of humidity endow Marsala wines with complex and various tertiary aromas.

Cantine Florio **welcomes the change** of the seasons: scorching summers, rainy winters, hot winds and heaps of sand. Marsala wines breathe in the atmosphere through the oak wood, acquiring different personalities, shades and colors.

¹⁴ FEDERICO FERRARA, *Marsala*, in «Giornale del Commercio», Palermo, Stamperia Reale, 1845, n.21, pp 2-3.

¹⁵ STEFANIA AUCI, *I Leoni di Sicilia. La saga dei Florio*, Editrice Nord, Milano 2019, pag. 393.

L'ANGEL'S SHARE

THE ANGEL'S SHARE IS CLOSELY LINKED TO THE GEOGRAPHY OF AGING: IT INDICATES THE PORTION OF MARSALA THAT EVAPORATES "TO THE SKIES" DURING AGING, SEEPING THROUGH THE OAK BARRELS, WHICH IS A LIVING BEING THAT INTERACTS WITH THE SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT.

The Angel's Share cannot be precisely measured, as it may **vary**. It is directly proportional to the surrounding temperature and to the period of aging in the wood; but it is inversely proportional to the size of the container. The Angel's Share is bigger when the environment is warmer, and Marsala spends more years in the barrel. It decreases as the temperatures drop or when there is little wine inside the barrels, because there is lesser contact between the wine and the wood staves.

While choosing the location and the size of the barrels, the Enologist **builds his vision of aging** as the product of different locations, the development within the climatic map of the cellars and the multiple "dimensional" opportunities offered by the vats. The Angel's Share is an **index of value and variety**: it measures the craftsmanship of the Enologist, each stroke of the chisel that help create the final work of art. It is the utmost synthesis of a Winemaking Listening as it truly expresses the rich organoleptic characteristics of Marsala. A lesser Angel's Share yields gentler, more welcoming, refined and fruity Marsala wines.

A greater concentration implies more alcohol, sugar and a bigger Share allotted to the skies: the Marsala wines obtained are definitely more structured, complex, and deep. A greater concentration implies more alcohol, sugar and a bigger Share allotted to the skies: the Marsala wines obtained are definitely more structured, complex, and deep.



3.

THE NEW FLORIO LINE



MARSALA IS VAST AND ABUNDANT

The harvest, the pressing of the grapes, the secret of tanning, the lovely encounter between wine and alcohol. The addition of cooked must and the selection of the barrels, the distance from the sea. The humidity and temperature of the seasons, the wind, the «Angel's Share», extremely long aging. Decanting, delicate natural stabilization, the position of the barrels inside the cellar, constant tasting and, above all, the choices of the Enologist who, using insight, traces one of the infinite paths that Marsala can take in order to reach full maturity.

Marsala is a **journey** marked by decades: it changes with time, developing through choices. **It is one, and many.** It has a precise identity within a multitude of possible expressions. From the first Grillo grape to the bottle, it is the **sum of possibilities** that lead the wine to its ultimate limits: reaching the boundaries of a distillate, but without ever losing its nature, rather always surpassing it.

More than anything, Marsala is an idea of art. An act of love that overcomes the present need to embrace the notion of «creation», opening up to a temporal dimension that spans towards infinity. Each bottle of Marsala is an invitation to marvel at such wonder: it is a wine created for the future, born to last and constantly evolve, carrying along the signs of its development, of reaching a level of maturation that embodies the balance between nature and art, science and passion, magic and alchemy, and – most importantly – beauty.

THE NEW LINE

THE NEW MARSALA FLORIO LINE
WAS CREATED TO REVEAL TRUTHS
THAT HAVE LONG BEEN FORGOTTEN.

- That Marsala has a recognizable identity, but each label's character is the result of a **personal history**, of processes and true artistic intuitions that start from the vineyard and end after decades of tastings, aging and appropriate positioning of the barrels in the cellar.
- That Marsala is a **chain project** that begins nowhere else but from the vineyard, the winemaking process, the meticulous planning of alcoholization, from tuning in to the seasons and observing their influence on the wine.
- That Florio Marsala wines are the voice of the **most marvelous Marsala winery in the world**: one that houses a "forest" of over 3,000 barrels with different sizes on an area of 22,000 square meters, divided into 4 naves dug into the tuff, located at a mere 95 meters from the sea in its closest point.

THE NEW LINE OF MARSALA FLORIO
EMBRACES AND SPEAKS OF THE TRUTH THAT
«THE» MARSALA DOES NOT EXIST.

Ever since the English traders perfected the technique of tanning, we can only speak of «the Marsalas»: the various natural and human paths that define different «routes» for each label, based on continuous reading and interpretation of the «horizon». And reaching such «horizon» is only possible by attentively measuring and harmonizing all the resources available, among which the most important is man: his ability to listen and understand, to express his personal art.

THE «DYNAMIC» PANORAMA OF MARSALA

The new Florio line presents an articulate form: a range of 10 products that embody the same number of expressions of Marsala.

A complete and dynamic panorama that moves through different dimensions. A range that starts from the ground to the top: beginning with the initial and gentler types, produced in a larger number of bottles (Classic and Premium), up to the collectibles, extremely rare and limited edition pieces (Exclusive). Conversely, it can also travel through time, from the present way back to the past: beginning with the 2017 Marsala Superiore to the very rare Marsala Superiore Riserva of 1994. Finally, it may consider greater or lesser «depth»: measuring, over the course of their history, the distance that the barrels have had from the sea, the natural element that powerfully influences the complex aging dynamics of Marsala Florio.



EXCLUSIVE LINE

PREMIUM LINE

CLASSIC LINE

THE «STORYTELLER LABELS» SELECTING. TASTING. PARTICIPATING

For the first time in the history of Marsala, the narration of these “differences” is not completely handed to the Enologist or the sommelier: it also appears on the label. Florio’s contribution to the «truth» about Marsala is a «transparent narrative» that becomes a heritage available to all, providing direct access to the shared and shareable secret of Marsala.

Florio’s «storyteller labels» contain **Marsala’s complete and complex journey** to reach a distinctive expression that is enclosed in the bottle. They also help both **trade and final consumers** to **consciously identify** with the production process, allowing for a more informed choice.

The new line – dressed in a highly recognizable *look and feel* – aims to promote an **active participation** in the infinite paths of Marsala found within the cellars of Florio, the reference point of a lively and complex ecosystem where order and chaos guide the path of every single label.



On the one hand, each Marsala is the result of a precise winemaking choice, governed by technical and organoleptic elements. On the other hand, Marsala reaches its ultimate purpose exclusively depending on the consumer’s experience and choice. Florio has broadened the horizons of this journey thanks to an **impressive range of nuances**, providing a **perfect match** between different types and predispositions like never before.

The new line of Marsala Florio represents the **most conscious and expansive expression** of Marsala currently present on the market: it is the concrete chance to taste the «infinite uniqueness» of Marsala in numerous combinations, moments, ways and occasions, each equally exceptional and incomparable.

THE STORIES OF A UNIQUE JOURNEY



The year of the fortification. Unlike wine, which bears its vintage, Marsala is born when alcohol is added, which Florio calls a «lovely encounter».

2008

Total years of aging. This indicates Marsala's age, counted after the lovely encounter between wine and alcohol.

13

MARSALA VERGINE AFFINATO MARSALA VERGINE REFINED
NEL FUSTO DI ROVERE 301 DA 20 HL IN 20 HL 301 OAK BARREL
NELLA CANTINA GARIBALDI IN THE GARIBALDI CELLAR

A summary of Marsala's journey inside the barrels. There can be just one barrel (referred to as single wood) or several ones, all containing the same Marsala.

Frosted glass bottle obtained from a mold produced exclusively for Florio in the 1980s. The bottles of the Exclusive Line do not have a label but are screen-printed on the glass.

[VR0308]

Verbale di Miscela. This is Marsala's official birth certificate, indicating the «lovely encounter» between wine and alcohol. It is a unique number that cannot be changed. Following this lovely encounter, Marsala continues its journey through time, evolving according to the choices of the enologist, who observes its inclinations.

035

Bottle number. Each expression of Marsala has a specific number because it is a limited edition.

19

The Angel's Share is the portion of Marsala that evaporates "to the skies" during aging due to the natural porosity of the wooden barrels. The quantity cannot be precisely determined as it depends on different factors: it is directly proportional to the surrounding temperature and the time spent in wood; but inversely proportional to the size of the barrel. When the temperature is warmer (and Marsala spends longer periods inside the barrel), the Angel's Share increases. Lower temperatures and shorter stay in the barrel result in lesser Angel's Share because there is less contact between the wine and the wooden staves. The Angel's Share is another important tool used by the Enologist: while selecting the location and the size of the barrels, he builds his vision of Marsala as the product of different locations and development within the climatic map of the cellars.

BACK LABEL

The journey of the barrels inside the four naves of the Florio cellars, dug directly in the tuff: Ingham-Woodhouse, Florio, Garibaldi and Donna Franca. The horizontal axis (from left to right) indicates the starting nave; while the vertical axis (from top to bottom) specifies the distance from the sea, measuring only 95 meters in its closest point. Depending on the Enologist's winemaking listening and after continuous tasting, some barrels may travel through all the naves and stay in different locations. Other times, aging may occur in just one place. The geography of aging plays a key role in the artistic creation of Marsala. The sea is a decisive element, as it can influence the temperature and humidity of the cellar, thus affecting the wine's concentration, aromatic profile and flavor. When the barrels are placed closer to the sea, the temperature drops and humidity increases. Wine concentration (or the Angel's Share) is lower, but the surrounding environment enriches the product with salinity, endowing Marsala with marked traces of the sea. Away from the coast, the temperature is less rigid, and the climate becomes drier. There is a higher concentration of wine, alcohol and sugar, and the wood is more present. The final Marsala wines are more structured, revealing more complex and profound tertiary aromas (due to aging in wood).



FOOD PAIRINGS MARSALA FLORIO



CLASSIC

MARSALA VERGINE RISERVA - VR0308

Focaccia bread with butter and anchovies,
bruschetta with tomato and bottarga,
aged cheeses



MARSALA SUPERIORE SECCO - SS1516

Raw shrimp with oil and lemon zest, oyster



MARSALA SUPERIORE RISERVA SEMISECCO - SR2715

Blue cheeses such as Gorgonzola, dried fruit



MARSALA SUPERIORE DOLCE - SD1217

Dark chocolate



MARSALA PREMIUM

MARSALA VERGINE RISERVA - VR1003

Smoked fish, pickled capers



MARSALA SUPERIORE RISERVA SEMISECCO - SR0207

Aged cheeses, avocado salad with oil,
salt and lemon zest



EXCLUSIVE

MARSALA VERGINE RISERVA - VR1898

Perfect as meditation wine



MARSALA SUPERIORE RISERVA SECCO - SS0900

Perfect as meditation wine



MARSALA SUPERIORE RISERVA SEMISECCO - SR0301

Perfect as meditation wine



MARSALA SUPERIORE RISERVA DOLCE - SD0294

Perfect as meditation wine

**A GLOSSARY OF
MARSALA**

WINES AND VINES | For the production of Marsala, Florio exclusively uses native **Grillo** grapes and some Catarratto, a typical variety of the western Sicilian coast. The production disciplinary allows the use of a wide variety of vines, classified according to their color:

1. Marsala oro and ambra: Grillo, Catarratto, Ansonica (locally known as “Inzolia”) and “Damaschino”, in purity or in blends.
2. Marsala rubino: Perricone (locally known as «Pignatello»), Calabrese (referred to as «Nero d’Avola») and Nerello mascalese.

Marsala **rubino** can contain up to 30% of white berried grapes among the varieties used for Marsala oro and ambra.

PRODUCTION AREA | The disciplinary clearly defines the province of Trapani as the sole area where grapes for Marsala can be cultivated, excluding the municipalities of Pantelleria, Favignana and Alcamo.

TANNING | Tanning, which Florio calls the «lovely encounter», is a technique that has been perfected in over two centuries. It is the harmonious meeting between wine and alcohol and indicates the future development as well as the type of Marsala to be produced. The lovely encounter between wine and alcohol marks the official birth of Marsala. There are three types of tanning: exclusively with alcohol (used for Marsala Vergine); with alcohol and *sifone*; with alcohol, *sifone* and cooked must.

COOKED MUST | Cooked must, also called *calamich* due to its brownish color, is the result of the caramelization of musts used to produce Marsala. It is obtained through a reduction process, placing the musts in stainless steel boilers over direct heat. After spending the right amount of time over direct heat, the must’s volume considerable reduces, while color and sugar reach higher levels of concentration. Cooked must has a brown color, a sweet taste with a hint of bitterness and the characteristic aromas of cooked grapes: dried fruit, dates, raisins. Adding cooked must to the base wine endows Marsala with its amber color and a pleasantly bitter flavor.

SIFONE | The *sifone* is also called *mistella*, from the word «*misto*», which means “mixed”. It is in fact a mixture of must from fresh grapes suitable for making “mutated” Marsala, whose fermentation process is halted by adding the right amount of alcohol. To make its *sifone*, Florio uses well-ripened Grillo and/or Catarratto with a high sugar content.

MARSALA CLASSIFICATION | The official classification of Marsala is stated by the disciplinary. It is divided into three different categories based on color, sugar level and years of aging.

Marsala classification based on **color**

- **ORO**, obtained from white wines.
- **AMBRA**, obtained from white wines mixed with no less than 1% of cooked must.
- **RUBINO**, obtained from red wines, with possible addition of a maximum of 30% of wines from white grapes.

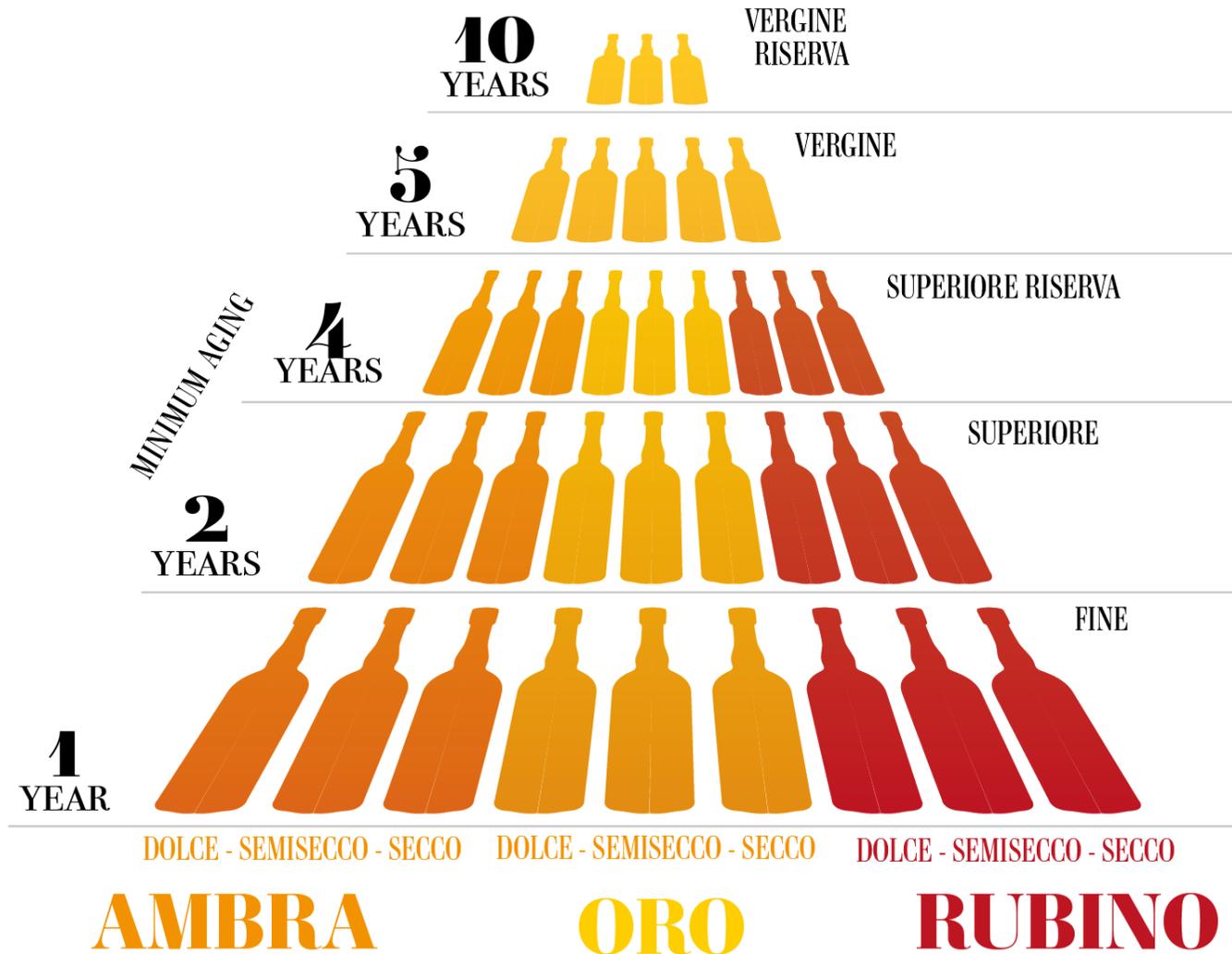
Marsala classification based on **sugar content**

- **SECCO**, sugar content less than 40 grams per liter.
- **SEMISECCO**, sugar content between 40 and 100 grams per liter.
- **DOLCE**, sugar content exceeding 100 grams per liter.

Marsala can also be classified based on **alcohol content** and **the minimum years of aging in wood**.

- **MARSALA FINE**, minimum alcohol content 17% vol, at least one year of aging.
- **MARSALA SUPERIORE**, minimum alcohol content 18% vol, at least 2 years of aging.
- **MARSALA SUPERIORE RISERVA**, minimum alcohol content 18% vol, at least 4 years of aging.
- **MARSALA VERGINE (or SOLERAS)**, minimum alcohol content 18% vol, at least 5 years of aging.
- **MARSALA VERGINE (or SOLERAS) STRAVECCHIO and/or RISERVA**, minimum alcohol content 18%, at least 10 years of aging.

Production, aging in wood and bottling of all types of Marsala wines must be carried out within **the permitted production area**.



Charges without loss of time at One Shilling and five pence
Sterling per Gallon Wine measure and to be paid for in Bills
upon the Commissioners for Victualing His Majesty's Navy
at the usual date by the respective Purasers of His Majesty's Ships
to which the Wine is delivered, and should any of the Wine be
wanted with the Wine an additional Charge is to be added of One
pound Sterling each pipe. The Wine to be delivered
as expeditiously as possible and within the space of five Weeks from the date, a
conroy will be wanted for the vessel from Mars
sla but all bills are to run by Mr. Woodhouse,



CANTINE FLORIO

Via Vincenzo Florio, 1

9105 Marsala (TP)

Tel 0923 781111

duca.it

