

# CONTRADE DI TAURASI

TAURASI \* CAMPANIA

There are many recent surprises in the region of Campania, which is perhaps the most improved winemaking area in Italy, but one thing has not changed: the wine made from the Aglianico grape grown around the village of Taurasi is still one of the glories of Italian viticulture.

Contrade di Taurasi is owned by Sandro Lonardo, a schoolteacher, and his wife Enza. They make Aglianico IGT, Taurasi, and small amounts of a white wine made from Greco Moscio, an indigenous white variety (grown ungrafted, interestingly). Their vineyards are all exposed directly south, which is ideal, and are at about 1300 feet above sea level, which may explain how a wine picked in the beginning of November in a warm climate can come in at relatively modest alcohol (between 13 and 13.5% in most vintages). All the vineyards are in the official Taurasi zone, but more than half of the fruit is declassified to IGT Aglianico, which improves the Taurasi and gives us an excellent, more forward example of Aglianico to drink while we're waiting for the Taurasi.

## AGLIANICO IGT IRPINIA

Declassified Taurasi; the less ageworthy lots are vinified separately, with a brief maceration of about a week and aging in puncheons (30%) and stainless steel (70%). The Irpinia shows the distinctive flavors of the area - blackberry/raspberry fruit balanced with fresh acidity, a savory character that I associate with volcanic soils, and a rounder, more forward structure than Taurasi itself. Drink now or in 3-5 years with red meats or substantial pasta dishes. (Unfined, coarsely filtered.)

## TAURASI DOCG

Outstanding red wine from southern Italy's most famous red wine appellation. The Aglianico grape, blended or alone, makes interesting wines all over southern Italy, but in Taurasi the volcanic soils and altitude make a wine of extraordinary power, complexity and freshness. The Lonardo family makes one of the best examples of Taurasi I have drunk, cleanly made but complex, intriguing and fine. (The wine spends about three weeks on the skins, and is aged for 18-24 months in wood, and a year in stainless steel; more recent vintages are aged entirely in large wood puncheons.) Tasting notes: Serious red-black color; aroma of berries, Japanese salt plum, expensive leather, cocoa, woody herbs (bay? lavender?); big, broad-shouldered wine on the palate. Drink now with roasted or braised meat, or age for 10 ++ years for a real treat. (Unfined, unfiltered.)

[www.contradeditaurasi.it](http://www.contradeditaurasi.it)