Marsala

Marsala is a fortified wine from Sicily. The wines are fortified either during or after fermentation, depending on the required level of sweetness. The addition of either mosto cotto (cooked must) or sifone, a mistelle produced by fortifying the unfermented must of overripe grapes, are used to add both colour and sweetness.

The wine is made using a process called in perpetuum, which is similar to the solera system.

Marsala wines are produced in three styles (colours):
- Ambra (Amber)
- Oro (golden)
- Rubino (Ruby)

The ambra and oro styles are produced from the white grapes Grillo, Catarratto, Inzolio (Ansonica), and Damaschino.

Grillo and Inzolio are the principal varietals; the ambra style is of lower quality and is the only style that permits the practice of concia: the addition of mosto cotto.

Rubino wines are produced from Perricone, Calabrese (Nero d’Avola), and Nerello Mascalese.

White grapes may comprise a maximum 30% of the rubino production.

The three styles of Marsala will also have their sugar content indicated on the label:
- Secco indicates a maximum 40 g/l of residual sugar,
- Semi-secco indicates 41 to 100 g/l of residual sugar,
- Dolce indicates a minimum 100 g/l of residual sugar.

**Marsala ageing requirements**

- **Fine**, - 1 year in cask (17%abv)
- **Superiore**, - 2 years in cask (18%abv)
- **Superiore Riserva**, - 4 years in cask (18%abv)
- **Vergine**, - 5 years in cask (18%abv)
- **Vergine Stravecchio / Soleras Riserva** – minimum of 10 years in cask

Vergine Marsala is a Secco wine, fortified after fermentation is complete. (No mosto cotto or sifone)

Solera versions must spend at least five years in the solera prior to bottling.

Vintage Marsala is produced, the vintage refers to the year of fortification.

Florio and Pellegrino are the leading producers of Marsala wine.