

2022 Torre Mora Etna Bianco Scalunera Sicily, Italy

When Mario Piccini stepped onto the Torre Mora estate in Sicily in 2016, he fell in love. His family has deep roots and 140 years of winemaking experience in Tuscany, and yet Sicily, specifically Mount Etna, filled him with excitement and inspiration. With some luck, he rented, renovated, and then purchased 15 hectares of the Torre Mora farm in Rovittello. The vineyards, farmed organically since 2016, lie between 600 to 750 meters above sea level on the northern slopes of Etna. The soil, loose, black volcanic ash, imbues these wines with character, while the winemaking objective is simply to transmit the terroir without obfuscation. Total production is about 5000 cases per year, and Skurnik is proud to represent these wines nationally in the United States. Torre Mora became Certified Organic in 2018.

Carricante is an ancient white wine grape variety from eastern Sicily. It is thought to have been growing on the volcanic slopes of Mt Etna for at least a thousand years. There are around 200 hectares (500 acres) of plantings on the island. Very few vines are found elsewhere. The variety is known for its marked acidity, and the high yields which gave rise to its name (carica means "load" in Italian). The best examples come from vines grown in volcanic soils, at high altitude (Etna's vineyards stretch up as high as 1,200 meters/3,940ft).

Well-adapted to their environment, Carricante vines respond well to the high diurnal temperature variations that characterize the climate around Mt. Etna. The grapes ripen slowly and steadily throughout the long growing season, retaining their trademark high acidity well into September. On the whole, Carricante wines offer a broad range of refreshing citrus aromas – anything from lemon and lime to grapefruit to orange – alongside cooling herbal notes such as mint and aniseed. An underlying mineral, slaty character is also to be found in the finest examples.

Bold and nimble in style, the Scalunera Etna Bianco is 100% Carricante and has fresh white fruit and herb aromas. Rich flavor springs up with lively acidity and a salty, mineral essence lingers on the finish. Long, persistent and sapid. It goes wonderfully with grilled seafood and pasta. Drink now.

Notes from www.skurnik.com & www.wine-searcher.com



Frutti di Mare (Seafood Spaghetti)

A very popular Italian pasta dish meaning "fruit of the sea" made with the freshest seafood you can get your hands on.

Ingredients:

1 lb clams & mussels (mixed) cleaned well
1 lb wild shrimp peeled
1/2 lb squid tentacles
1/4 c extra virgin olive oil
4 cloves garlic grated

Directions:

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook the spaghetti according to the package directions until Al Dente. Drain and reserve 1 cup of the salty pasta water.

Meanwhile heat up your largest skillet on medium low flame. Add a lug of olive oil, the garlic and red pepper flakes. Stir quickly making sure not to burn the garlic. Add in the clams and mussels and toss them around.

Pour in the white wine and cover with a lid. Cook for about a minute or so until the clams start to open.

Add the shrimp to the skillet with clams and give it a stir. Cover and cook for another minute or so.

Once all the clams and mussels have opened and the shrimp is almost cooked, add the squid tentacles. Cook another 30 seconds or so until they curl up.

Meanwhile warm up the sauce in a saucepan. Pour the sauce over the seafood and toss to coat well.

Add the cooked spaghetti pasta to the skillet with the seafood and toss to coat in the sauce. Add a little bit of the reserved pasta water if needed to stretch out the sauce.

Transfer your seafood spaghetti to a serving platter, drizzle with a lug of olive oil and sprinkle with the basil and parsley. Serve with lemon wedges on the side.

Serves 4 | Recipe <https://ciaoflorentina.com/seafood-spaghetti-recipe-spaghetti-frutti-di-mare/>



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2020 Barra Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon Mendocino, California

Following in the footsteps of his father, Antonio Barra, and his maternal grandfather, Giuseppe Rovera (who immigrated to Mendocino County from Piedmont, Italy in 1906), Charlie Barra began farming grapes in the mid-1940s. By 1954 he had purchased Redwood Valley Vineyards, the ranch that is now home to over 265 acres of organically grown grapes.

When Charlie started farming Redwood Valley Vineyards, farmers were averaging as little as \$40 a ton for their grapes, as the demand for quality wine based on true varietals had not yet been established. Most growers were still farming what Charlie called “standard” grapes that were used by the major wine producers to make Burgundy and Chablis--the basic table wines of the times. But after a few short years of growing “vin ordinaire”, Charlie could see the tide was turning. He began working with Karl Wentz, Robert Mondavi and others on moving to a varietal-focused vineyard.

The Barra vineyards have been certified by the CCOF (California Certified Organic Farmers) for over 30 years now (and it had taken another three years of inspections prior to that for the certification to become complete). But Charlie’s favorite saying was “I’ve really been farming organically for 55 years...I just didn’t know it the first 30!” Prior to World War II, growing without commercial chemicals and fertilizers was standard procedure.

The Cabernet Sauvignon fruit for this wine was handpicked from both the 50-acre vineyard site located at the winery in Redwood Valley, CA as well as the home ranch, Redwood Valley Vineyards. After completing primary and secondary fermentation, this wine was gently racked into barrels where it rested for 18 months before final blending. Aged in 30% new French oak, this elegant Cabernet greets you with complex notes of vanilla, black currant, wood spice, and anise. On the palate, it is soft and plush, while at the same time delivering a wonderful, lively acidity. Pairings for California Cabernet include steak, burgers, lamb, portobello mushrooms, and bold cheeses. Drink now - 2025.

Notes from www.barraofmendocino.com

“Full-bodied, fruit-forward red with notes of black cherries and currants as well as hints of walnut and cedar. Firm tannins and velvety texture with a succulent aftertaste.” James Suckling 92



Pan-Seared Steak with Garlic Butter

This Pan-Seared Steak has a garlic butter that makes it taste like a steakhouse quality meal.

Ingredients:

- 2 lbs New York Strip Steaks (2 steaks), or Ribeye or Top Sirloin Steaks (1 lb each steak, 1 1/4" thick)
- 1/2 Tbsp vegetable oil, or any high heat cooking oil like canola or extra light olive oil
- 1 1/2 tsp sea salt
- 1 tsp black pepper, freshly ground
- 2 Tbsp unsalted butter
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and quartered
- 1 sprig fresh rosemary

Directions:

Thoroughly pat steak dry with paper towels. Just before cooking, generously season with 1 1/2 tsp salt and 1 tsp black pepper. Heat the cast iron pan until hot then add 1/2 Tbsp oil over medium-high heat, swirling to coat. Once the oil is very hot, add steaks to the skillet. Sear the steaks on the first side for 4 minutes until a brown crust has formed then flip and cook another 3-4 minutes. Using tongs, turn the steak on its sides to render the white fat and sear the edges (1-minute per edge). Reduce heat to medium and immediately add 2 Tbsp butter, quartered garlic cloves and rosemary to the pan. Spoon the butter sauce over the steak, tilting the pan to get butter on your spoon. Continue spooning the sauce over the steak for a minute or until the steak is about 5-10 degrees from your desired doneness (the temperature will continue to rise another 5-10 degrees while steaks rest). Transfer steak to a cutting board, loosely cover and rest 10 minutes before slicing into 1/2" strips to serve. Spoon extra butter sauce over sliced steak to serve.

Serves 4 or 1/2 steak per person | Recipe <https://natashaskitchen.com/pan-seared-steak/>



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