

PREMIUM

## Best Campania wines: 30 to try

Aldo Fiordelli recommends 30 of the latest releases from Campania, primarily from the 2020 and 2019 vintages.



Aldo Fiordelli  
January 12, 2022



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The truly remarkable thing is that all of these varietals are crucial here. Fenile, for instance, is early ripening, while Ripoli is late maturing; Ginestra is aromatic, while Pepella is spicy. This is perfectly demonstrated in some of Campania's best wines, such as the extraordinary red blend from the Amalfi Coast – Marisa Cuomo's Furore Rosso Riserva, Costa d'Amalfi 2017.

It's an area better known for whites but its mineral-rich soils and dramatic day-to-night temperature variations allow for extraordinary phenolic ripeness, producing Aglianico and Piediroso of rare complexity.

### Biodiversity

Campania's biodiversity takes on a concrete role as vintage conditions vary year by year: Greco, for example, soars in the hot years, while Fiano stands out in the cooler years. The region's abundance of autochthonous varietals was the dominant theme that surfaced at the latest edition of Campania Stories, an annual appointment to showcase the region's new vintages, held in September 2021 at the Campus Principe di Napoli Gastronomic University on the Amalfi Coast in Agerola, a striking location at 600 metres above sea level.

With its 26,000 hectares of vines, Campania represents 4% of total Italian vineyard cultivation.

The estimated value of wine produced in 2018 across the region was roughly €72 million – about 2.4% of the national total. While it's opportune to note the charm of this artisanal dimension, we must also consider the difficulties of obtaining consistent data.

Annual hectolitre estimations differ considerably depending on whether you consult Istat, the national statistical institute, or Assoenologi, the association of Italian winemakers.

According to Istat, in 2018 (the most recent data available) Campania produced 1.37 millionhl, or 2.53% of the national total: an increase of 6% compared to the dry 2017 vintage, but still about 13% lower than the ten-year average. According to Assoenologi, 730,000hl of wine were produced in 2018, almost half the amount estimated by Istat. This variation could depend on the calculation of musts (as opposed to finished wine), suggests a source.

Also, according to Assoenologi, in 2019 and 2020 production rose to 778,000 hL while in 2017 it was 618,000hl. 'The 2017 harvest certainly marked a change in the historical average of the harvests,' explains a note from the association presided by Roberto Di Meo.

## Campania's scope

The distance from Campania's northern border with Lazio – in the area of Galluccio and Roccamonfina – to the extreme south bordering Basilicata is about 300 kilometres; the same as the distance between Beaune and Châteauneuf du Pape. It is a varied landscape; the hilly and mountainous inland and lofty cliffs overlooking the Tyrrhenian coast are scattered with volcanoes and remnants of ancient calderas.

Vines in Campania benefit not only from coastal breezes but also the coolness that altitude brings. At the end of August, one might leave for the Amalfi Coast with a summer suitcase, only to find yourself shivering in the evenings at 600 metres above sea level. This is the most tangible sign of the extreme fragmentation of the region, challenging to understand yet beguiling nonetheless.

The Amalfi Coast, along with Campi Flegrei are two of Campania's most underrated areas, but we shouldn't forget the Sannio area to the northeast of the region, which makes up 40% of the vineyards of Campania.

Campi Flegrei on the coast west of Naples is one of Campania's volcanic terroirs, along with Vesuvio on the other side of Naples and Irpinia further inland to the east. Campi Flegrei has a vast wooded area of 260 hectares, the former royal hunting reserve of the Spanish Bourbon dynasty, which today provides a welcome breath of fresh air and whose respiration proves fundamental to the surrounding viticultural activity, particularly – though not exclusively – in hot years.

The temperature range between night and day is increased by this green lung, as well as the proximity of the sea. Both factors are able to enhance the phenolic maturity of the grapes and their complexity.

## Campania 2020 & 2019

After the dryness and heat of a vintage such as 2017, much of the volcanic soils of Campania returned to their natural state, lending complexity to the slighted 2018 vintage.

The 2019 and 2020 vintages in Campania are more regular and should be considered as 'twins': both experienced excellent climatic trends and produced almost identical quantities of grapes.

2020 registered moderate rainfalls, with temperatures slightly higher than usual up until the autumn and just a few windows between June and September when a sub-Saharan anticyclone has alternated with the Azzorre anticyclone.

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## 30 of the best Campania wines to try:

### Luigi Maffini, Pietraincatenata Fiano, Cilento, 2019

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The greater balance of the 2019 vintage returns a wine on the edge of warmth but full of layers. This Fiano comes from Giungano vineyard on limestone soil and is fermented in French oak barrels without maceration, then aged for a brief four months. Beyond its petrolly note, there is...

Points 93



### Pietracupa, Cupo Fiano, Campania, Italy, 2018

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Talented Sabino Loffredo's wines are identified by a sleek mineral tanginess. This 2018 vintage of his selection 'Cupo' from Montefredane is intense and smoky with Mirabelle plum and an iodine character. The palate is dominated by a Mojito-like flavour of lime

Points 93



### Marisa Cuomo, Fiorduva, Costa d'Amalfi, Campania, 2019

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If the quality of the estate's Costa d'Amalfi Furore red wine is quite surprising, we must admit that its white Fiorduva is always a consistent reference. The 2019 is particularly rich, with a gold colour and an oaky character. Walnut, mint leaf and a roster of stone

Points 93



### Ettore Sammarco, Selva delle Monache, Costa d'Amalfi, 2020

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Selva delle Monache is astonishing in the great 2020 vintage. The blend of Biancolella, almost unique Biancuzita (Ginestra) and Falanghina is able to reach remarkable concentration without losing its briny telltale character. Slightly estery on the nose, it asserts notes of spring flowers, yellow peach and a saline perception....

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### Feudi di San Gregorio, Pietracalda, Fiano di Avellino, 2020

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This Fiano is harvested in Sorbo Serpico from 15-year-old vines planted at 450 metres above sea level on a mainly clay soil. Smoky and chalky, it's focused on spices such as white pepper, then fairly neutral broom aromas. It's more assertive on the palate, with

Points 92



### Benito Ferrara, Vigna Cicogna, Greco di Tufo, Campania, 2020

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From vineyards up to 400 metres above sea level on the clay calcareous soil of Tufo village, this Greco is harvested from vines of 30 to 60 years. Gabriella Ferrara's estate is one of the oldest here, dating back to 1860. The 2020 vintage did the rest. It's an

Points 92



### I Favati, Pietramara, Fiano di Avellino, Campania, 2020

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Lapio is considered one of the finest villages for Fiano di Avellino. I Favati harvested grapes also from Atripalda for this selection. It's a wine focused on citrus notes of candied lemon and lemon leaf, intense and tense, almost herbal in flavour. The attack is refined, without phenolic grip but...

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### Cantine del Mare, Falanghina, Campi Flegrei, Campania, 2019

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Despite Gennaro Schiano distinguishing himself for outstanding Piediroso, his Falanghina 2019 is also delicious. Sourced from mostly old vines in Bacoli, Monte di Procida and Cigliano, the grapes are gently pressed and stainless steel fermented

Points 92



### Feudi di San Gregorio, Feudi Studi Morandi, Fiano di Avellino 2019

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Morandi is the highest Fiano di Avellino of Feudi within the appellation. Intense on the nose, it displays wild fennel, saffron, candied lemon and smoky whiffs. Great fruit concentration confirms the quality of the 2019 vintage, with Mirabelle plum layered

Points 91



### Agnum, Falanghina, Campi Flegrei, Campania, Italy, 2019

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From the volcanic soil of Campi Flegrei arrives this lean yet perfumed Falanghina. Elderberry and whiffs of coriander and camomile are enriched by an apricot flavour. Delicacy and tension of lifted acidity chase each other, dancing over some mid-palate weight. A bit rustic at the end, yet very typical.

Points 91



### Mustilli, Vigna Segreta, Falanghina del Sannio, 2019

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Focused this year on Falanghina-based wines, the Mustilli estate shines with this Vigna Segreta. The most representative winery of Sannio produced this wine with a short maceration and long lees ageing of 10 months. The leesy character is indeed evident,

Points 90



### Astroni, Vigna Astroni Falanghina, Campi Flegrei, 2019

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The Varchetta family manages 25 hectares in Campi Flegrei (13 owned and 12 rented). Vigna Astroni is the estate's greatest selection in stainless steel (there is an oak-aged wine too, called Strione). The grapes are destemmed and gently crushed, using just the

Points 90



### Scavia, Calù, Terre del Volturno, Campania, Italy, 2020

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Scavia winery lies in Marianello, at Liberi in the province of Caserta. Here, Pallagrello is planted at 500 metres above sea level, blended in this wine with 15% of Fiano. The must is fermented at moderate temperature in a stainless steel tank and aged on the fine lees for six...

Points 89



### Luigi Maffini, Kratos Fiano, Cilento, Campania, Italy, 2020

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There is no volcanic soil in the vineyards of Luigi Maffini in Cilento but there is a great proportion of limestone. The grapes are harvested from Giungano, Castellabate and Trentinara. This Fiano comes from the 2020 vintage, which was good in terms of

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### Casa Setaro, Aryete Caprettone, Vesuvio, Campania, 2019

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Caprettone is the flagship grape variety of Vesuvio, on a fully volcanic soil. The Aryete selection comes from 60-year-old vines and is vinified in amphora. Intense rose and sweet apricot, peach and papaya aromas lead to a mellow and soft palate with stony-

Points 88



### Montevetrano, Colli di Salerno, Campania, Italy, 2018

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A well established brand using international grape varieties blended with Aglianico for a more approachable style. Crimson in the glass, it is subtle if not low-key on the nose with restrained cassis, violet and olives. Dense on the palate, it's soft first then firm and quite foursquare on the finish,...

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### Marisa Cuomo, Furore Rosso Riserva, Costa d'Amalfi, 2017

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Andrea Ferraioli and Marisa Cuomo are passionate producers on the Amalfi Coast, growing ancient indigenous grape varieties on steep, rocky vineyards overlooking the sea. Celebrated for their whites, their reds are also worthy of consideration. This

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### Galardi, Terra di Lavoro, Campania, Italy, 2018

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The northern pick of Campania, from a leading producer in Casertano and one of the most consistent red wines of the region. Based on 80% Aglianico and 20% Piediroso, the grapes come from Galluccio and Sessa Aurunca from vines mostly 22 to 24 years old

Points 94



### Feudi di San Gregorio, Taurasi, Campania, Italy, 2016

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A very classic wine for Aglianico, Irpinia and Taurasi. Dense garnet in the glass with a restrained bouquet of geranium and dark rose, it develops cassis, cigar box and herbal touches enhanced by a Modica salt chocolate character. Careful handling and oak ageing in barrels for 18 months contribute to...

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### Villa Raiano, Taurasi, Campania, Italy, 2016

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Castelfranci, one of the cooler areas of the Taurasi appellation, is emerging as a village to watch, especially in good vintages such as 2016. This Taurasi from the Basso family is a telltale example. Reductive at first, it then opens up to reveal leather, firebrand,



Points 93

### Villa Matilde Avallone, Fusonero, Campania, Italy, 2016

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A very good Taurasi from the villages of Montemarano and Paternopoli within Irpinia. Aglianico here is sourced from old vines of between 36 and 53 years of age, destemmed, crushed and cold macerated before fermentation, which occurs not above 26°C. The



Points 93

### Feudi di San Gregorio, Piano di Montevergine Riserva, Taurasi, Campania 2015

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From Piano di Montevergine and Taurasi villages, this Riserva is harvested from relatively young vines of 15 to 20 years. Aged for 18 months in French oak barrels, it is focused on graphite minerality and restrained cassis, enhanced by a herbaceous character and wild dark fruits, linked nose-palate by cacao...



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### Luigi Maffini, Cenito Aglianico, Cilento, Campania, 2018

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The iconic elegant style of Maffini doesn't disappoint here: the Aglianico is sourced from 25-year-old vines from Castellabate on clay and limestone soil with sand. The must is aged in partly new French oak barrels for 12 months. Graphite, smoky tones and



Points 92

### Sertura, Aglianico, Irpinia, Campania, Italy, 2019

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The production of Giancarlo Barbieri is so tiny but his wines are imported to the UK. He manages just 0.9 hectares in Montefalcione within the Irpinia region. His Aglianico is long-macerated but not oak aged. A kind of Cahors style of crunchiness, it's dominated



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### Salvatore Molettieri, Renonno, Taurasi, Campania, 2015

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Salvatore Molettieri and his sons embody the genuine Irpinian style. Viticulturists first, they have also been winemakers since 1983. Today, despite the replanting of their Renonno vineyard 10 to 15 years ago, this selection shines for its multifaceted character. An intense camphor note attacks the nose in a lovely balsamic...

Points 91



### Agnanum, Piediroso, Campi Flegrei, Campania, Italy, 2019

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This is a good example of how easily Campi Flegrei can produce complexity. In the balanced 2019 vintage, Piediroso from century-old vines on volcanic soils vinified in stainless steel doesn't need anything else to express its deliciousness. Bright purplish in

Points 91



### Tenuta del Meriggio, Aglianico, Irpinia, Campania, 2016

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The quality of the 2016 vintage continues to shine. Here, Aglianico is fermented in a stainless steel tank then aged in big oak vessels. Ruby in the glass, it focuses on an amazing fresh cherry fruit character, layered with smoky woodland and liquorice

Points 90



### Cantine del Mare, Terra del Padre Piediroso Riserva, Campi Flegrei, Campania 2017

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The must of Piediroso from volcanically grown vines over a hundred years old is fermented in a stainless steel tank under controlled temperature then aged in 10hL botti for 18 months. A style underlined by fresh, pure strawberry and pomegranate fruit, with orange peel vibrancy and a tingling palate, it's...



Points 90

### Delite, Pentamerone, Taurasi, Campania, Italy, 2015

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A boutique winery run with passion by Emanuele Coscia over six hectares, where he produces 10,000 bottles, 2,000 of which are this delicious Taurasi. Thyme and blackberry aromas over forest floor depth, with dark chocolate and tobacco suggest an



Points 89

### Marisa Cuomo, Ravello Rosso Riserva, Costa d'Amalfi, 2017

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The main difference between Furore and Ravello red wines from Andrea Ferraioli is the blend, which leaves the 30% of Aglianico in favour of 70% Piediroso. Garnet in colour, it has restrained aromas of bramble fruit with some funky notes of medical herbs and



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