

PORTOVINO

MORTELLITO 'CALAIANCU' BIANCO TERRE SICILIANE

Mortellito [MORT-el-li-to] is in Val di Noto*, in the corner of Sicily that lies at the same latitudes as North Africa's arid desert climate. Its vineyards are a few kilometers from the coast, with **grooves of ancient olive and almonds trees breaking the wind off the sea.** Abandoned and still working fishing ports dot the landscape. Owner Dario Serrentino has always enjoyed the contrasts of this **coastal growing area**, which he calls '**a desert next to the beach.**' Over the years, lucky for us, he's learned to coax extremely elegant wines from this receding coast of **limestone**, which, he says, is '**the magic to produce wines with tension, freshness, and complex salinity.**' In Dario's best vintages, his rosso and bianco wines have a **tapering svelte finish, cool and salt-dusted.** Drinking them is akin to a dive into the nearby Ionian sea on a hot summer day.

Dario has always worked on the family farm in one form or another (his heirloom almonds were actually his first love). He changed careers from social worker and part-time farmer to full-time *vignaiolo* with his first bottling in 2014. He works only with native grapes, including an **herbal Frappato**, and a **spicy-sour bush vine Nero d'Avola**. His **whites are acid-driven and aspirin-chalky in texture:** the **Grillo** often has a nose of grilled nuts and citrus rinds, the **Moscato di Alessandria** is floral and herbal (*la sua morte*, 'it's death,' as the Italians like to say, is a pairing with raw fish *crudo*).

There's never been any chemical interventions in the vineyards, and there's an intentional hands-off approach in the cellar, with a minimum of sulphur added at bottling. **Avoiding the entrapments of the glou-glou or overwrought luxury style**, Dario is part of a very small contingent of producers in Sicily producing **fine and natural wines**, or as Dario poetically likes to say: ***mare e terra in vino.***

* Val, confusingly, doesn't translate as 'valley' in this instance; instead it most likely come from the Arab or Latin meaning, 'Governor' of Noto or 'Territory' of Noto

REGION: Sicilia **GROWING AREA:** **FARMING:** Certified Organic Bioagricert ITBIO007B05H **VINEYARD:** 4 Ha **ALTITUDE:** from 40 m / 131 ft to 80 m / 263 ft **SOILS:** medium texture limestone **VARIETIES:** 90% Grillo and 10% Catarratto **VINE AGE:** From 5 to 10 years old **VINE TRAINING:** *alberello* (bush vines) and guyot espalier **HARVEST DATE:** beginning of September **YEASTS:** Native **FERMENTATION & ÉLEVAGE:** Grillo and Catarratto coferment after spending 1 night on the skins. Fermentation completed in 15 to 20 days. Élevage for 6 months in stainless steel tanks. **MALOLACTIC**



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FERMENTATION: Yes **SULPHUR:** 10 mg/l added during fermentation; 20 mg/l at bottling **ALCOHOL:** 13% **ANNUAL PRODUCTION:** 1,000 cases