

NEGRO AMARO

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BACKGROUND

Negro Amaro, or Negroamaro (pronounced NEGG-ro ah-MARR-oh), is mainly grown in Puglia, in the south of Italy, particularly in the provinces of Brindisi, Taranto and Lecce. Supposedly of Greek origin, this has yet to be confirmed by DNA analysis. It is used for both rosé and red wine styles and is the major component of many DOC wines, e.g. Brindisi, Copertino, Squinzano, Rosso di Cerignola and Salice Salentino—in many of these, it is blended with up to 20% Malvasia Nera. The planted area in Italy was 31,000 hectares in 1990, but has decreased since that time. There do not appear to be significant plantings in any other countries. In Australia, there are currently at least seven wine producers according to the *Wine Industry Directory*. Synonyms include Abbruzzese, Abruzzese, Albese, Arbese, Arbise, Jonico, Lacrima, Mangiaverde, Mangiaverme, Negra della Lorena, Nero Amaro, Nero Leccese, Nicra Amaro, Niuri Maru and Uva Cane.

VITICULTURE

Budburst and maturity are mid-season to late. Vines are vigorous and growth habit is erect. Bunches are compact, medium to large and yield is moderate to high. Berries are purplish-black, medium to large with thick skin. In Italy it has been traditionally grown as bush vines, but performs well on various trellis systems. With good basal bud fertility, it may be spur pruned. Negro Amaro may be difficult to machine harvest because berries do not detach easily from bunch stems. It is susceptible to botrytis due to the compact bunches, but is tolerant of downy and powdery mildews. With late budburst it can escape early spring frosts. Negro Amaro has performed extremely well under hot and dry conditions in Australia.

WINE

Negro Amaro has good acid retention and relatively low pH in hot climates. Phenolics are moderate to high. Wines have a fruity perfume with good body, are well-rounded and slightly bitter. Descriptors include dark fruits, boysenberry, prune, spicy, dried cherry and chocolate. Wines have good ageing potential.

This is an extract from the manual developed for the Research to Practice workshop on 'Alternative varieties: emerging options for a changing environment' (Tassie, L.; Dry, P.R. and Essling, M. 2010). For further information on this and other emerging varieties, contact Marcel Essling (viticulture@awri.com.au; tel. 08 8313 6600) at The Australian Wine Research Institute to arrange the presentation of this Research to Practice program in your region.