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OIL OF THE WEEK

Val Paradiso Extra Virgin Olive Oil "Agrigento – Capital of Culture"

by Christian Guzzardi

March 30, 2025



The oil can dedicated to Agrigento, capital of culture



In the heart of Sicily, among the almond and olive trees that grow within the district from which it takes its name, lies the **Val Paradiso** farm . Located in Naro, in the province of Agrigento, it has been producing high-quality extra virgin olive oils from the island's main native varieties since 1980. One hundred and fifty hectares and approximately 40,000 trees spread between Naro and Licata, cultivated with care and dedication by Massimo Carlino, following organic farming guidelines. This work is carried out in harmony with the surrounding environment, respecting nature, without the use of chemicals, and using only natural products and organic substances.

The mill and all company facilities are also powered exclusively by energy from renewable sources, such as small wind turbines and photovoltaic panels, which produce all the necessary electricity with zero emissions. A 1,800-square-meter facility includes a storage area, a chemical laboratory, temperature-controlled cellars, and a protective-atmosphere bottling plant.

In Naro, in the Saladino and Fasinella districts, olive groves of Carolea and Biancolilla trees extend. In Licata, in the Cufilaro and Passarello districts, trees of the Nocellara del Belice, Biancolilla, Cerasuola, and Coratina varieties grow. In addition to Italian organic certification, Val Paradiso has obtained exclusive international recognitions such as Bio-Suisse (Switzerland), JAS (Japan), and NOP (United States), adhering to the rigorous standards of these countries. For several years, Val Paradiso has also been managing the centuries-old olive trees of the **Valley of the Temples** Archaeological Park in Agrigento. These monumental trees produce Diodoros extra virgin olive oil, a premium product that enhances the territory and its ancient agricultural vocation. This project respects the landscape and its cultural roots, recognized as a Slow Food Presidium.

From this precious natural heritage, knowledge, and technology, Val Paradiso oils are born. The range includes the Classico, a blend of Biancolilla and Nocellara del Belice



olives; the Organic, a single-variety olive obtained exclusively from Biancolilla olives; the IGP Sicilia Bio, a blend of Nocellara del Belice, Biancolilla, and Cerasuola olives; the Diodoros Valle dei Templi, housed in a ceramic bottle designed by Antonio Giancontieri and inspired by ancient Sicilian processing techniques; and a special edition of the double-certified extra virgin olive oil, produced in a limited edition for the 2024 olive oil campaign and dedicated to Agrigento, **the Italian Capital of Culture 2025**. The range is completed by flavored oils with garlic, lemon, rosemary, basil, orange, and chili pepper. An average annual production of 120,000 liters, 40% of which is distributed abroad (Europe, Canada, Japan, and the United States) and 60% in Italy, through the HoReCa channel and specialized shops and stores.

In 2025, Val Paradiso launched a project in collaboration with the Agrigento prison, involving **inmates** in cultivating olive trees and harvesting olives from a small olive grove within the facility. The harvest was then processed into oil at an olive mill, resulting in a limited but significant production. This experience will lead to new training programs for inmates, ranging from cultivation to olive oil tasting.

Among the Val Paradiso oils, for Cronache di Gusto we tasted **the extra virgin olive oil dedicated to Agrigento**, named Italian Capital of Culture in 2025. This limited edition, produced from the 2024 olive oil campaign, is produced in a single 1-liter tin, decorated by the young Sicilian artist Carmelo Nicotra. The illustration depicts the goddess Kore at the center of a minimalist landscape, composed of monochrome geometric shapes representing the sky, the Scala dei Turchi, and the sea. On the back, an architectural element: the silhouette of a Gothic-style pointed arch, an emblem of many of Agrigento's monuments. Obtained from the **Nocellara del Belice, Biancolilla, and Cerasuola** cultivars, it is a medium fruity (4/10) with a golden color, characterized by a typically Sicilian aromatic profile. The notes of tomato



and aromatic herbs, including oregano, particularly stand out, accompanied by herbaceous hints. On the palate, it is well-balanced, thanks to a nice balance between light bitterness (3/10) and moderate spiciness (4/10). This extra virgin olive oil embodies the distinctive characteristics of its three cultivars: Nocellara del Belice, with its bold, fruity character; Biancolilla, with its delicate, smooth profile; and Cerasuola, which adds a more pronounced bitterness and an artichoke aftertaste. For these reasons, it enhances the flavor of the dishes it accompanies. It pairs well with vegetable-rich salads, red meats, pasta dishes and soups, and pizzas and focaccias. It is at its best when served raw.

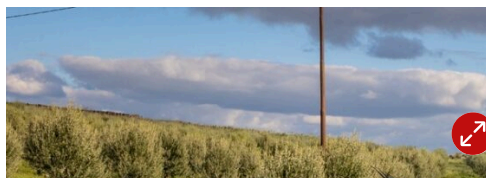
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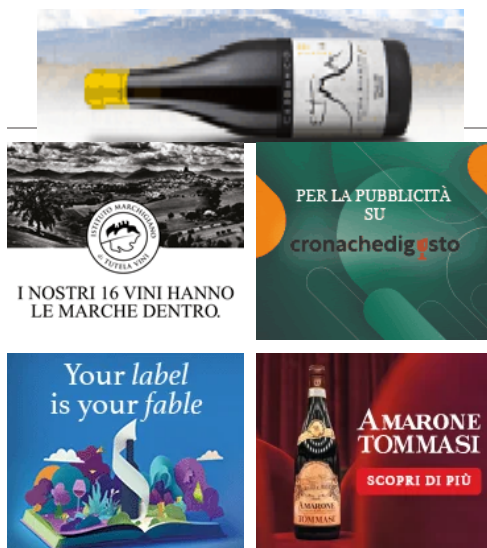


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by Christian Guzzardi





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