

DANZANTE

2006

MERLOT IGT DELLA SICILIA

• WINEMAKER'S NOTES •

The 2006 Danzante Merlot's ruby tonality is striking both for its clarity and its density. Well-fruited fragrances predominate on the nose, initial cherry and dried plum gradually give way to appealing spicy nuances, particularly black pepper. It opens confidently to a mouth-filling palate, where velvety tannins are supported by a judicious alcohol, and achieves a lovely balance of all of its components.

Finishes appropriately long.

Varietal blend: 90% Merlot, 10% Complementary Varieties

• VINEYARDS & GRAPES •

In French, the word Merlot means "Young Blackbird," probably alluding to the grape's beautiful dark-blue color. This grape is the first French variety to be planted on a large scale in Italy after the Phylloxera disaster (Phylloxera is a parasitical disease that devastated the European vineyards in the 1806's through the end of the century). Originally introduced to the Northern provinces, Merlot is now found in the central and southern regions as well. The grapes for Danzante Merlot are selected from the province of Agrigento in Sicily. Viticulture in Sicily dates back around 4000 years and while ancient wines from this region earned prestige around the world, until recently, modern wine growing has focused on high production and desert grapes. Fortunately in the past few years there has been a rebirth in Sicilian wines with gradual conversion towards quality. The warm Sicilian sun promotes perfect ripening of the grapes, which is essential in creating great wines.

• FERMENTATION AND AGING •

The grapes are lightly crushed and the must fermented in stainless steel vats at approximately 30° C (86 F). The wine ferments approximately 10 days and is given seven days of extended skin contact to naturally soften tannins and develop varietal complexity. Immediately following the primary fermentation, the wine undergoes malolactic fermentation to enhance the wines roundness and depth.

The wine is not oak aged in order to accentuate the pure berry fruit character. After 10 months in stainless steel tanks to marry flavors, the wine is bottled.

5.63 g/l total acidity, 3.51 ph, 3.1 g/l residual sugar, 13.7% Alcohol

• SERVING SUGGESTIONS •

Smoked charcuterie or first courses such as risotto with cheese. Also pairs with sautéed poultry or rabbit.