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Committed to its craft: Pellegrino's Sicilian legacy

From the historic cellars of Marsala to the UNESCO-protected bush vines of volcanic Pantelleria, Cantine Pellegrino stands as a vital custodian of Sicilian fine wine – a legacy of quality reaffirmed by standout scores at the Decanter World Wine Awards 2026.



The rugged terrain of Pantelleria.
(Image credit: Supplied by Pellegrino)

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On the sun-drenched western coast of Sicily, in the historic port town of Marsala, time moves differently. Step into Pellegrino's venerable cellars and you'll find vaults stuffed with old barrels containing precious liquids, and share space with historic treasures including beautifully decorated 19th century trading carts and even the remains of a Punic warship dating back to 241 BC.

Precious commodities

Founded in 1880, Pellegrino boasts a long and esteemed history of winemaking. It's one of the island's oldest and most prestigious family-owned wineries, yet the family has never been content to rest on its laurels. Today, it stands as a dedicated custodian of two unique, historically significant expressions of Sicilian viticulture: the world-renowned fortified wines of Marsala, and the vivid, sun-kissed wines from the rugged volcanic island of Pantelleria.

Pellegrino has always looked to protect and preserve the centuries-long tradition of Marsala. This dedication was recently validated at this year's Decanter World Wine Awards (DWWA), where its [Single Barrel Marsala Vergine Riserva 2005](#) secured a Silver Medal with a resounding 93 points.

Identified by Pellegrino's cellarmaster as a particularly extraordinary expression, this single 20hl oak cask of Marsala matured for over 20 years before bottling. The Vergine style represents Marsala at its most bone-dry and complex, with judges praising its 'hazelnut, dried apricot and saffron (which) unfold through honeyed roasted apple and spice.'



The winery's Single Barrel Marsala Vergine Riserva 2005.
(Image credit: Supplied by Pellegrino)

Pantelleria's extreme landscape

Beyond the Sicilian mainland, Pellegrino's vision extends to Pantelleria. Located closer to the Tunisian coast than to Sicily, this tiny, windswept volcanic outcrop is a place of extreme viticulture.

Here, Zibibbo (the Sicilian name for Muscat of Alexandria) vines are cultivated using the *alberello pantesco* system – a low bush-vine training method so deeply tied to the landscape that it has been granted UNESCO World Heritage status. The vines hunker down in shallow hollows, shielded from the relentless winds and protecting the grapes from the fierce southern sun.

From these demanding conditions, Pellegrino crafts cutting-edge dry whites alongside one of Italy's most celebrated sweet wines: Passito di Pantelleria. The creation of Passito is a painstaking labour of love, requiring the grapes to be hand-harvested and naturally sun-dried on racks to concentrate their natural sugars and aromatic intensity.

This meticulous craftsmanship was brilliantly underscored at DWWA 2026, where Pellegrino's [NES Passito di Pantelleria DOC 2024](#) was awarded a Gold Medal and a stellar 96 points. It is an authentic expression of place, described by the judges as having a 'kaleidoscopic array of aromas and flavours evoking a Sicilian market: orange blossom, marmalade, crystallised lemon rind and saffron honey'.

Crafting wines of this calibre requires both immense skill and unrelenting patience. With over 140 years of winemaking experience distilled into every bottle, Pellegrino continues to prove that the finest way to achieve contemporary excellence is by looking to its past.



Pellegrino's NES Passito di Pantelleria DOC 2024.
(Image credit: Supplied by Pellegrino)

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