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Merano WineFestival debuts in Calabria highlighting southern Italian wines and cuisine

Cirò hosts inaugural event with tastings, chef showcases, scientific talks, and celebrations of regional food and wine heritage

Friday, May 16, 2025



From June 7 to 9, 2025, the town of Cirò in Calabria will host the first edition of the Merano WineFestival Calabria – Essence of the South. This event marks the debut of one of Europe's most respected wine festivals in Southern Italy. The festival is

organized through a partnership between Merano WineFestival, the Department of Agriculture of the Calabria Region, the Regional Agency for the Development of Calabrian Agriculture, and the Consorzio di Tutela Vini DOC Cirò e Melissa.

The festival opens on Saturday, June 7 at 5:00 PM in Cirò's historic center. The opening ceremony will be followed by a series of tastings and activities that highlight the region's food and wine traditions. Nine tasting stations will each focus on a native Calabrian grape variety, with about 180 wines available for sampling under the guidance of expert sommeliers. Ten local chefs will present traditional Calabrian dishes with modern interpretations at three culinary islands. The program also includes a Cirò Wine Library, a showcase on regional biodiversity with participation from five guest regions, access to the Luigi Lilio Museum, and live music.

On Sunday and Monday, June 8 and 9, the festival moves to Borgo Saverona in Cirò Marina. More than 130 wine and food exhibitors will offer unlimited tastings to visitors. The schedule features live cooking shows by leading chefs and entertainment throughout both days. Sunday's events begin with a ceremonial saber-opening of sparkling wine bottles and the presentation of the WineHunter Award Calabria 2025 to outstanding products. From 6:00 PM until midnight, guests can enjoy tasting counters, culinary creations, live music, and a poolside lounge.

A special "Chef on the Table" format will run from 7:30 PM to 10:00 PM each evening. On Sunday, chefs Luca Abbruzzino (Abbruzzino Oltre), Antonio Biafora (Hyle), Caterina Ceraudo (Dattilo), and pizza chef Daniele Campana (Campana 12) will prepare dishes inspired by local ingredients. On Monday, chefs Nino Rossi (Qafiz) and Riccardo Sculli (Gambero Rosso Restaurant) will take over, joined by pizza chef Roberto Davanzo (Bob Alchimia a Spicchi).

The Social Garden area is designed as a meeting point for producers, journalists, influencers, and wine lovers. It will host talks, live interviews, music sessions, aperitifs, and mixology demonstrations in an informal setting.

Between Sunday and Monday, Professor Attilio Scienza and Dr. Anna Schneider will lead a scientific conference titled "Breath and Cry of the Earth." The conference will address vineyard biodiversity in Southern Italy and discuss future sustainability scenarios for

agriculture.

The festival concludes on Monday night at 11:30 PM with “Magna Graecia Metodo Classico,” a poolside toast celebrating Calabrian sparkling wines. Organizers expect this event to attract wine enthusiasts, industry professionals, and tourists interested in exploring Calabria’s food and wine culture. The festival aims to promote local products while highlighting Calabria’s rich history as part of Magna Graecia.