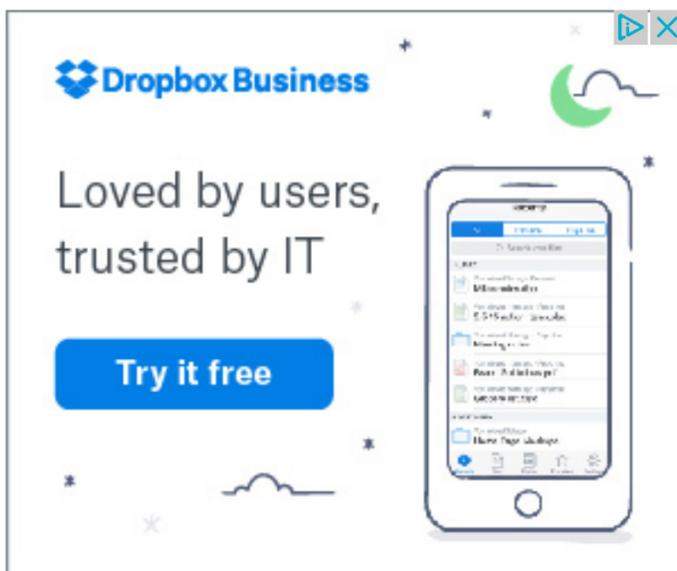


## Cirò: Calabria's Ancient Wine from the Toe of Southern Italy's Boot

by [Loren Sonkin \(/user/loren-sonkin\)](#)

The region of Calabria is the proverbial toe in the boot shape of Italy with a long history. Its first name was, in fact, *Italia* most likely derived from the Italic tribes who inhabited the region. They in turn most likely took their name from the word *vituli* which was the local word for the numerous caves which dot the mountainous area. The Greeks then came to the area bringing the art of winemaking. They called the area *Enotria* which meant "land where the vine is cultivated high above the earth." There are records from the 4th century B.C. which indicate a vineyard in this area was worth six times the value of the same size field planted with grains. In fact, there is a group of people living today called the Grecanici who allegedly trace their roots back to Odysseus and the survivors of the Trojan War. The area was named Calabria in the 7th century by the Byzantines.

Calabria is bordered to the north by the region of Basilicata. The rest of Calabria is bordered by the Ionian and Tyrrhenian Seas. It is one of the poorest regions in Italy. The economy is based on agriculture including grapes, figs, olives and citrus fruits. In terms of the topography, there are some flat long areas near the coast (less than 10% of the total country), however, most of Calabria is mountainous. The Ionian sea has a moderating effect on the temperatures for the vineyards nearer to the coast, but the area is still quite hot and dry during the day. Due to the altitude, temperatures cool down a little at night which allows the grapes to continue to develop thru the growing season. The soils are a mix of clay, sand and marl which is good for wine growing.



Not a lot of wine is produced here. The best known wine is a DOC wine called Cirò (pronounced "CHIR-o"). There are other DOC's that produce wine, however, for quality wines, with the exception of Cirò, the future and its potential is all that they have. Cirò has ancient roots. Cirò may be the oldest wine in the world still produced today. Local

legend has it that the grapes were used to produce Cremissa, in a Greek colony known today as Cirò Marina, a beverage offered as a toast to the gods by the Olympic champions of ancient Greece. In fact, in the 1968 Olympics, the athletes were all offered Cirò with their meals during the competition.

There are about a dozen producers of Cirò bottling about 30,000 hectolitres per year. The DOC Cirò is located along the Ionian coast in low lying hills. Cirò is made also a Bianco (White), and Rosato (Rosè), but it is the Rosso (Rosso) that is most famous and that is the subject of this article. The Rosso

must be made with at least 95% of the wine coming from Gaglioppo grapes. The remaining 5% can be Trebbiano Toscano or Greco Bianco grapes. There are five additional designations for Cirò Rosso; Classico, Superiore, Classico Superiore, Reserva, and Classico Riserva. The first three are geographical restrictions while to carry Riserva title on the label the wines must be aged for 24 months before release.

The Gaglioppo grape is indigenous to the area. The wines it produces are very unique. The grape's meat is lightly colored. While the skin of the grape is thick, it does not have a lot of tannins. To produce quality wines, producers must be willing let the grapes get fully ripe and then allow the juice to have contact with the skins for a long time to absorb both color and the tannins for structure. To do this well requires temperature controlled modern equipment which can be expensive. There are few producers willing to invest the money and make quality wines.

### **The California Wine Club**

<http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?>



<http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?>

[u=286677&b=58022&m=10286&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ecawineclub%2Ecom](http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?u=286677&b=58022&m=10286&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ecawineclub%2Ecom)

**MORE INFO** ([HTTP://WWW.SHAREASALE.COM/R.CFM?](http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?)

[U=286677&B=58022&M=10286&AFFTRACK=&URLLINK=WWW%2ECAWINECLUB%2ECOM](http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?u=286677&b=58022&m=10286&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ecawineclub%2Ecom))

[u=286677&b=58022&m=10286&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ecawineclub%2Ecom](http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?u=286677&b=58022&m=10286&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ecawineclub%2Ecom))

For more than 25 years, The California Wine Club founders Bruce and Pam Boring have explored all corners of California's wine country to find award-winning, handcrafted wine to share with the world. Each month, the club features a different small family winery and hand selects two of their best wines for members.

- **Premier Series (starting at \$39.95/mo)** (<http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?u=286677&b=58022&m=10286&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ecawineclub%2Ecom%2FPremier%2DWine%2DClub>)
- **International Series (starting at \$110/mo)** (<http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?u=286677&b=58022&m=10286&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ecawineclub%2Ecom%2FIInternational%2DWine%2DClub>)
- **Pacific Northwest Series (starting at \$68/mo)** (<http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?u=286677&b=58022&m=10286&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ecawineclub%2Ecom%2FPacific%2DNorthwest%2DWine%2DClub>)
- **Signature Series (starting at \$151/mo)** (<http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?u=286677&b=58022&m=10286&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ecawineclub%2Ecom%2FSignature%2DWine%2DClub>)
- **Aged Cabernet Series (starting at \$180/mo)** (<http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?u=286677&b=58022&m=10286&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ecawineclub%2Ecom%2FCabernet%2DWine%2DClub>)

**Wine Crasher** (<http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?>

[u=286677&b=865646&m=65843&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ewinecrasher%2Ecom%2FWine%2DClub%5Fc%5F61%2Ehtml](http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?u=286677&b=865646&m=65843&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ewinecrasher%2Ecom%2FWine%2DClub%5Fc%5F61%2Ehtml))

Wine Crasher is a 5 Star rated wine club offering only highly rated 89+

wines at guaranteed best prices. Wines rated by the most trusted wine critics, including Robert Parker's Wine Advocate, Wine Spectator, Vinous by Antonio Galloni, and Burghound.



- [3 Bottle Red Club](http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?u=286677&b=865646&m=65843&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ewinecrasher%2Ecom%2FWine%2DClub%5Fc%5F61%2Ehtml)  
([http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?](http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?u=286677&b=865646&m=65843&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ewinecrasher%2Ecom%2FWine%2DClub%5Fc%5F61%2Ehtml)

([http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?](http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?u=286677&b=865646&m=65843&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ewinecrasher%2Ecom%2FWine%2DClub%5Fc%5F61%2Ehtml)  
[u=286677&b=865646&m=65843&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ewinecrasher%2Ecom%2FWine%2DClub%5Fc%5F61%2Ehtml](http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?u=286677&b=865646&m=65843&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ewinecrasher%2Ecom%2FWine%2DClub%5Fc%5F61%2Ehtml))

**MORE INFO** ([HTTP://WWW.SHAREASALE.COM/R.CFM?](http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?u=286677&b=865646&m=65843&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ewinecrasher%2Ecom%2FWine%2DClub%5Fc%5F61%2Ehtml)

[U=286677&B=865646&M=65843&AFFTRACK=&URLLINK=WWW%2EWINECRASHER%2ECOM%2FWINE%2DCLUB%5FC%5F61%2EHTML](http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?u=286677&b=865646&m=65843&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ewinecrasher%2Ecom%2FWine%2DClub%5Fc%5F61%2Ehtml))

[u=286677&b=865646&m=65843&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ewinecrasher%2Ecom%2F3%2DReds%2Deach%2Dmonth%2D89%2Dpoints%2DbrBest%2DPrice%2D30%2Doff%2D1st%2DMonthbr%5Fp%5F80%2Ehtml](http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?u=286677&b=865646&m=65843&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ewinecrasher%2Ecom%2F3%2DReds%2Deach%2Dmonth%2D89%2Dpoints%2DbrBest%2DPrice%2D30%2Doff%2D1st%2DMonthbr%5Fp%5F80%2Ehtml))

- [3 Bottle White Club](http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?u=286677&b=865646&m=65843&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ewinecrasher%2Ecom%2F3%2DWhites%2Deach%2Dmonth%2D89%2Dpoints%2DbrBest%2DPrice%2D30%2Doff%2D1st%2DMonthbr%5Fp%5F85%2Ehtml) ([http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?](http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?u=286677&b=865646&m=65843&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ewinecrasher%2Ecom%2F3%2DWhites%2Deach%2Dmonth%2D89%2Dpoints%2DbrBest%2DPrice%2D30%2Doff%2D1st%2DMonthbr%5Fp%5F85%2Ehtml)  
[u=286677&b=865646&m=65843&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ewinecrasher%2Ecom%2F3%2DWhites%2Deach%2Dmonth%2D89%2Dpoints%2DbrBest%2DPrice%2D30%2Doff%2D1st%2DMonthbr%5Fp%5F85%2Ehtml](http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?u=286677&b=865646&m=65843&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ewinecrasher%2Ecom%2F3%2DWhites%2Deach%2Dmonth%2D89%2Dpoints%2DbrBest%2DPrice%2D30%2Doff%2D1st%2DMonthbr%5Fp%5F85%2Ehtml))
- [6 Bottle Mixed Red/White Club](http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?u=286677&b=865646&m=65843&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ewinecrasher%2Ecom%2F6%2DRated%2DMixed%2DRed%2DWhite%2D89%2Dpoints%2DbrBest%2DPrice%2D30%2Doff%2D1st%2DMonthbr%5Fp%5F86%2Ehtml) ([http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?](http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?u=286677&b=865646&m=65843&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ewinecrasher%2Ecom%2F6%2DRated%2DMixed%2DRed%2DWhite%2D89%2Dpoints%2DbrBest%2DPrice%2D30%2Doff%2D1st%2DMonthbr%5Fp%5F86%2Ehtml)  
[u=286677&b=865646&m=65843&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ewinecrasher%2Ecom%2F6%2DRated%2DMixed%2DRed%2DWhite%2D89%2Dpoints%2DbrBest%2DPrice%2D30%2Doff%2D1st%2DMonthbr%5Fp%5F86%2Ehtml](http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?u=286677&b=865646&m=65843&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ewinecrasher%2Ecom%2F6%2DRated%2DMixed%2DRed%2DWhite%2D89%2Dpoints%2DbrBest%2DPrice%2D30%2Doff%2D1st%2DMonthbr%5Fp%5F86%2Ehtml))
- [Personal Tailored Club](http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?u=286677&b=865646&m=65843&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ewinecrasher%2Ecom%2FPersonal%2DTailored%2DClub%2DbrBest%2DPrice%2D30%2Doff%2D1st%2DMonthbr%5Fp%5F81%2Ehtml) ([http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?](http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?u=286677&b=865646&m=65843&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ewinecrasher%2Ecom%2FPersonal%2DTailored%2DClub%2DbrBest%2DPrice%2D30%2Doff%2D1st%2DMonthbr%5Fp%5F81%2Ehtml)  
[u=286677&b=865646&m=65843&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ewinecrasher%2Ecom%2FPersonal%2DTailored%2DClub%2DbrBest%2DPrice%2D30%2Doff%2D1st%2DMonthbr%5Fp%5F81%2Ehtml](http://www.shareasale.com/r.cfm?u=286677&b=865646&m=65843&afftrack=&urllink=www%2Ewinecrasher%2Ecom%2FPersonal%2DTailored%2DClub%2DbrBest%2DPrice%2D30%2Doff%2D1st%2DMonthbr%5Fp%5F81%2Ehtml))

Tags: