

Massimo Lentsch on reviving Lipari’s volcanic vines

Posted on May 26, 2026 by Sabina Castelfranco

LIPARI, Sicily — Some 350 metres above the Mediterranean, looking out at Salina, Alicudi and Filicudi, Massimo Lentsch is rebuilding an archipelago’s lost wine tradition one vine at a time. He sailed into Lipari in the early 2000s, fell for a volcanic plateau called Piana del Castellaro, and chose to make wine where viticulture had all but vanished. Today his Tenuta di Castellaro pairs that revival with the slow tourism reshaping the Aeolian Islands – vineyard picnics, a bistro and stays among the vines.

Q. You arrived here by sailboat in the early 2000s. How did it begin?

“We arrived in the night with the sailing boat and I went around the island and found this place, the Piana del Castellaro, 350 metres over the sea, and I fell in love. I already had a company that produced wine, so immediately I thought I would start to produce wine here on the island.”

Source: https://italynow.co.uk/massimo-lentsch-on-reviving-liparis-volcanic-vines/



Teuta del Castellaro (*Credits: Tenuta del Castellaro*)

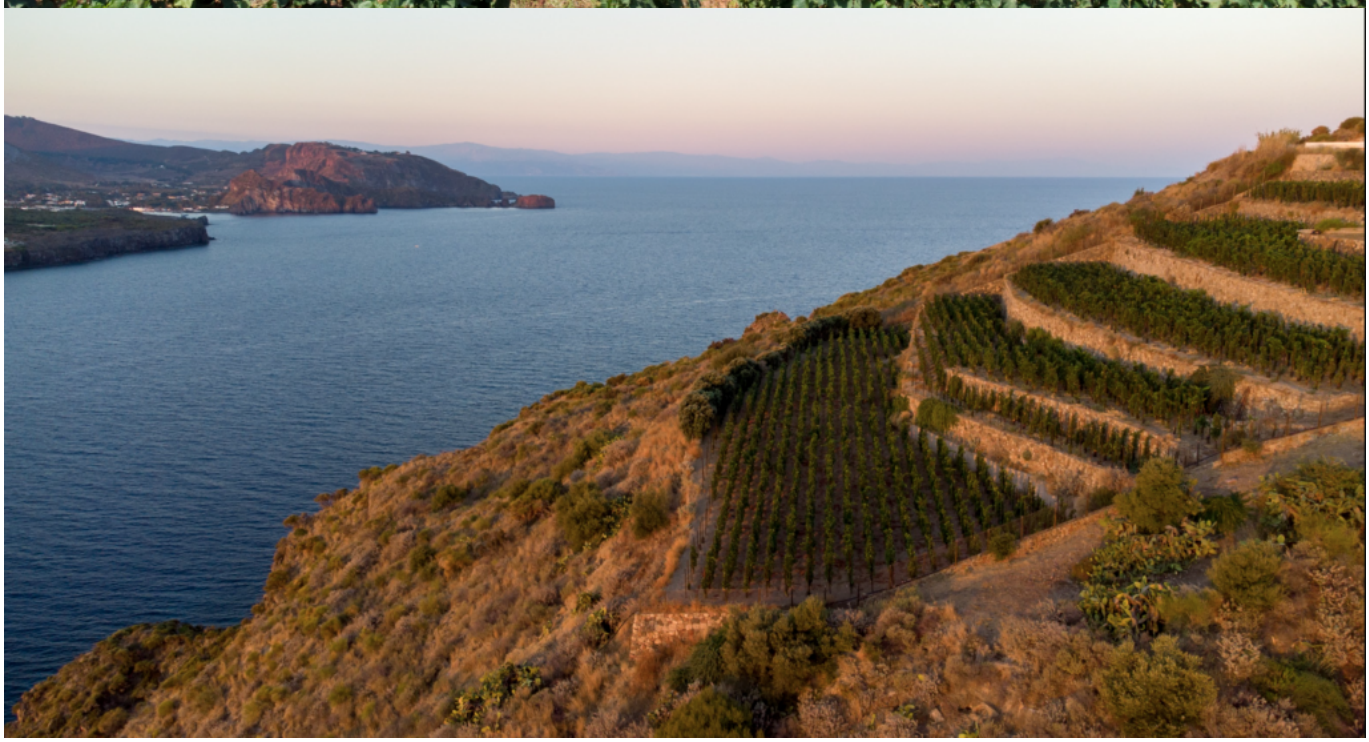
Q. Twenty years ago viticulture here was practically gone. What made you think you could bring it back?

“The first thing I did was to get to know Salvo Forti, a winemaker of Etna with great experience on volcanic soils. We went around the seven islands with an agronomist and found that Malvasia delle Lipari and Corinto had a big health problem, so we made a selection and reproduced them from the best plants.”

Q. What does this volcanic territory give the wines?

“The wines of Tenuta di Castellaro speak of salt, sea and wind. Our goal is wines that are very expressive but not too structured or complex, because the direction of wine in Italy and the world is low alcohol.”







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Various vinyards and views (*Credits: Benedetto Tarantino*)

Q. You farm with the alberello technique, the little bush vine, all by hand. Why this method?

“It is an old method, from the year 1400, started in Sicily with alberello. The plants set close to one another let the roots go down, so even with high temperatures and no rain the plant stays in very good condition.”

Q. You are an outsider from Bergamo on an island that lives slowly. Was slow tourism always the vision?

“I think it is a good mix. I come from the north of Italy where everything is fast and well organised, and I came to this island where life is slow. We keep the tradition but exalt it with technology and contemporary ideas.”

To listen to the Italy Now podcast with Massimo Lentsch, click here.

With reporting by Alina Trabattoni.

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