

# A Winery Tour, Lunch Included



Chris Warde-Jones for The New York Times

Anna Tasca Lanza conducts cooking classes at Regaleali, on the north coast of Sicily.

By MARIAN BURROS

**A**BOUT halfway between Palermo, on the north coast of Sicily, and Agrigento, on the south, lies one of the island's premier wineries and cooking schools — Regaleali, which has been in the family of Count Lucio Tasca since 1830.

Regaleali, near the tiny village of Valledlunga, is not a palazzo but a grand country estate of 1,200 acres. It is also a working farm that provides all the wine and almost all the food it serves its guests. A couple of years ago the count's son, Giuseppe Tasca, realized that those who were coming for the wine tasting were interested not only in the vineyards but also in the wonderfully peppery green olive oil from the 4,000 olive trees, the extensive vegetable garden and fruit trees, the chickens and sheep and the cheese made on the estate from the sheep's milk.

Soon a simple wine tasting was turned into a typical Sicilian five-course lunch paired with the estate's wines.

Regaleali, which is derived from an Arabic word meaning home of Ali, offers a serenely romantic view of Sicily. The cultivated hillsides stretch as far as the eye can see from the buildings that house the winery and the count's residence. The wine tastings and lunch are served in the handsomely remodeled barn, its ochre stucco walls



trimmed in blue, the barnyard now a brick-and-cobblestone courtyard.

The wine lunch changes with the season. A typical meal would start with panelle, deep-fried wedges made from chickpea flour, or with vegetables from the garden. The antipasto is always served with Almerita Spumante, a delicious sparkling wine.

The primi, or pasta, course might be served with fava beans or with a tomato sauce and the farm's fresh sheep's-milk ricotta. The secondi course is often the estate's tender lamb, cooked with one of the winery's finest reds, Rosso del Conte, or the fat and succulent chickens. Homemade cheeses follow. For dessert the ricotta is

sweetened and used to stuff freshly fried cannoli. Fruit in season is another choice.

The wine and five-course lunch is \$67 a person, at \$1.35 to the euro. Wine tastings without lunch are \$20 a person. Both include tours of the estate. Overnight stays at the estate, in bedrooms with private baths, including breakfast, can be arranged for \$108.

Mr. Tasca's aunt, Anna Tasca Lanza, the cooking teacher and cookbook author, conducts cooking classes, as she has for more than 15 years, at Casa Vecchie, in the middle of the vineyards. Her charming demonstration kitchen has white tile walls, brightened with a border of blue and white tiles. Like the lunch with wine pairings, she bases her classes on the seasonal offerings of the farm. A five-day stay includes cooking classes each day with side trips. Up to 10 students can be accommodated.

The five-day course (including accommodations in rooms with private baths at her home or that of her sister, Costanza di Camporeale) is \$3,026 a person; a three-night course, including accommodations, \$1,681 a person; an overnight stay with lesson and lunch is \$1,076 a couple; one day lesson and lunch is \$175 a person.

Regaleali is one and a half hours by car or train from Palermo. Information about the estate is available on the Web at [www.tascadalmerita.it](http://www.tascadalmerita.it). For wine tastings: [welcome@tascadalmerita.it](mailto:welcome@tascadalmerita.it) or Lilly Lo Cascio at (39-091) 6459711. For cooking classes, e-mail [antalan@tin.it](mailto:antalan@tin.it) or call (39-091) 450727. ■