



Projet Erasmus+ Namur - Marsala

" Patrimonia "



A la découverte du patrimoine historique, architectural et culturel

« Florio » Cantina



Luigi Sorbo

Translated by Robin Charue 



ISISS « Abele Damiani » - Marsala

ABSTRACT

The Florio Cantina, built in tuf stone by Vincenzo Florio in 1832, mirrors the typical Anglo-Saxon style of the times, with wide arches in sixth and tuf stone floor (a regional stone) to maintain the constant moisture level for all four seasons. The structure covers around 44.000 square metres of area and represents the heart of the Marsala production: where once left the boats of the Florio Company loaded with the precious nectar, and here the most famous Marsala in the world is still produced. The development cellars extend over 7.400 square meters and surprise the visitors with their majesty. Thanks to its favourable position, its mild climate and its beautiful landscape and architectures, the cellars are a perfect place to organise conferences and company meetings, business breakfasts, aperitifs, lunches and gala dinners, guided tours, shows, parades, exhibitions, presentations of products and services.

STORY

The Florio Cantina arose in 1833 in Marsala from the businessman Vincenzo Florio who, after purchasing a land on a stretch of beach located between the Bagli (old typical Sicilian building) of Ingham-Whitaker and Woodhouse, had a factory built for the Marsala wine production.



After twenty years of work, Florio managed to assert himself by proposing a decent Marsala. The market saturation did not worry Vincenzo Florio who, from 1840 to 1845, had expanded his interests to shipping, textiles, steel industry, tuna boats and Sufis.

On may 6th 1906 the Targa Florio was born (an international automobile competition) on the Sicilian roads although, at the beginning of the twentieth century, it seemed like a crazy idea that only Vincenzo Florio's sportive intuition could conceive. Actually, the road network of the island still displayed the poor route of the Bourbon's era, with rambling lands and tortuous paths. But what was defective became, thanks to the intuition of Vincenzo Florio, the chance of the project. Vincenzo Florio did not neglect any detail regarding the organisation of his race: he summoned Lalique, a fine representative of the *Art Nouveau*, to forge the price plate, put the ships of his own fleet available to the participants to take them to Sicilia and called the greatest artists of his time to create the advertising campaign, with billboards, posters and special postcards. His efforts were rewarded: not less than thirty engines registered for the race, a real record for the times, and got a great success from the public.

The factories, in 1920, were acquired by the Cinzano Company which then sold it to the Ilva company (Lombardian wine liquor industry) in 1988. The Florio Cantina opened for the public an exhibition place since 1992. Nowadays, it is part of the Ilva Groupe of Saronno and also produces Muscat and some pantellerian passito.