

PRESS RELEASE

Presented at the Regional Assembly of Sicily The Cynara Festival

The event celebrating the artichoke since 1982 is underway. Many novelties are in store with good food, great wines, and exceptional guests, featuring music, cooking shows, and innovation. The climax will be on April 25th with the 42nd Artichoke Festival of Cerda.

Palermo, April 19, 2024 – This morning in Palermo, at the **Sala Pio La Torre** of the **Regional Assembly of Sicily**, the **press conference presenting the Cynara Festival and the 42nd edition of the Artichoke Festival of Cerda** took place. This year, it extends from **April 20th to 28th with** a dense program of initiatives and meetings to celebrate the "Artichoke Civilization." The **Mayor** and regional parliamentarian **Salvatore Geraci**, the **President of the Monreale DOC Mario Di Lorenzo**, and **Vincenzo Pernice**, head of the **Regional Agriculture Department of Sicily**, were among the speakers. Mayor Geraci opened the session by emphasizing *"the deep connection of the community to this event, born in 1982, which has always involved all Cerda families. It's a heritage of feelings and enthusiasm experienced with genuine popular participation that has transformed our city into a small but important capital of the artichoke and gastronomy, attracting thousands of people from all over Sicily and other regions every year. Cerda is an open and hospitable city, dressing up in celebration, giving its all"*.

Numerous innovations have been introduced, condensing day by day into Taste experiences, recipes, and cooking shows to exalt the artichoke and its identity cultivar: the spiny Cerda variety. President Mario Di Lorenzo spoke on behalf of the seven wineries of the Monreale DOC, lined up for the Cynara Festival, ready to pair their wines with dishes and culinary proposals that can break the common belief of the challenging relationship between wine and artichoke. "We experienced this unusual combination at the Vinitaly dinner table, and the challenge seems to be won. We participate with great enthusiasm because the territories of excellence and identity in Sicilian agriculture must converge and team up, work together, and propose together." Indeed, in Verona, the native Catarratto and Perricone, and the very Sicilian international Syrah performed well, harmonizing with dishes where the artichoke played an absolute starring role.

Vincenzo Pernice, from the Agriculture Department, seized the value of this "on the field" synergy between the Artichoke of Cerda and the labels of this renowned DOC in the Palermo area. *"We support this approach between peculiar production systems that give rise to new models of interaction, economic, cultural, social. The Sicily Brand is reaffirmed, with initiatives like these (the Cynara Festival), a guarantee of quality in food, wine, and experiences in the territories. These processes, born from the participation of local producers*

and their administrations, are successful if they remain consistent with the objectives of enhancing production chains and their spin-offs”.

Mayor Salvatore Geraci, thanking the press, concluded by recalling how this territory, between the Imera River and the Torto Valley up to the Madonie, owes much to the history of specialized agriculture. *"At that time, that area counted more than 1700 hectares. We need to provide perspectives for our young people; we need economic sustainability as well as a societal model. In the 1970s, Fiat arrived, bringing industrialization, leaving rubble and 600 families on layoff for decades. I want to remember these people because this territory must be reborn with new economies, and the artichoke can generate this rebirth for them”.*

To christen the Cynara Festival and the **42nd edition** of the Festival, a godmother whom Cerda knows very well: **Giusi Battaglia**, journalist, press officer, and host of "*Giusina in Cucina*" on Food Network, since January also an integral part of the cast of "It's always Noon" on Raiuno. On **April 25th** – the traditional highlight day – she, along with **Salvo La Rosa**, will promote the Artichoke, together with many guests who will convey the most beautiful message on that stage: that of peace and friendship.

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