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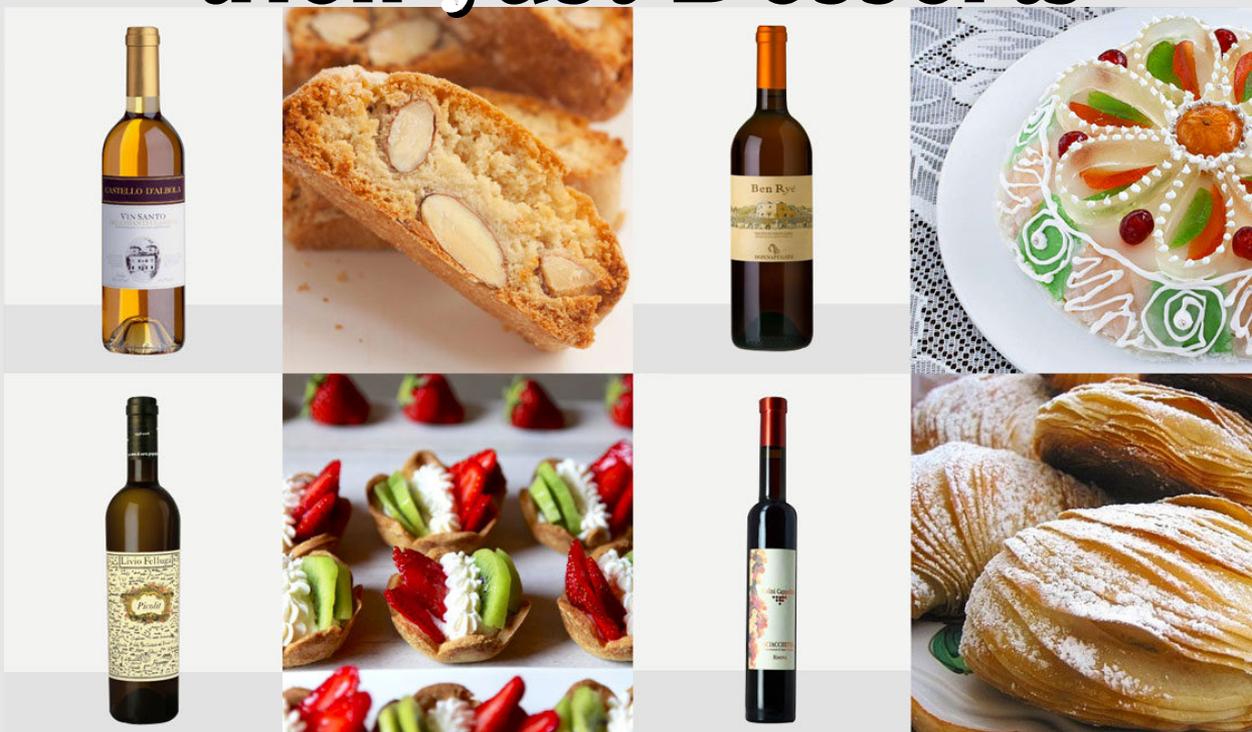
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FOOD TRAVEL &gt; Top 5 Sweet Wines and their Just Desserts

Date posted: **May 31, 2014**

# Top 5 Sweet Wines and their Just Desserts



*Pairing a wine with a dish is complicated enough, but pairing it with a dessert is even trickier. Luckily, our very own Chiara Giovoni is here to help us with 5 special combinations featuring 5 typical Italian desserts, including the much-loved Sicilian cassata!*

#WINE AND COCKTAIL

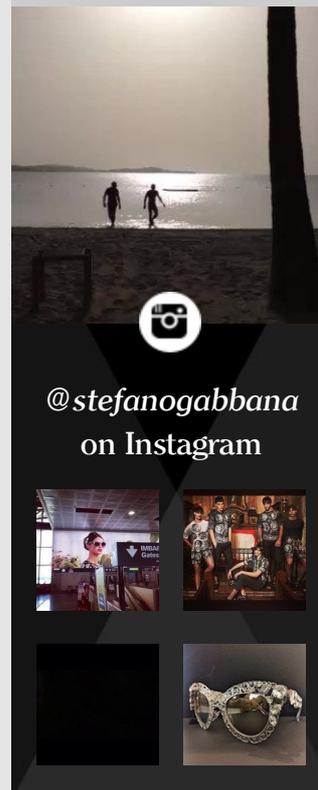
On the trail of cinema d'auteur inspiration, we could paraphrase "La dolce vita" (the sweet life), the emblem of Italian hedonism, with a more wine-centric alternative: "la dolce vite" (the sweet vine). In

terms of their fascination, the comparison is very apt, and, in fact, Italian sweet wines rank among the most sublime and delicious substances that can be savoured in a wine glass. Despite the complex craftsmanship and the complicated agronomy needed, it is a wonderful area of the Italian wine world that conjures up very different expressions of sweet wines that are a joy to discover either on their own or in combination with one of the recipes from the rich tradition of Italian confectionery. The production of sweet wines is very special and requires certain weather conditions, but it is above all thanks to the sun and some unique varieties that Italy is one of the most important countries in the world in terms of the excellence of its sweet wines. From north to south, there are countless varieties from red or white grapes that create sweet wines with great charm, all linked to different types, from natural sweet wines, sweet sparkling wines, late harvest sweet wines, passito and noble rot wines, fortified and flavoured wines. Each region adopts particular production techniques, but it is the late harvests especially that tend to win over our palates, because they contain a higher concentration of sugar, thereby sustaining all the aromatic properties of the grape. These sweet variants are described as "meditation wines" but the dessert wines in particular - those whose grapes are left to dry on the plant or harvested and laid out on mats or racks - have the ability to arouse intense emotions and flavoursome cravings at the first sip. Take note of their perfect pairings for guaranteed unforgettable moments.

#### Ben Ryé Donnafugata - Sicilian cassata



Donnafugata means "Runaway Woman" and is a name caught between history and literature. The story behind it tells of a queen who fled to the Sicilian countryside to escape from the Napoleonic troops that had arrived in Naples. She was Maria Carolina, wife of Ferdinand IV of Bourbon, and her story was picked up by the writer Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa in his famous novel *The Leopard*. The Sicilian countryside where Maria Carolina hid was renamed Donnafugata, and that's where the company's vineyards are to be found. In 1988, the property in the Sicilian countryside was increased with the addition of the vineyards on the island of Pantelleria, where the company produces bunches of Zibibbo for its famous Ben Ryé, named after the Arabic expression meaning "Son of the Wind". The warm aroma of jasmine flowers and orange blossom honey during a hot summer sunset resides in this intoxicating and complex wine with outstanding freshness. It exudes enveloping notes of apricot and sweet sensations of almond, honey, candied citrus with aromatic herbs and mineral tones. It is an ideal wine for pampering yourself, perfect with foie gras but a dream come true with the **traditional Sicilian cassata**,



a dessert made from ricotta, candied fruit and marzipan ([check the best Sicilian pastry shop in Italy on Swide](#)).

#### Felluga Picolit 2008 – Crostatina with Fresh Fruit



70 years and five generations has passed since the Felluga family left their native Izola and came to produce wine in the hills of Friuli, when Livio, the company's founder, opened the first vineyards in Rosazzo, which are now a symbol of the region's tradition. The Picolit is the noblest wine found in this area. It is a passito wine whose origins are still shrouded in mystery, though there are traces of it dating back to 1750 that describe it as the "nectar produced by the most haggard grapes of the bunch." A very small number of highly concentrated berries from each cluster are turned into sweet golden sips with intense tropical notes, enveloping aromas of candied fruit and flowers that make it an unforgettable poetic experience. Its ideal pairing is a fragrant crostatina alla crema (cream tart) garnished with fresh fruit, which combine to create a real treat for the palate.

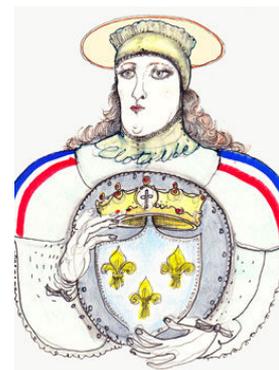
#### Castello d'Albola Vin Santo del Chianti Classico – Cantucci di Prato



The hot and dry climate of Pian d'Albola, on Radda hills in Chianti, provides the perfect conditions for growing Trebbiano Toscano and Malvasia del Chianti vines, two grapes that have helped shape the history of Italian sweet wine. Vin Santo is perhaps the most famous sweet wine in the world, and it acquires its uniqueness right from its complex vinification in chestnut casks, the typical Tuscan barrels used for the fermentation of grapes dried on racks. Then there is a long wait, because the ageing process requires the wine to spend 8 years in the wood. The result is a light amber nectar, with surprising aromatic qualities, complexity and finesse. Bouquets of roasted almond caramel, orange peel and light glazed tones come together to produce a generously persistent aftertaste. Strictly to be

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accompanied with the classic Cantucci di Prato biscuits, preferably the real deal from the ovens of the legendary Mattei bakery, but absolutely no dunking!

#### Marco de Bartoli Bukkuram – Almond Paste



In Arabic the word Bukkuram means “father of the vineyard,” and from ancient times it has been used to refer the Pantelleria area beloved by the Arabs for the cultivation of Zibibbo grapes. The Marco de Bartoli vineyard lies on a slight plateau 200 meters above sea level, while the winery is housed in an eighteenth century ‘dammuso’ building. Passito wine has been made using Muscat of Alexandria grapes since 1984. Also known as Zibibbo, this grape can take pride in having reawakened a long-dormant interest in a wine so historic it can be found in the legends of Greek mythology. The old vines grow on sandy soil a few inches from the ground in a shape known as the “alberello pantesco”, i.e. the Pantelleria shrub, and create surreal landscapes where the sun meets the sand and, significantly, the wind come in from the sea. The grapes are partly dried under the sun in special drying areas outlined by thick walls made of lava stone, and are partly ripened on the vine. After nearly three years of ageing in wood, the wine finds its way into the bottle, bursting with all the energy of the location where it saw the light. A powerful glass with an iridescent amber colour, it has a warm fragrance that includes notes of dried fruit, dates, dried plums and bergamot. Definitely recommended with almond paste and a starry night.

#### Sciacchetrà Riserva 2006 Forlini Cappellini – Neapolitan Sfogliatella Riccia



A rare gem from the vineyards of Manarola, a beautiful village in the picturesque landscape of Cinque Terre in Liguria. Tradition has it that to produce Sciacchetrà the grapes are not dried outdoors, but in a dry and ventilated cellar, where it waits for two months for the



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right concentration of flavours in the Albarola Bosco and Vermentino grapes. An imposing man of considerable stature but with the delicacy of an engraver, Giacomo, the producer, prefers to not spread the grapes out on racks, but rather puts the bunches out to dry after threading them one by one in chains made of string, as if sewing precious lace embroidery. A wine with a great bouquet, its expressive intensity comes through with the highly charged gold colour, not to mention the notes of dried fig, nectarine jam and almond praline with beautiful hints of Oriental spices and a rewarding freshness and richness that balances out the natural sweetness. Memorable in combination with the traditional Neapolitan sfogliatella riccia: voluptuous waves of crunchy pastry that envelope a soft and fragrant ricotta core.

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### **Chiara Giovoni**

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**Marco De Bartoli**

Thanks for sharing these beautiful pairings Chiara... Chee

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