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 **VinoInLove** @VinoInLove 45m 
@figandquince This sounds very creative and interesting!

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Son Of The Wind: 2008 Donnafugata Ben Ryé ¹⁴

This entry was posted in [Italy](#) [Sicily](#) and tagged [Donnafugata](#) [pantelleria](#) on June 11, 2014 by Julian Rossello.

Pantelleria is a tiny volcanic island in the Straits of Sicily just 60 km east of the Tunisian coast. Although Pantelleria belongs to Italy it has been influenced by many cultures in the past and in fact it was first settled by Iberians and Romans but was conquered in the 8th century the island was conquered by Arabs and ever since the Arab culture has remained omnipresent. The Arabs influenced many things on Pantelleria – including winemaking. They brought new grape varieties to the island with the most famous one being Muscat of Alexandria, which is better known as Zibibbo on Pantelleria. Zibibbo is the Arab word for raisin.



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Muscat of Alexandria has a natural high sugar level and is ideal for the production of dessert wines and it can be argued that some of the best ones are made on Pantelleria. The wineries on Pantelleria have a long tradition of making passito out of these grapes. They do so by sun-drying them on straw mats before the vinification process. The longer the grapes remain on straw mats the sweeter the more weight they lose and the sweeter the resulting wine will be. This process results in a usually rather low yield per hectare. To save time most wineries on Pantelleria adopted a new technique where the grapes get air-dried.

It is uncertain where the name Muscat/Moscato is coming from. One theory suggests that the grape variety is named after the city of Muscat, the capital of Oman. Another theory suggests that the word derives from the Italian word *mosca*, which means fly. It is said that flies were attracted by the sweet grapes of the Muscat family and so the locals named them Moscato (English: Muscat).

The global demand for sweet wines has significantly declined the past century (a real pity in my opinion because sweet wines can be superb) and this has forced so wineries to dramatically lower their production of sweet wines. On Pantelleria this has led to the production of dry Muscat of Alexandria wines. Today's wine review is, however, about Pantelleria's most famous passito: Ben Ryé.

2008 Donnafugata – Ben Ryé – Passito di Pantelleria DOC

Ben Ryé is produced with 100% air-dried Zibibbo and the wine aged for a around five months in stainless steel tanks. The majority of (Italian) sweet wines age usually at least in parts in oak but because Zibibbo is so aromatic and intense the use of oak is not needed. The first vintage of Ben Ryé was 1989.

I always prefer drinking rich sweet wines like Ben Ryé in glasses with a large bowl and enjoy serving them a little refrigerated (9-10°C) and watched them evolve in the glass. The bottle was a small 0.375l bottle.

The wine is classified as Passito di Pantelleria DOC.

In the glass Ben Ryé had an amber-golden color. The label indicated ABV was 14.5%

The nose was harmonic and incredibly intense. It opened with aromas of figs, dried stone fruit (especially apricot) and raisins. Caramel and lemon zest joined the other aromas after some additional time.

On the palate, Ben Ryé of exceptional balance – not too sweet thanks to the moderate acidity. Slightly mineralic, almost creamy and very elegant with notes of white peaches and apricots. Full-bodied and complex. Ben Ryé had a amazingly long and creamy finish.

5 / 5 stars

Son Of The Wind

Ben Ryé is a superb mediation wine and I like this vintage even better than the more recent ones. It also perfectly pairs with a number of desserts but I like it best without food / only little food. The wine as a long aging potential. Even if you are not a huge fan of sweet wines I strongly advice you try Ben Ryé at least once but be warned: Ben Ryé is addictive!

Find this wine on Wine Searcher.

You might be wondering about the title, which leads us back to the introduction of this post. Over a thousand years ago the Arabs conquered Pantelleria. When they arrived on the island they renamed it “daughter of the winds” after the strong winds that arise on the coast of North Africa. Donnafugata adopted this Arab name by naming this sweet wine Ben Ryé. Ben Ryé is Arab for *son of the wind*.

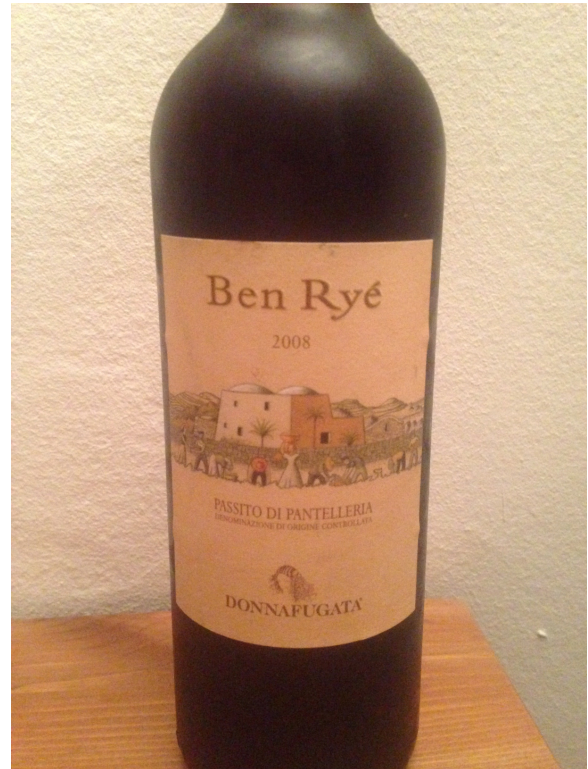
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About Julian Rossello



Julian Rossello was born and raised in Munich, Germany. Throughout his life, he had the chance to live in Italy and the United States. He traveled through most of Europe and wine has always been one of his passions. He believes that there is always more to discover. When it comes to wine, Julian favors Italian red wines but he will try pretty much any thing (at least once). Sharing his experience and to connect with fellow wine lovers was one of his motivations to start Vino in Love. Connect with Julian on Google+ and Follow him on Twitter

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🗨️ 14 thoughts on “Son Of The Wind: 2008 Donnafugata Ben Ryé”



winetalks

June 11, 2014 at 2:29 AM

Nice post and I must say this sure sounds like a delicious wine. Unfortunately, I've never tried any Passito di Pantelleria before so maybe I'll try Ben Ryé 😊 It's also not often that I see you rate a wine this high..

Reply ↓



Julian Rossello

Post author

June 12, 2014 at 7:35 PM

Frank,

Ben Ryé is one of my favorite dessert wines. You should really give it a go



Reply ↓



RiojaChianti

June 11, 2014 at 2:54 AM

I attended a vertical tasting of 2004, 2007 and 2010 Ben Ryé in April and my personal highlight was the 2007 Ben Ryé but I was positively surprised by all three wines. I had some bad experiences with dessert wines so I usually stay away from them but I read many positive reviews about Ben Ryé so I decided to follow the invitation to that vertical tasting.

Reply ↓



Julian Rossello

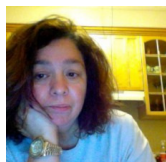
Post author

June 12, 2014 at 7:37 PM

RiojaChianti,

I'd have loved to attend that vertical tasting. How was the 2004 Ben Ryé? I heard it was a pretty good vintage.

Reply ↓



Suzanne

June 11, 2014 at 3:18 AM

I am not a fan of sweet wines in general, a little taste chilled though is nice. I see that the Ben Ryé is available in the US, I'll try it. Great review Julian!

Reply ↓



Julian Rossello

Post author

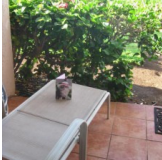
June 12, 2014 at 7:38 PM

Reply ↓

Suzanne,

Thank you! Well sweet wines are a difficult topic. Many people I know dislike them for various reasons, which I find quite unfortunate because some sweet wines are of superb quality and Ben Ryé is one of those superb sweet wines.

Let me know how you like it 😊



Antisocial Patty

June 11, 2014 at 3:54 AM

That sounds interesting. Cheers!

Reply ↓



Julian Rossello

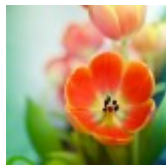
Post author

June 12, 2014 at 7:39 PM

Patty,

Thanks! It's an exceptional sweet wine. You should consider trying it.

Reply ↓



Andy

June 11, 2014 at 4:14 AM

I'm not a fan of sweet wines. Every time I try one it reminds me of flavored sugar water with alcohol. On top of that, lots of sweet wines tend to be ridiculously expensive.

Reply ↓



Julian Rossello

Post author

June 12, 2014 at 7:40 PM

Andy,

Well I can assure you that Ben Ryé tasting nothing like that. If you think about all the grapes needed to produce a small 0.375 then in my opinion the price is justified.

Reply ↓

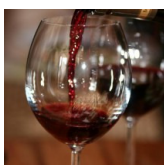


Sean P.

June 11, 2014 at 2:31 PM

That sounds like a good bottle of wine. Will try it 😊

Reply ↓



Julian Rossello

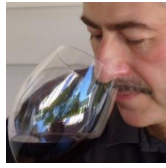
Post author

June 12, 2014 at 7:41 PM

Sean,

That sounds like a good plan! Let me know how you like Ben Ryé 😊

Reply ↓



talkavino

June 11, 2014 at 3:42 PM

Ben Ryé is truly a spectacular wine – every time I taste it, I'm absolutely amazed at the beauty it holds. The balance is absolutely impeccable. I fully agree with your 5 star rating.

Reply ↓



Julian Rossello

Post author

June 12, 2014 at 7:42 PM

Anatoli,

It's reassuring to hear that you agree with my rating. Ben Ryé has never disappointed me and remains one of my favorite sweet wines. The consistency between vintages is very impressive.

Cheers!

Reply ↓

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