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Wine of the Week – Donnafugata Ben Rye - \$41.99

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Pantelleria, Sicily--Donnafugata Ben Rye (\$41.99) is a sweet wine from Sicily that is made with an ancient process known as "passito." Grapes are dried in the sun and open air until they achieve a raisin-like quality. The result is a grape that is intensely sweet with a complex flavor profile. Ben

Rye (pronounced Ben Ree-Ay) literally means "born of the wind," and the high wind, for which the island is named, certainly add another dimension of flavor to the grapes and the resulting wine.



Ben Rye is made from 100% Zibbibo grapes, the oldest continually existing, unmodified grape still in vinification. The grape, otherwise known as Muscat of Alexandria (Muscat d'Alexandria) grows everywhere in Pantelleria. It is characterized by a lime sherbet -green color, with hints of grey. The grape is quite hardy, with a thick skin and fleshy texture, which makes it resistant to the harsh conditions of the island. Grapes are harvested by hand and inspected carefully for spoiled over ripened grapes, which are immediately discarded. Stems and spoiled grapes are also removed by hand in the field. The work is labor intensive and back-breaking. The workers who perform this task have been doing it all their lives, as have their forebears. Before the grapes are crushed, they lie for weeks "in passito" in drying sheds that dot the island. Grapes are dried until they achieve an almost raisin-like quality. The resulting wine is sweet, with concentrated flavors of dried apricots, raisins and hints of toasted almond. Ben Rye is a terrific dessert wine with layers of flavor that continually surprise. It can be drunk solo or served with sweet cakes or dried fruit. The wine is known here as "the liquid of the gods." One taste affirms why it is so called. Taste the wind of Pantelleria with Donnafugata Ben Rye and enjoy!



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