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## Downton Abbey Wine

A Taste Of The Good Life Official Wine Of Downton Abbey



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WINE



# What to Expect from Moscato Wine with Donnafugata's Jose Rallo

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An insider's view of what you should expect from the best wines made from the Moscato grape.

It seems that Moscato wines, no matter if they are from Italy, California, or Australia, have taken the wine world by storm in the last several years. While Moscato can offer lively, simple, sweet wines that are easy to appreciate and enjoy, there is much more to this highly aromatic grape (which has many versions and aliases). Jose Rallo, the voice and face of Italy's celebrated Donnafugata winery, knows Moscato well. When she is not indulging her love of jazz singing, Rallo helps to oversee this Sicilian producer's quality systems and marketing initiatives, which in no small part involve Moscato (called Zibibbo in Sicily). Here are Rallo's thoughts on what makes Moscato special, and what you should expect from a superior bottle of wine made from this popular grape variety.

### What should wine drinkers expect from Moscato / Zibibbo wine?

A Moscato wine made from an aromatic variety like Moscato di Alessandria (Zibibbo) should generally have a quite complex and rich nose. The style of the wine (dry/sweet) and its relative vinification process will determine its characterizing elements. Dry Zibibbo is made with fresh grapes, generally high in acidity with lower sugar. [Sweeter Moscato] is made with fresh but very ripen grapes almost like a late harvest. The dry or sweet versions should be fresh and fragrant in the mouth, with typical rose and orange blossom and fruity notes (citrus and melon), with a mineral background. Passito is made with both fresh and dried grapes, and will show more dried fruits like apricot, figs, dates and nuts, but should never lack in acidity.

### What are your recommendations for food matches for Moscato?

We recommend to pair a dry Zibibbo with all types of oily fish, baked pasta in white sauce, or fried fish. If we move away from Italian cuisine, then we can imagine it as well with Asian food, due to its aroma and crispness. Try it also with some olives and fresh cheese as an aperitivo. Sweet Moscato versions are perfect with savory cheeses, fruit salads and baked desserts. It is worth trying with "bottarga" (tuna roe), big smoked fish, and goat cheese. We suggest pairing naturally sweet Passito like our Ben Ry&eacute; with foie gras, or blue veined cheeses such as Roquefort or Stilton; but it also matches desserts like dark chocolate or dried biscotti with almonds. Last but not least, it deserves to be tried by its own.

SCOPRI



**Joe Roberts**

Wine Expert

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Joe Roberts is the founder of 1WineDude.com, one of the most influential and popular wine websites in the U.S., and the first specifically targeted website for wine lovers. In 2012, he was the 14th most influential U.S. wine business in list of the 100... [read more](#)

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### Why do you think Moscato is so popular (particularly in the U.S.)?

The rich aromas of Moscato/Zibibbo are easy to recognize without being banal. It's a wine with great potential of producing very different styles, thus allowing it to meet different tastes, so it's something familiar which can be offered in very different tasting occasions.

### Anything else that we should know about Moscato / Zibibbo wines?

Besides being aware of the different styles and vinification techniques (and as a consequence being aware of the different qualities [imparted by each]), it might be important to know that Zibibbo grown on the volcanic island of Pantelleria expresses at its best its potential due the different microclimates and its soils, being particularly enhanced with minerality.

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