



DONNAFUGATA

PRESS RELEASE

## *Vinitaly 2004: an anti-stress Decalogue*

**The golden rules that will ensure that the Donnafugata staff at Vinitaly will be in top form; all the precautions to take to survive the fatigues of the five days in Verona; from hand luggage to clothing and from the diet to the sleep that is absolutely essential.**

Five days at Vinitaly, March 1-5, will put everyone to the test, including the Donnafugata staff, which will be called upon to pour 30,000 samples for tasting and explain everything in four different languages, as well as participate in an interminable series of meetings with customers and fans coming from every part of the world. It's hard work holding high the banner of Sicilian premium wines, remaining constantly in tip-top condition with a smile on the lips, even when working to the brink of collapse.

Physical and mental stress can wipe out even a tried and tested veteran of Vinitaly and for that reason Donnafugata has drawn up a veritable Decalogue or 10 commandments for its collaborators, 20 persons of an average age of 30 whose professionalism has won them the title "producers with hearts" in a survey carried out by the monthly magazine *Cucina & Vini* among the thousands of visitors to the fair in 2003. They turned in a real "**dream team**" performance that in respect to the meticulous training required resembles that of the Ferrari squadron. Everything is based on technical competence—in respect to wine in this case—but also physical preparation and psychological resistance.

To deal with those factors, rules and helpful hints for surviving the stress of the Verona wine fair. The effort begins with **baggage**, which should be hand luggage, if possible, so that it does not wind up in the cargo bay of the airliner. A large percentage of checked baggage goes missing at the airports. Lost luggage is a misfortune that brings even the strong to their knees and represents an unhappy commencement for any journey.

**Clothing** deserves the closest attention. And shoes lead the list. They must be comfortable, low and light. The feet are in fact the part of the body most at risk, veritable Achilles heels that hour after hour wear down the resistance of even the most hardened worker. Garments should be sober but elegant and in styles that facilitate the work of the wearer behind the table at tastings. Women especially should shun lace and sleeves, which can interfere with the handling of bottles and goblets.

The commandments assign a strategic value to the diet, stipulating as essential a wholesome **breakfast** based on yogurt, honey, fruit, bread and butter. Those ingredients can make the difference for someone who must be able to function over a prolonged period. Heavy consumption of coffee is not advised because it tends to put the nerves on edge and it undercuts the work of the palate, an indispensable working instrument. Drink a lot of water, as much as three liters (nearly a gallon), to deal with the alcohol absorbed during the tastings. At **lunch**, the commandments advise a bit of Ragusano cheese or chocolate (the one with Mille e una Notte created by Ernst Knam or another with Ben Ryé, invented by Paul de Bondt), especially if the worker is short of endorphins. When the day's battle is over the staff returns to the hotel for an hour of relaxation before dinner, which everyone enjoys, although the time is usually divided between telephone calls and snoozing. The menu at **dinner** should offer dishes of fine quality and wines of a comparable level should be consumed. But they must be those of competitors in order to evaluate their characteristics.

The "warrior" has earned his or her rest at the end of the day. The commandments strongly recommend a good night's **sleep**, which should last at least nine hours. Therefore, a curfew should be observed, beginning at 10 p.m.. The sole exception granted is for Aperivino, an after-fair event on Thursday, April 1, organized by Donnafugata, Michele Chiarlo and Umani Ronchi for the most loyal wine lovers and customers.

Sound advice for Vinitaly that Donnafugata suggests that even those attending the fair as visitors may wish to take to heart. Golden rules dictated by a bit of irony and a lot of experience. In any case, they are fundamental in ensuring that participants survive to fight again another day.

*Press Office: Palermo, March 12, 2004*