

## *World heart surgeons at Donnafugata. A keynote speech by José Rallo on the future of fine wine.*

The world's top heart surgeons got together in the historic Donnafugata cellars in Marsala recently and among them was Leonard Bailey, who in 1984 performed a transplant operation in which he gave a baboon's heart to Baby Fae.

The occasion was an international symposium on "Congenital Heart Disease: Which Future?" that opened on Sunday, May 15 in the Sicilian city and drew more than 200



heart surgeons from all over the world. It was hosted by the Rallo family along with Prof. Carlo Marcelletti, who organized the conference. José Rallo, owner of the Donnafugata wine estate, welcomed the surgeons in introductory comments, delivered in English. And she traced Donnafugata's winemaking history to illustrate its view of the past, present and future of Sicilian wine worldwide.

During her speech, Ms. Rallo referred to the extraordinarily good period that Sicilian fine wine is currently experiencing and spoke of an actual "renaissance" in what is currently the island's most dynamic and competitive field of production. "The wine sector, especially wines of quality, is the driving force for environmental protection, development of tourism, growth in employment and higher revenues for the food and agricultural sector.

The future of Sicilian wine is tied to key success factors like scientific research directed at quality, communications that are more effective in interpreting consumer requirements, human resources training and, of obvious importance, coherent policy in support of production investments. The global competition picture," José Rallo concluded, "requires broad strategy able to combine technological innovation, environmental and territorial protection and a continual, tireless striving for extreme quality."

*The Press Office: Palermo - May 16, 2005*