



DONNAFUGATA®

PRESS RELEASE

## ***The 2012 grape harvest at Donnafugata*** **A fine one, promising elegant, well-structured reds and fresh and fragrant whites**

Weather: In Sicily the year was **slightly warmer** than in the previous years, although, in general, weather patterns were fairly normal.

The **winter** was on the mild side, with less rainfall than average and the **spring** was more humid. From October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012 total **rainfall** was about 470 mm (18.5 inches) compared to a ten-year average of 660 mm (30 inches) according to the S.I.A.S. weather station at Contessa Entellina.

A hot, windy and dry **summer** produced **very healthy grapes**, perfectly mature from the aromatic and phenolic standpoints, thanks also to big temperature excursion between day and night, differences of even of 20°C (68°F). This helped maintain the vine's foliage/fruit balance, a factor that in the Contessa Entellina area protected the grapes from the summer heat, and permitted the leaves to optimally transfer to the fruit during the night what they had photosynthesized during the day.

The harvest at Contessa Entellina: It began on **August 10** with the nocturnal harvesting of the Chardonnay. This **nighttime harvest** is a technical choice aimed at conserving grape aromas while saving 70% on the energy needed to cool them. The Sauvignon Blanc was picked on August 13 and the Viognier on the 17. Later in the month temperatures higher than usual made it necessary to pick the early-ripening varieties like Merlot and Syrah in advance of customary harvesting time (this year beginning on August 18). From the end of August to the beginning of September it was the turn of the indigenous grapes: Grillo, Inzolia, Catarratto, Grecanico and Nero d'Avola. The last to be picked were the Tannat, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Sauvignon, and the 2012 harvest ended on September 25. There were about 5% more grapes than in 2011, in any case the least productive of recent years.

The harvest on Pantelleria: Donnafugata cultivates vineyards in 12 district of the island differing in altitude, exposure and vine age and therefore in harvesting periods. Picking began on **August 17** for the grapes that would be dried and ended on September 24. Overall, the big temperature ranges between day and night helped enhance the aromas of the Zibibbo (or Moscato d'Alessandria), the main variety grown on Pantelleria's volcanic soil.

**Antonio Rallo**, head of production and co-owner of Donnafugata, stated: "It was a **sunny harvest, typical of our territories**. Yield per plant is normally low at Donnafugata and the vines usually don't suffer from lack of water. Even though rainfall was slightly under average until the late spring the only effect this had was on the Chardonnay vines, producing fewer grapes per plant. From the **qualitative standpoint**, all the varieties were in line with **expected standards** and there was nice performance by the Grillo, an indigenous, traditional Sicilian grape grape that the winery considers very promising.

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