



## PRESS RELEASE

# Ben Ryé Passito di Pantelleria, the most popular of Italian dessert wines

The trend, which has been under way for some years now, reached another high in the fourth quarter of 2006 due to significant growth in demand on the part of Italian wineshops. **Passito or raisin wines and especially those of Pantelleria are enjoying a magic moment of appreciation** among lovers of quality wine.

That was a more than significant confirmation resulting from a survey **among owners of 230 stores in Italy** carried out by the **Wine Towns organization**, the network to which belong 560 communes in whose territory at least one DOC wine is produced. In 2006, the Passito category set a record that is certain to be surpassed. In 2007, 28% of the retailers sampled said they would increase the shelf space occupied by these wines. And they will do so outside the canonical periods of the holidays (Christmas and Easter).

According to the responses of the retailers interviewed, the success achieved by the raisin wines was due to consumption of this type of wine that was less occasional and to the greater information available to the consumer about the enological value of these highly particular wines of the territory.

In addition, the inquiry showed that the average assortment of sweet wines available in Italian wineshops amounted to 25 with a prevalence of Sicilian wines in respect to the products of other regions.

In particular, **Ben Ryé**, Passito di Pantelleria di DonnaFugata, **is the naturally sweet wine most in demand**. A cult wine among aficionados but capable as well of winning the endorsement of experts, as attested by its extremely rich trove of awards: 8 Gold Medals at BAVI in Torgiano, 5 Vinalies d'Or in Paris, 2 Grand Gold Medals at the wine competition "La Selezione del Sindaco," a Grand Gold Medal in Brussels and in 2006 inclusion among the "Top Ten Wines of the Year" by the U.S. magazine *The Wine Enthusiast*.

In short, a highly successful wine in Italy and abroad, a symbol on the island of sun and wind of a corporate history, that of DonnaFugata, which has conquered a position of leadership among the naturally sweet wines.

"Consumption of Passito wines is expanding substantially," explained **Antonio Rallo of DonnaFugata**. "That's surely because the **quality of these wines has risen**. They are increasingly pleasant and elegant. And, then, the consumer is better informed and is well aware of the fact that, in addition to being great sipping wines, these dessert beverages are extraordinarily **versatile in terms of food matches**. From foie gras to desserts and *bottarga* [mullet roe] in chocolate and with a nod to cheeses of the highest quality, the Passiti bring out the sensory characteristics of a vast variety of foods by playing on sweet-savory, fresh-fatty contrasts."

In short, consumption that tends to emerge from an elitist circle to conquer those new palates that are in search of more original and incomparable expressions of a territory. Passito di Pantelleria, the naturally sweet Italian wine most in demand.

