



DONNAFUGATA®

PRESS RELEASE

Excellent premises for the 2008 vintage

Donnafugata is about to begin its 2008 harvest at Contessa Entellina and on Pantelleria after a year of typically Sicilian weather. The vineyards are in excellent health, with all the right stuff for making wines that are big on personality and territoriality.

To date the year's weather has been typical for Western Sicily. The vineyards enjoyed a good budding period and developed fine vegetation, index of excellent photosynthesis. Blossoming and setting were normal but a little later than the average for previous years.

In June and July this slight delay was quickly recouped thanks to temperatures that were never so high as to halt photosynthesis or so low as to slow it down, and so at Contessa Entellina some portions can be harvested somewhat in advance of seasonal averages.

In June the vines were trimmed to help new leaves grow at a key moment, that of grape ripening.

In July the grapes went through the darkening stage. At this time the vines were thinned, particularly the black grape varieties, this year proving to be more productive. Reducing grape output per vine makes it possible to get wines with mature polyphenols and greater aromatic complexity.

THE DONNAFUGATA ESTATE AT CONTESSA ENTELLINA

Weather: rainfall and temperatures. From October 1, 2007 to July 31, 2008, 17 inches of rain fell, slightly less than the average 22 during the same period in previous years (2003-2008).

In terms of temperature, this year too there were big differences between day and night, a factor important in grape maturation because it lessens the stress of summer heat and enables what was photosynthesized during the day to pass from leaves to grapes at night. The table shows how the hottest period – July 6 to 10 – was greatly offset by very cool nighttime temperatures.

Data collected by the Agriveltha remote-sensing station at the Donnafugata estate at Contessa Entellina.

	July 6	July7	July 8	July 9	July 10
Maximum Temperatures	97.9° F	96.4° F	96.4° F	95.7° F	97.9° F
Minimum Temperatures	66° F	62.2° F	63 ° F	59.9° F	65.3° F
Day/night difference	63.9° F	68° F	65.5° F	67.8° F	64.6° F



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Similarly, the hottest day – July 21 – with a maximum of 100.2° F, cooled down at night to 57.2° F, a difference of nearly 75° F. These big changes from day to night therefore had good effects on the growth cycle of the vineyard and the organoleptic quality of the grapes.

Ripening and harvest. Grape picking is scheduled to start on August 6. The nighttime harvest will concern younger portions of Chardonnay that are further ahead in ripening. Afterwards the Viognier will be picked, followed by the Merlot, Syrah, Nero d'Avola, Cabernet Sauvignon, Ansonica and finally the Catarratto.

Samplings will be taken with increasing frequency and tasting the grapes in the vineyard will help in precisely defining the ripening stages and the decisions to harvest the different varieties from their different vineyards.

Quantity and quality. Right from blossoming, vineyard output looked slightly higher than the average for previous vintages, testifying to the excellent health of the vines. As a consequence, to meet its qualitative goals the winery thinned the vines.

DONNAFUGATA ON PANTELLERIA

Weather: rainfall and temperatures. Rainfall on Pantelleria was somewhat below average. Temperatures were the usual seasonal. Except for the few days when the sirocco blew, there were good differences in temperature between day and night.

The particularity of the Pantelleria microclimate (high nighttime humidity, sunny and windy days) aided constant growth. June trimming helped the Zibibbo to set and this year vine/grape growth was optimally balanced, with good outcome for the organoleptic quality of the grapes.

Ripening and harvest. The Zibibbo harvest will probably begin around August 15 in the earliest-ripening districts on the island – Martingana, Punta Karace, Cala Levante – and then proceed to the other areas in which Donnafugata has vineyards. In fact, on Pantelleria there are many different grape-growing contexts dependent on different factors (distance from the sea, exposure, altitude and volcanic nature of the terrain, vineyard age) and so grape ripening varies from zone to zone.

Quantity and quality. This year's vineyard output was slightly above average for recent years, in particular due to very fertile shoots and ideal climatic conditions during flowering and setting.

Final appraisal. Both at Contessa Entellina and on Pantelleria there are to date all the premises for an excellent vintage. Now we must simply wait for the harvest and the future to have their say.

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