



DONNAFUGATA®

PRESS RELEASE

Ben Ryè is Wine of the Year for the D'Agata and Comparini Guide

Ben Ryè is "Wine of the Year" according to the **Guida ai Migliori Vini d'Italia – Italy's Best Wines 2009** written by Ian D'Agata and Massimo Claudio Comparini and published by Guido Tommasi in a bilingual (Italian/English) edition.

The award ceremony was held last November 8 at the Teatro Puccini in Merano during the Wine Festival, and accepting the honor on Donnafugata's behalf was **Antonio Rallo**, the vintner representing the fifth generation of this historic Sicilian wine family.

Ben Ryè Passito di Pantelleria was **1st among the "Best 100"** ranking for all the wines – whites, reds and sweet – competing.

In the D'Agata-Comparini prize record, Ben Ryè followed Ornellaia's Masseto 2004 (in the 2008 edition of the guide), Poggio di Sotto Brunello di Montalcino 2001 (in the 2007 edition), and, in the 2006 edition, the tie between Luciano Sandrone's Barolo Cannubi Boschis 2001 and the Avignonesi Vin Santo 1994.

The 2009 guide also named the Cantina Produttori Nais Magreid in Alto Adige "Producer of the Year", Maurizio Zanella "Wine Personality of the Year" and Marc De Grazia "Rising Star".

Worthwhile mentioning is the international prestige of the tasting commission that did the 2009 edition of this guide, composed of **Ian D'Agata** (writer, wine & food journalist and Italian correspondent for *International Wine Cellar*, an American magazine put out by Stephan Tanzer); **Massimo Claudio Comparini** (sommelier, wine writer and vice-director of the International Wine Academy in Rome); **Bernard Burtschy** (writer for the *Revue du Vin de France* and *Le Figaro*) and **Derek Smedley** (Master of Wine and co-chairman of the International Wine Challenge).

The results of the tough job of tasting and visiting the main Italian wineries performed by the authors also had important feedback abroad: right now Ian D'Agata is traveling to **New York** and **Toronto** to present "The Ecco Guide to Italy's Best Wines" just published by Harper Collins, while Massimo Claudio Comparini will be in **London** on November 19 to present the guide published by Guido Tommasi.

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From the "Guida ai Migliori Vini d'Italia - Italy's Best Wines 2009"* *Wine of the Year: Ben Ryè 2007, Donnafugata - Sicily

The Passito di Pantelleria is perhaps Italy's best known sweet wine made from air dried grapes, but unfortunately most examples that people try are poor, when not downright bad. The Ben Ryè is a stellar wine, with the '06 and '07 bottlings the best ever.

The '07 is a much richer, sweeter wine as opposed to the '06, clearly revealing a higher percentage of air dried grapes used: nonetheless, it maintains amazing freshness and refinement. Compliments to the Rallo family for their hard work, dedication and passion, as working Pantelleria's rocky, steep terrains is anything but easy. The Rallos could easily devote their efforts to other wines and grapes that are far easier and less costly to produce.