



DONNAFUGATA

PRESS RELEASE

## *2008: a year at Donnafugata*

**January – Two important innovations in the historic Marsala cellars: an underground barrique cellar and a 50-kW photovoltaic installation.**

The **new subterranean barrique cellar** has soft lighting, enveloping silence and an atmosphere full of fragrances. From the raised walkway there is an endless view of barriques. The room is spacious, circa 17,000 sq ft and holds in a single place all the Donnafugata wines that are aged in wood. The barrel vaults designed by Moretti Costruzioni are a perfect response to static, aesthetic and functional requirements. Temperature (59° to 61°F) and humidity (80 to 85%) are constant and heat dispersion is reduced to a minimum, with great energy savings. The **new 50-kW photovoltaic system** installed on the roofs of the historic Marsala cellars consists of 3,700 sq ft of mono-crystalline panels of the grid-connected type that produce an average of 79,000 kW a year.

**February – Donnafugata for the Future, wine & music for microcredit.**

Donnafugata for the Future is the project with which the Sicilian winery innovatively interprets its social responsibility, betting on **microcredit** (following the example of Muhammed Yunus, Nobel Peace Prize winner in 2006) in collaboration with voluntary, non-profit organizations. This is a formula that has few precedents in Italy and combines wine, music and social-benefit work. The funds raised through sales of the new “**Donnafugata Music & Wine**” CD, featuring Josè Rallo as solo vocalist, will be used entirely to establish a guarantee fund that will enable the Banca Etica to finance micro-enterprises. The CD is sold in Italy's finest restaurants, wine bars and wine shops and at [www.cdbaby.com](http://www.cdbaby.com).

**March – MILLEANNI, the new extra-virgin olive oil.**

The quality and expression of territorial values that have always distinguished Donnafugata wines gave birth to **Milleanni**, an extra-virgin olive oil blended from three olive varieties – Biancolilla, Nocellara del Belice, Cerasuola – grown in the Belice Valley in the heart of western Sicily.

**April – Josè Rallo joins the board of directors of the Banco di Sicilia.**

Josè Rallo – fifth generation of the family that created Donnafugata – was appointed member of the Banco di Sicilia Unicredit Group board of directors. For the first time in the bank's 140-year history the board now includes two women: Josè Rallo and Maria Luisa Averna.



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**July – The Donnafugata website now speaks 9 languages.**

Since its online publication the Donnafugata website has always been bilingual, in **Italian and English**. As of July much of its content is also being provided in **another 7 foreign languages** (French, German, Japanese, Chinese, Russian, Korean and Spanish) easy to access through as many “landing-pages” from which to “set down” in the polyglot Donnafugata world. And in honor of the tenth anniversary of the **nighttime harvest** also published online was a **mini-site** entirely devoted to this milestone in the Extreme Quality project <http://vendemmianotturna.donnafugata.it>.

**August – The nocturnal harvest: ten years of a passion for quality.**

The night of August 6 at the Contessa Entellina estate Agriculture Minister Luca Zaia cut the first bunch of 2008 Chardonnay, celebrating the tenth anniversary of an important technical innovation, **nighttime harvesting**. In fact, it was in 1998 when Donnafugata first experimented with moonlight grape picking, a method that the winery definitively adopted in 1999. Thanks to cooler nighttime temperatures the fragrance of the grapes is fully preserved in their move from vineyard to cellar, avoiding undesired fermentations and getting good energy savings in the stages of cooling and pressing.

**September – The Pantellerian Garden is donated to the FAI.**

For the past twenty years involved on Pantelleria in a project pursuing production excellence, whose finest expression is Ben Ryé Passito, Donnafugata also promotes the island's agriculture and has donated a **Pantellerian garden to the FAI** (the Italian National Trust). The circular layout and size of the garden (built in lava-stone drywalls and one of the few exemplars that have been restored and can be visited) guarantee the ideal microclimate for protecting a century-old orange tree, a valuable “vitamin factory”, from wind and drought. Self-sufficient from the water-supply standpoint the Donnafugata *Giardino Pantesco* is an agronomic system that looks to the future.

**October – The grape harvest ends: the 2008 vintage promises excellence.**

An **excellent harvest for Donnafugata**, both at Contessa Entellina and on Pantelleria. The year was somewhat less rainy than average and temperatures were higher than seasonal but without excessive peaks and with broad temperatures changes between day and night. Careful vineyard tending, from winter pruning to pre-harvest thinning, enabled the vines to attain optimal growth/output balance. Also decisive in achieving high quality was the work done to monitor grape ripening and choose the best moments for picking each type in Donnafugata's various vineyards. The 2008 wines will have just the right amount of alcohol, great crispness, aromatic finesse and elegance.

**November – Ben Ryé 2007 Wine of the Year for the D'Agata and Comparini guide**

**Wine of the Year** was the award given to **Ben Ryé 2007** Passito di Pantelleria by 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. Ben Ryé thus



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came in first among the “Best 100” chosen from all the categories competing – whites, reds and sweet wines – and joined the guide’s prize roster after Ornellaia’s Masseto 2004 (in the 2008 edition of the guide), the Poggio di Sotto Brunello di Montalcino 2001 (in the 2007 edition) and the Barolo Cannubi Boschis 2001 from Luciano Sandrone which tied with the Avignonesi Vin Santo 1994 in the 2006 edition.

### November – Winenews survey: Donnafugata among the top 7 in all the Italian guides.

Only seven wineries had all the Italian wine guides in agreement: **Gaja, Braida, Caldaro, Trabucchi, Corte Sant’Alda, Masciarelli and Donnafugata**. This was the result of a survey published by [www.winenews.it](http://www.winenews.it) and conducted by comparing the ratings of the 2009 editions of the five main guides to Italian wines: **Gambero Rosso-Slow Food, L’Espresso, AIS-Bibenda, Veronelli and Maroni**. Donnafugata’s fine performance stemmed from the laurels again crowning the winery’s top wines: the red Mille e una Notte 2005 was given “Tre Bicchieri” by Gambero Rosso-Slow Food and rated “Super Tre Stelle Blue” by Veronelli, while the Passito Ben Ryé 2007 got top ratings from L’Espresso, Maroni, AIS-Bibenda and Veronelli.

### December – Donnafugata gives birth to “Ben Ryé Grappa”.

There is a **newborn of excellence at Donnafugata: Ben Ryé Grappa**. This is the outcome of distilling **Zibibbo dried grape pomace** that results from vinifying Ben Ryé Passito di Pantelleria. Skillful **maturation in wood** gives it extraordinary complexity. A distillate with golden glints and seductive aromas of apricot and raisin, it has mellow and engrossing taste with hints of dried figs and honey. It is a harmonious and elegant expression of the character of Pantelleria, island of sun and wind.

### December – Wine tourism: 2008 results and 2009 events.

Donnafugata’s wine tourism figures were very good: in 2008 it welcomed **approximately 9,000 visitors** to its various estates, **up about 30% from 2007**. A great number of foreigners from **34 different countries** made up 25% of all the visitors received: the first in line were Americans, followed by Germans and Swedes. **There were record visits to the Pantelleria vineyards and cellar**, 1,900 people and a 55% increase from the previous year. Donnafugata’s wine tourism project is addressed to experts and wine-lovers and features visitor-tailored hospitality. The next special events open to wine enthusiasts will again be **Open Cellars** (Cantine Aperte), slated for May 31, 2009 at the historic cellars in Marsala and **Goblets of Stars** (Calici di Stelle), held the night of August 10 at the Contessa Entellina estate.

*Marsala: December 1, 2008*

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