



DONNAFUGATA

PRESS RELEASE

## *FAI Spring Days: Donnafugata's Pantellerian Garden opens to the public*

**Saturday, March 28 and Sunday, March 29** the Donnafugata Pantellerian Garden will be open to the public for the "Spring Days" held by the FAI (*Fondo Ambiente Italiano*, The Italian Trust – [www.fondoambiente.it](http://www.fondoambiente.it)). The *giardino pantesco* – which Donnafugata donated to the FAI last year – stands among the Pantelleria vineyards that are the birthplace of the prestigious Ben Ryé *passito* (raisin wine) and will be open from **10 a.m. to 6 p.m.** The guided tours will depart from the Donnafugata winery in the Khamma district and include the vineyards and cellar as well as a special tasting of the winery's products.

With the "*Giornate di Primavera*" – now in their **17<sup>th</sup> edition** – the FAI's primary aim has been to call attention to the abandoned state of a great many prize assets of the so-called minor Italy. And it is thanks to the FAI and its delegations across the country that public awareness has grown through the years and that many of these jewels have been recuperated and restored to society.

Italy is one great open-air museum and we often forget this. To make us more conscious of it, and look at Italy with newer eyes, the FAI created this special occasion that is repeated each year in the first weekend of spring.

More than ever this year the FAI is uniting the *Bel Paese* from north to south: from the Valtellina to Pantelleria, island of sun and wind where Donnafugata is involved in a project of **heroic viticulture aimed at excellence** and that sees in the Pantellerian garden the symbol – together with growing vines bush-like on terraced land – of an agriculture to defend and promote.

The Donnafugata Pantellerian Garden is one of the few exemplars still extant on the island that has been restored and can be visited. For its size and construction features it is the most common type: the garden is circular in layout. Its diameter, (35 ft outside, 27 ft inside), its height (rising to 13 ft) and its lava-stone **drywalls** ensure the best microclimatic conditions for the "waterless" survival of a **century-old "Portugal" orange tree**, an ancient variety with several trunks that fills the entire area of the garden (about 179 sq ft).

Typical of southern Mediterranean cultures, these circular constructions equipped with a low door hold a single citrus tree and are an ingenious **self-sufficient agronomic system**. The garden is able to defend the plant from the two main threats to its survival: wind, whose intensity and frequency provoke irreparable damage, and the scarcity of water that on Pantelleria can sometimes lead to 300 consecutive days of drought.

This type of garden has a **fascinating history**. The oldest depiction of one was found engraved on a Sumerian tablet from 3000 B.C., showing a fruit tree surrounded by a wall. The Pantellerian garden derives precisely from the myth of the "walled garden" that symbolizes life and the womb. In fact, utilizing the porosity of stones and the big differences between day and night temperatures to capture moisture right from the air (in addition to stone and beaten-earth channels collecting rainwater), the *giardino pantesco* meets the plant's need for water without any irrigation. **An ancient system that looks to the future.** Donnafugata's gift to the FAI is a small but concrete gesture aimed at recounting the beauty of a territory and a model of sustainable agriculture.

*Marsala: February 24, 2009*

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**Reservations are required to visit the Donnafugata Pantellerian Garden: Tel. +39 0923 724216/724206 or e-mail [info@donnafugata.it](mailto:info@donnafugata.it). Cell phone: +39 338 7718805 (active only on March 28 and 29, 2009).**

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## Other FAI properties open to the public during the Spring Days 2009

Abbey of San Fruttuoso, Banchina Camogli di San Fruttuoso - Camogli (Genoa)

Ieranto Bay, Via Fontana di Nerano, 23 - Massa Lubrense (Naples)

Barberia Giacalone, Vicolo dei Caprettari - Genoa

Casa Carbone, Via Riboli, 14 - Lavagna (Genoa)

Castello della Manta, Via al Castello 14 - Manta (Cuneo)

Castello di Masino, Via al Castello 1 - Caravino (Turin)

Castello di Avio, Via al Castello - Sabbionara d'Avio (Trento)

Castel Grumello, Via Sant'Antonio, 11 - Montagna in Valtellina (Sondrio)

Edicola Liberty, Piazza Canossa - Mantova

Kolymbetra Garden, Valle dei Templi – Agrigento (Sicily)

Mulino di Baresi – Roncobello (Bergamo)

Torba Monastery, Via Stazione - Torba, part of Gornate Olona (Varese)

Villa Gregoriana Park, Piazza del Tempio di Vesta - Tivoli (Rome)

Torre di Punta Pagana, Loc. San Michele di Pagana – Rapallo (Genoa)

Villa Panza and collection, Piazza Litta, 1 - Varese

Villa del Balbianello, Via Commedia - Lenno (Como)

Villa Della Porta Bozzolo, Viale Camillo Bozzolo 5 - Casalzuigno (Varese)

Villa Necchi Campiglio, Via Mozart, 14 - Milan