



DONNAFUGATA

PRESS RELEASE

The 2010 grape harvest at Donnafugata

A rainier year than usual; yield somewhat lower but quality high thanks to ripe and healthy grapes giving wines of particular finesse.

Fairly even weather and meticulous **vineyard tending** were the premises for quality grape growing that brought healthy and promise-fulfilling fruit to the cellar. In the **autumn** and **winter** rainfall was above seasonal averages: overall, from October 1, 2009 to September 30, 2010 there were 32.8 inches, compared to the average 26.6 registered in the past ten years by the S.I.A.S. weather station at Contessa Entellina (www.sias.regione.sicilia.it).

In the **spring** (April-May), there was a slight delay in vine budding and blossoming. In June some trimming was done to spur the growth of new leaves physiologically active in the last stages of ripening.

In July the grapes began to darken; **temperatures** were within seasonal norms, always with big differences between day and night. Initial estimates for the year showed a less productive one and so vines were **thinned only in some vineyards** in order to have total grape output in line with the winery's quality goals. The grape harvest began on August 16 at Contessa Entellina, a few days later than in past years. Following tradition it began with the nocturnal harvesting of the **Chardonnay**, the earliest variety to ripen.

In August there were three heat waves with temperatures higher than usual, which sped up grape ripening. Great differences between day and night temperatures aided in **balancing plant/grape growth**; between August 21 and 28 peak temperatures reached over 101°F, while the lowest was 67.5°F. After August 29 the weather got cooler, below seasonal averages.

In addition to the Chardonnay, at the Contessa Entellina estate in August other grape varieties were harvested: starting on the 18th the **Sauvignon Blanc** and **Viognier** and on the 24th the **Merlot**. September was harvest time for the **Nero d'Avola** and **Syrah** (starting on the 1st), the **Grecanico** (beginning on the 2nd), the **Catarratto** (from the 6th), the **Cabernet Sauvignon** (from the 8th), the **Petit Verdot** (from the 14th), the **Ansonica** (from the 16th), the **Tannat** (17th) and the **Alicante Bouchet** (from the 20th). The harvest concluded on October 2 in some later-ripening vineyards of Cabernet Sauvignon.

On **Pantelleria** Donnafugata's vineyards are located in 11 different areas (*contrade*) of the island and are an important example of heroic viticulture. Here the **Zibibbo** harvest began on August 18 at the Martingana vineyards, traditionally the first to ripen, and ended on September 19 at the Ghirlanda. On Pantelleria, too, the year was less productive, especially at the vineyards hit by strong winds at blossom time.

Both on Pantelleria and at the Contessa Entellina estate isolated **September showers** brought no vine diseases or particular problems with grape ripening. Overall, the grapes were harvested in **amounts** somewhat smaller than recent-year averages; for vinification purposes **quality** was very good to excellent. The whites wines are crisp, with aromatic finesse; the reds have good structure and balance; the Passito di Pantelleria will be especially rich and complex.

Marsala: October 26, 2010

Alessia Panzeca – International Press Office
alessia.panzeca@gmail.com cell. +39 335 6522242

Ferdinando Calaciura – Italian Press Office
calaciura@granviasc.it cell. +39 338 322 9837