

PRESS RELEASE

## Donnafugata at Expo: the heroic viticulture of Pantelleria model of sustainable agriculture and production excellence

Last 6 May “**Donnafugata on Pantelleria**” was the protagonist of the last evening dedicated to the minor Sicilian islands, inside the **Bio-Mediterraneum** Cluster, the area of Expo that brings together Sicily and 10 countries united by traditions, cultures and life styles.

The debate, which took the form of a speakeasy, cultural aperitif, focused on the theme of the **heroic viticulture** on the island of sun and wind, a model of sustainable agriculture, capable of giving life to products of excellence as well as safeguarding a landscape of haunting beauty.

Discussing this with José Rallo, the face and voice of the Sicilian company, were the American journalist Wolfgang Aichtner, moderator of the meeting, Costanza Pratesi, Head of Environmental Sustainability FAI (Italian Fund for the Environment) and Salvatore Gino Gabriele, Mayor of Pantelleria.

**José Rallo**, who in this first week of Expo played the role of the Patroness of the **Bio-Mediterraneum**, retraced the steps in the history of the family winery: from the historic cellars in Marsala (founded in 1851) to the Contessa Entellina estate, until the landing on Pantelleria in 1989.

Here Donnafugata now has 68 hectares of vineyards in production, cultivated with **Zibibbo** in 12 districts of the island, where it produces the white Lighea and the naturally sweet wines Kabir Moscato and **Ben Ryé**, Passito di Pantelleria, one of the most celebrated in the world. The production process of this wine was illustrated, the fruit of an advanced synthesis between tradition and innovation, passion and hard work of man, following the time – slow and long – set by nature and the quality objectives pursued by Donnafugata.

**Mayor Gabriele** reminded us that last November the name of Pantelleria hit the world news headlines for the **UNESCO recognition of the alberello pantesco**. The proclamation, that took place in Paris, marked a historic milestone: for the first time, an agricultural practice – creative and sustainable – was included in the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

**Costanza Pratesi, Head of Environmental Sustainability FAI**, spoke about the Pantellerian Garden donated to the Fondo Ambiente Italiano by Donnafugata in 2008. An extraordinary self-sufficient agronomic system, capable of making a citrus tree grow and bear fruit in an extreme context where the hand of man has always had to contend with wind and drought.

Among the Khamma vineyards the garden constitutes, along with the dammusa and the dry stone walls, a characteristic feature of the landscape that fascinates and testifies to the hard work and dedication of the agricultural community of the island.

The projection of photographs taken on Pantelleria at the end of the '60s by architect **Renato Bazzoni**, one of the founders of the FAI, evoked particular awe. The images document a landscape of exceptional beauty that deserves our greatest commitment to ensure that it continues to be safeguarded.

The perfect corollary of the speakeasy was, lastly, the **tasting** of the two most well-known labels that Donnafugata produces on Pantelleria; **Lighea**, fresh and fruity, was presented paired with bread made from the ancient Sicilian grains used by the Vescera family, passionate bakers in Carlentini (Siracusa); the final toast in honor of the peoples of the Mediterranean with the Passito **Ben Ryé**, a metaphor for the success of Italy in the world: the **pairing with the “saltiness”** of the Alacce (anchovies) from Lampedusa and then the bacio pantesco, a typical sweet based on ricotta, was remarkable. Lastly Ben Ryé accompanied a taste proposed by Peppe Giuffrè: ricotta, Zibibbo raisins and a sprinkle of **cinnamon**, the spice that better than any other, from east to west, expresses the common roots of the Mediterranean cuisine.

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