

Ben Ryé 2008 *Limited Edition*

THE PROJECT AND ITS INNOVATIONS

Donnafugata *Ben Ryé Passito di Pantelleria* is considered a symbol of naturally sweet wines in Italy and around the world.

It is produced from the grape variety Zibibbo using the alberello pantesco training system, an agricultural practice recognized in November 2014 as **UNESCO World Heritage**.

In 1989 Donnafugata arrived on Pantelleria, a volcanic island characterized by the heroic viticulture, and a long journey of research and experimentation in the vineyard and cellar began, until the **latest important innovative stages**.

Objective: increase the complexity of Ben Ryé

1. **Knowledge and enhancement of the different terroirs** (soils, exposure, altitude, age of the vineyard, time of harvest, grape quality, separate vinifications...)
2. **Innovation regarding dried grapes:** from the vineyards with grapes characterized by higher acidity, we selected only the clusters that are the most suitable for withering, to concentrate freshness and balance residual sugars that for the first time have exceeded the threshold of 200 g./l.
3. **Increasing use of dried grapes in vinification**, until a grape-wine yield of 25% is reached.
4. **Increasing use of bottle aging** before proposing it on the market, to give the complexity achieved in the vineyard and cellar the right time to express itself.

The fruit of this research is Ben Ryé 2008 Passito di Pantelleria Limited Edition of about 6,000 bottles. An unprecedented choice that offers a **new and amazing sensory point of view**.



Ben Ryé 2008 *Limited Edition* - THE PROJECT AND ITS INNOVATIONS

Ben Ryé is the *Passito di Pantelleria* that Donnafugata has been producing since the 1989 vintage.

Over the 20 years that followed, arriving at the 2008 harvest from which this *Ben Ryé Limited Edition* is obtained, the winery has acquired a growing knowledge and mastery of the agronomic techniques of the **cultivation of Zibibbo** in the context of heroic viticulture that characterizes the island (terraces, dry stone walls, the *alberello* vine training system).

In particular, thanks to the gradual acquisition of new vineyards, *Ben Ryé 2008* was produced from grapes from **14 districts of the island** that differ greatly from one another; the volcanic matrix of the terrains is common to all, but between the various vineyards there are significant differences related to the presence of more or less sand, pumice stone or rock, the depth of the terrains, exposure to sun and wind, as well as their altitude and the age of the vineyard, which on average is very old (there are also century-old ungrafted vines).

In the case of Pantelleria, even though it is a relatively small island, because of such a wide **diversity of viticultural contexts**, the ripening periods vary considerably and therefore the Zibibbo **harvest** spans a period of about **4 weeks**, between mid August and mid September.



The pedological diversity of the districts and their microclimates have gradually turned out to be a great help in the pursuit of the objective of **greater complexity** in the wine; some examples:

- the grapes in the districts of Martingana and Punta Kharace ripen early, they are grapes that are suitable for withering, and that give power and concentration to the wine;
- in Bukkuram and Khamma we obtain heralding grapes with great balance and elegance;
- in Serraglie, Mueggen and Barone we obtain grapes that have more marked acidity that enhances the freshness of the wine.

In addition, with the 2008 harvest we introduced **an innovation regarding the dried grapes**: from the vineyards furthest from the sea, higher and less precocious, with grapes characterized by higher acidity, we selected only the clusters that are the most suitable for withering (in the sun and in the wind).

The dehydration of these grapes results in an even higher concentration of organic acids, of fundamental importance for balancing the sugar component. **We have been able to increase the quantity of dried grapes added during fermentation** (more than 70 kg in 100 liters of must, grape-wine yield equal to 25%) **and for the first time exceed the threshold of 200 grams/liter of residual sugar, increasing the complexity of the wine without losing its proverbial balance and elegance.**

Ben Ryé 2008 Limited Edition is the fruit of a selection of dried grapes, one grape at a time, and also of a masterly work in the cellar because **the fermentation occurs in extreme conditions considering the potential alcohol around 27% alc./vol., and also considering it is a naturally sweet wine** (not fortified).

In these 20 years of history of *Ben Ryé*, in addition, Donnafugata has been able to evaluate the aging potential of this wine; through frequent vertical tastings of all vintages **the extraordinary longevity of Ben Ryé emerged.**

Therefore we decided to create *Ben Ryé 2008 Limited Edition* – and we come to another innovation that has characterized this project – deciding to preserve a little more than 6,000 bottles of it in the cellar for **even longer bottle aging** before proposing it on the market.

So the consumer who was accustomed to loving the gushing freshness of *Ben Ryé Passito di Pantelleria*, has had the chance to redefine the perception of the good quality of this wine and this type, discovering the wealth of aromas and taste it can express: not only raisins and apricots, but *Ben Ryé* displays a thrilling

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kaleidoscope of carob, mineral notes, Mediterranean herbs, honey, tobacco and everything our memory and taste-olfactory recognition capacity are able to capture.

A wine that pays full homage to the value of the heroic viticulture of the island and the agricultural practice of the *alberello pantesco* cultivation of Zibibbo, which just a few months ago was recognized as **UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**.

For *Ben Ryé* the research continues – together with the University of Milan – with the experimental field in the district of Barone where **33 biotypes of Zibibbo** have been planted, chosen through a mass selection carried out in Spain, France, Greece and southern Italy.

TECHNICAL DATA SHEET

Type: naturally sweet wine - *Passito di Pantelleria Doc.*

Grapes: Zibibbo (Moscato d'Alessandria).

Production area: south-western Sicily, island of Pantelleria; districts: Khamma, Mulini, Mueggen, Serraglia, Gibbiuna, Barone, Martingana, Bukkuram, Favarotta, Punta Karace.

Altitude: 20 to 400 m ASL

Orography: terraces on predominantly sloping terrains typical of heroic viticulture.

Soils: sandy, originating from lava, sub-acid-neutral reaction; deep and fertile, well endowed with phosphorus, potassium and zinc.

VINEYARD

Training and pruning: the vines are cultivated by hand, in basins, low alberello pantesco, consisting of 2 to 4 branches with typical horizontal growth. Age of vines: also more than 100 years old.

Plantation densities: 2,500 to 3,600 plants per hectare.

Yield per hectare: about 4 tons.

Vintage: normal climatic trend; an excellent harvest that began on August 17 and continued until September 20 depending on the ripening times in the different districts. Good temperature variations contributed to enhancing the aromatic quality of the Zibibbo. Ben Ryé 2008 displays extraordinary richness and complexity.

CELLAR

Fermentation: in stainless steel at a controlled temperature; the dried grapes, de-stemmed and selected by hand, are added - several times - to the fermenting must. During maceration the dried grapes release their extraordinary heritage of sweetness, freshness and very personal aroma.

Aging: in tanks for 4-5 months and 6 years in the bottle before release.

Analysis data: alcohol 14.13 % ABV, total acidity 7.16 g/l., pH 3.82, residual sugar 203 g/l.

TASTING NOTES

Description (8/8/2014): Ben Ryé 2008 is bright amber. Notes of dates followed by dried figs and carob on the nose, ending in apricots and flowers, mineral notes and Mediterranean scrub. Soft and enveloping in the mouth, with excellent acidity that emphasizes the length and persistence.

Aging potential: over 30 years.

THE WINE EXPERIENCE

Food & Occasions: with blue or aged cheeses, with ricotta-based desserts. With chocolate, try it with gianduia or "De Bondt Ryé". Extraordinary alone, as a meditation wine, for those who read or listen to music. The ideal crowning moment of a formal dinner or a romantic appointment. Serve in medium-size tulip glasses, it can be uncorked at time of serving. Excellent at 14°C.

Art & Wine: from the Arabic "Son of the Wind" that blows constantly among the clusters on Pantelleria and brings with it an intense load of perfumes. Dedicated to this limited edition, a special label that draws on the narration of the classic label, reinterpreting and enhancing it. The images that recount the love, care and effort of heroic viticulture are illuminated by golden rays, in a sweet and elegant portrait. Ben Ryé 2008 is a special edition of Donnafugata Passito di Pantelleria, on which the founder Giacomo Rallo is proud to put his signature, 20 years after the **first vintage**: that of 1989.

