

John Fodera's Tuscan Vines

Passionately Pursuing Italian Wine and Food

September 9, 2022

DONNAFUGATA UPDATE

by John Fodera (<https://johnfodera.com/author/johnfodera/>)

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~ The Capital of Sicily, Palermo ~

Donnafugata is a leader in the Sicilian wine landscape. For almost four decades, this family run estate (<https://johnfodera.com/sicily-heritage-donnafugata/>) has been producing top quality wines from Sicily's vast terroir.

Donnafugata owns approximately 405 hectares of land divided between four vineyard locations. Founded in 1983 by Giacomo Rallo and his wife Gabriella, the winery is principally run by Jose and Antonio, the 5th generation of Rallos.

The name Donnafugata means “woman in flight” and is taken from the novel *Il Gattopardo* about a queen who found refuge where the company's vineyards are located. Today, the family produces a vast amount of wine; 18 different labels in total and while it can be confusing to keep track of, the quality is undeniable.



~ The Rallo family – owners of Donnafugata ~

I just completed selected tastings for some of the winery's latest releases; having revisited some of the wines from an article two years ago (<https://johnfodera.com/sicily-heritage-donnafugata/>).

The **2020 Donnafugata Sur Sur** is 100% Grillo fermented in stainless steel. This light to medium bodied wine portrays crisp tropical fruit aromas and flavors. Pineapple, lemon and grapefruit are notable. With crisp acidity, this drinks well as an aperitif or with lighter fare. I

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enjoy Grillo, but overall, it doesn't rise to the complexity of Vermentino or Vernaccia. Still, a nice value under \$17. 85 points. [Find this wine \(https://www.wine-searcher.com/find/donna+fugata+sursur+grillo+igp+sicilia+italy/2020\)](https://www.wine-searcher.com/find/donna+fugata+sursur+grillo+igp+sicilia+italy/2020).



~ The Sur Sur is a reliable, easy drinking white ~

The Arabian influence on Sicily is represented on most of Donnafugata's labels. Just as Sherazade is the classic story teller from 1,001 nights, so too is this classic wine Sicilian.

The 2019 Sherazade is 100% Nero d'Avola. In the glass, the array of colors spans the spectrum. Ruby, brick, siena, amber, it is very pretty to admire. On the nose, the aromas clearly feature red plums, flowers and spicy pepper notes. In the mouth, the wine is well balanced and especially concentrated at the price point. Flavors follow the nose and are clean and persistent. This is excellent value and really lovely. I so much more prefer Nero d'Avola to the lighter wines from Etna based on Nerello. Great house red. 91 points. About \$16. [Find this wine \(https://www.wine-searcher.com/find/donna+fugata+sherazade+igp+sicilia+italy/2019\)](https://www.wine-searcher.com/find/donna+fugata+sherazade+igp+sicilia+italy/2019).

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~ Sherazade is 100% Nero d'Avola ~

Although the many wines crafted by Donnafugata can sometimes be confusing, the benefit is that quality is available at many different price points. The final wine goes up the ladder but along with Mille e Una Notte, is a great standard bearer for the estate.

The **2016 Tancredi** is a deep garnet in the glass. The aromas leap from the bottle in this structured wine. Red plums, smoke, tobacco and flowers are heady and complex. On the palate, the wine is juicy and lively with wonderful crisp viscosity. Eucalyptus, black plums, cocoa and shale notes are impressive and lengthy. Sweet, long juicy finish is somewhat shortened by the rather substantial tannins. Drink now with decanting but can easily cellar up to 10 years. 94 points. Fairly priced around \$35. [Find this wine.](https://www.wine-searcher.com/find/donna+fugata+tancredi+terre+siciliane+igp+sicilia+italy/2016) (<https://www.wine-searcher.com/find/donna+fugata+tancredi+terre+siciliane+igp+sicilia+italy/2016>).

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~ Tancredi is a serious wine and a blend of Nero d'Avola, Tannat and Cabernet ~

Donnafugata is also practicing organically and striving for sustainability throughout their vineyard holdings. To read more about these vast initiatives, please see here: [Sustainable Farming \(https://www.donnafugata.it/en/sustainability/\)](https://www.donnafugata.it/en/sustainability/).

Salute!

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John Fodera has been writing about Italian wines since 2010.

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John Fodera

John Fodera has been writing about Italian wines since 2010.

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