

## PostcardZ from Victoria

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Posted on [December 14, 2016](#) by [PostcardZ from Victoria](#)

#### 🍷 **Donnafugata Winery: Tradition and Inspiration** **Take Flight in Sicily**

***When I knew I was going to be in Sicily in October***, I wanted to have at least one formal wine tasting experience. I immediately reached out to **Donnafugata** located in Marsala on Sicily's western coastline.

***After contacting them and making arrangements***, my friend, Margie, and I looked forward to our personal tour and tasting. Welcomed warmly, our visit became much more – it became an introduction and insight to the place and the people of this land...

🍷 ***We are greeted by Laura and introduced to Chiara who will be our guide for today. We are also fortunate enough to meet Gabriella, the matriarch and inspiration behind Donnafugata...***

#### 🍷 **The Family and the Legacy**

##### ***Inspiration from a "woman in flight"***

**Donnafugata is definitely a family affair.** The Rallo family has been associated with this place since 1851. In 1983, fourth generation Giacomo Rallo with his wife Gabriella, created **Donnafugata** and a new direction and style of Sicilian wines.



**After a visit to Napa, California,** Giacomo initiated the move away from the production of Marsala to a broader focus on Sicilian varieties. Today, after the untimely passing of Giacomo, the fifth generation carries on this legacy and continues to be intimately involved in all aspects of the winery.

**The family has been and remains** focused and dedicated to their passion for fine Italian wines and viticulture and, in particular Sicilian wines, throughout the world. But, this will become obvious as we begin our tour...

**We are introduced to Donnafugata's rich history and, of course, to the meaning of "Donnafugata".** No, it is not the family name! It translates into "**donna in fuga**" or "**woman in flight**". It is inspired by the adventures of a character, a queen, in *Il Gattopardo* (*The Leopard*) by Tomasi di Lampedusa, who takes flight and finds refuge where the company vineyards are today.

**But, you have to understand that everything at Donnafugata** is rich with meaning and a symbiotic relationship between the land, the people, the culture, art, the vines, and, of course, passion – and is bottled in their exquisite wines.

## 🍷 The Land and Wineries

**"A deep love of its land has always been at the core of Donnafugata."**

**As Italy's largest region and the largest island** in the Mediterranean, Sicily has always been ideal for growing grapes which for many years were sold to the north. Today, however, Sicilian wines are experiencing a new awareness and appreciation...

**We are visiting the production facility in Marsala built in 1851.** With its spacious enclosed courtyard, layout is typical of a Mediterranean "*baglio*". It is here that wine produced at *Contessa Entellina* and *Pantelleria* is brought for aging and bottling.



### ***The other Donnafugata locations are:***

**Wine estate Contessa Entellina** with 270 hectares (667 acres). Divided into 10 districts, it produces 17 varieties of grapes, primarily pinot noir and chardonnay.



**The island of Pantelleria**, is closer to North Africa and has 68 hectares (168 acres) and is split into 14 districts. Here, in this dry windy place, the heroic vineyards\* are harvested by hand from low bush vines.

Varietals: The vine variety is Zibibbo (Moscato d'Alessandria)

(\*Heroic vineyards = wind, no water, all harvested by hand)



**Only this year (2016) Donnafugata announced** that they are now cultivating wines under the *Etna*, *Cerasuolo* and *Frappato di Vittoria* denominations in eastern Sicily.

**D.O.C. (Controlled Designation of Origin) designations** applicable to **Donnafugata** wines are: *Sicilia DOC*, *Contessa Entellina DOC*, *Pantelleria DOC*, *Etna DOC*, *Frappato di Vittoria DOC* and *Cerasuolo di Vittoria DOCG*.

### **The Commitment**

***“From the vine to the bottle, there is no quality without sustainability.”***

***Donnafugata’s commitment to the environment*** is more than a philosophy; it is a 100% dedication to providing the highest quality wines employing only sustainable and renewable techniques and clean energy practices.

***Wines are aged and bottled here in Marsala.*** The size of their cellars is impressive as is the fact that they are absolutely spotless. Using stainless steel tanks for freshness and cement to add complexity to their whites (only one of their whites is aged in barrels) and French oak to age their reds, ***Donnafugata’s*** annual production is 25 million bottles shipped to 60 countries.





 **Art in and on a Bottle**

*“Donnafugata distinguishes itself by the names chosen for its wines and the artistic designs, each of which, in addition to being an homage to art and literature, interpret the personality of the wine.”*

*It's impossible not to notice the distinctive and unique labels on every bottle of **Donnafugata** wine. And every label has a story, a story that relates to the wine and to this place.*




**The inspired imagination and vision of Gabriella** coupled with the artistic talent of *Stefano Vitale* has resulted in creative and enchanting designs. Each label has a story, is a *delightful story*, influenced by a legend, a character or a fable originating in artistic and literary references.



### Tasting Notes

***“Every bottle of Donnafugata is a tale filled with emotion, a sensory fabric perceived in the mouth that remains in the heart and mind.”***

**We are introduced to five(5) of Donnafugata’s wines from their six collections.**

 ***Depending on your mood, cuisine and who you are with, there is bound to be a selection to please every palate:***

#### **“Fresh and Fruity”**

*Sur Sur (2015)*

*Grillo*

Reminiscent of running through meadows on a summer day, Sur Sur is light and fresh with subtle fruity/grapefruit notes.

#### **“Versatile, Rich in Character”**

*Lighea (2015)*

*Zibibbo-Muscat of Alexandria*

From the island of Pantelleria, hence the mermaid on the label, it has a delicious fruity nose but is pleasingly dry on the palate.

#### *Vigna di Gabriella*

*Primarily Ansonica blended with others*

*Sicilia Doc*

An abandoned wine encouraged back by Gabriella, it has a distinctly pleasing and fresh minerality. Aging in cement and oak gives it its rich color and elegant notes.

#### **“Iconic Wines”**

*Mille a una Notte (2011)*

*Nero d’Avola, Petite Verdot, Syrah and other grapes*

*Sicilia IGP*

#### *Ben Rye (2014)*

*Passito di Pantelleria*

*Zibibbo-Muscat of Alexandria*

The perfect finish with its luscious apricot/fig bouquet and fresh (not cloying) sweetness.

#### **“Mediterranean Elegance”**

**🍷 Grazie to our gracious hosts—Laura and Giovanni for making it possible and especially to our exceptional guide, Chiara, for our private tour and tasting.**

Grazie (I to r) Laura, Chiara, me and Giovanni!

**We loved this very special introduction into the wines of Sicily and, particularly, to those of *Donnafugata*.**



**🍷 Visit Donnafugata's websites for more information:**

[www.donnafugata.it](http://www.donnafugata.it)

[visit.donnafugata.it](http://visit.donnafugata.it)

***If you're fortunate enough to visit Sicily, a visit to Donnafugata is a must. Otherwise look for their wines in your local wine shop...***

*Label graphics and quotes courtesy of Donnafugata.*

**🍷 Coming SOON! Italian Wine Trails & Tales heads north for some bubbly with Orna!**

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