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08
MAY
2017

Donnafugata Sur Sur 2016 Grillo

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No, it's not a Pinot Grigio. Grillo is a white wine grape indigenous to the Sicilian wine region. Though its exact evolution is unknown, it's believed to be the cross-bred child of Catarratto (one of the most widely planted white wine grapes in Sicily) and Zibibbo (a Muscat grape variety originating from Alexandria, Sicily). The grape's claim to fame is its ability to withstand warm temperatures and drought — perfect for the hot-blooded climate known to the Sicilian terrain (and people). Grillo is sturdy enough to hang on the vine well past a traditional harvest time, making it the perfect candidate for concentrated, high-alcoholic dessert-style wines (most classically, Marsala).

Interesting factoid: the Italian word *grillo* literally translates to the English word “cricket.” And that is where the Donfugata Sur Sur 2016 Grillo begins...



About the Wine: The name sur sur is also a nod to the cricket, from the classical Arabic language (which was once also spoken in Sicily), which refers to the chirping noise the insect makes. Thus “the voice of spring,” is what is depicted on the Donnafugata Grillo label both in words and imagery. The painting shows Gabriella (founder of Donnafugata) running barefoot through a springtime scene, surrounded by the “singing of crickets that sounds sweet to her ears, like a thousand “SurSur... “.

The Donnafugata Sur Sur 2016 Grillo is made from 100% Grillo grapes harvested from the Contessa Entellina Estate Vineyard in Sicilia DOC Grillo

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[@STACYLOUBRISCOE](#)

Freelance #food and #wine writer and editor. Wine Editor and Content Producer for SF Chronicle

(located in the South-Western part of Sicily). The wine was fermented in 100% stainless steel and aged for 2 months before bottling, where it aged a bit further (for 3 months) before release.

12.73% ABV

Flavor Profile: The bottle opens and there's immediate scents of green grass speckled with white flowers and just the faintest background of a rubber or plastic. On the pour, the Donnafugata Sur Sur Grillo is near clear but settles in a fun Crayola-peach in the glass — with just the slightest tint of pink blush. The initial aroma is an undeniable peach fruit along with bits of salted buttered caramel, honey, honey-dew melon, and just the thinnest line of acidity. At the top of the glass there's a perfume-like quality that once again brings to mind those tiny white field flowers.

The initial textures of the Donnafugata Grillo are soft and smooth while the flavor is almost like eating a flower whole: the aromas of its petals, the stink of the stamen's pollen, and the vegetative nature of stem and leaves. The bouquet in the mouth is beautiful and savory.

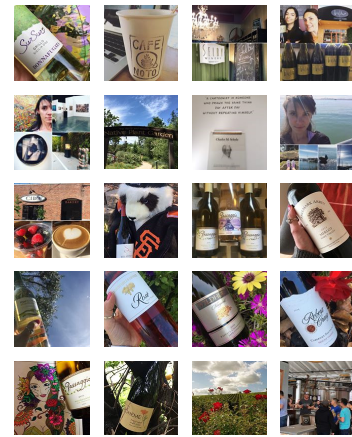
Though the initial textures may have been soft and round, as the taste progresses there's a bit of grittiness to it — a rusticity — that calls to mind that pollen dust. When you feel this, close your lips and breathe through the nose and there's a background essence of soft, raw nuts (like almond or cashew). The finish is lingering — not so much with flavor but, again, with texture: here is where the acidity shines through, bursts through, and covers the tongue, the teeth, the gums.

For my first Grillo, my conclusion is this — this white wine is all about the floral bouquet and the textures. Though there are touches of fruit here and there (certainly on the initial smell and taste), it is not nearly as fruit forward as a typical, American Pinot Grigio. Thus, there's no mistaking it for either "sweet" or "diluted." A bit more body and a bit more substance — I can see why this grape is so popular in Sicilian culture.

One more note: While many of us US drinkers may prefer our white wines Champagne-cold, serve the Sicilian Grillo as you would a Chardonnay (no less than 50 degrees Fahrenheit). Otherwise you run the risk of missing out on this textural journey.

Food Pairing: I paired my Donnafugata Sur Sur 2016 Grillo with an Italian salad (tomatoes, herbs, mozzarella) and garlic cheese bread. Definitely do choose simple ingredients to let the nuances of the Grillo stand out. I would highly recommend this wine with cheese or a cheese-oriented dish, as the fats in the cheese bring forward the fruitier aromatics as well as give a sense of effervescence to the tongue as it cuts through that fat.

More Info: I received a sample of Donnafugata Sur Sur 2016 Grillo as a sample for review. (Cheers Dave and #WiningHourChat!) Retail Price: Unknown. I was unable to find if and where Donnafugata wines are available to ship to the US. Which, I must say, is unfortunate because they have a full library of native Sicilian varietals I'd love to try. For more information, please visit the [Donnafugata website](#).



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2 comments on "Donnafugata Sur Sur 2016 Grillo"



Misty says:
May 8, 2017 at 10:38 am

I love your descriptions! Made me think of happy, flowery Springtime! I've never tried Grillo, so now I'll have to. Cheers!

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Dave Razzari says:
May 8, 2017 at 11:13 am

Excellent review Stacy. I had no idea what it was until reading this. A perfect spring wine it sounds to me. Happy you enjoyed it.

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