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29 Gennaio 2016

<http://www.erobertparker.com/members/winedata/articles/article1215.asp>

## Italy: A Vertical of Donnafugata's Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé (1989 - 2013) di Monica Larner

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*Along with its dessert wines, Pantelleria is known for its caper production. Island foods incorporate lots of oregano and capers. A few of the specialties include fried rice balls, insalata pantesca (with potato, tomato, capers, green olives, onions and oregano), bell peppers stuffed with capers, cheese and bread and little pizzas with more olives and capers.*

I confess to be supremely smitten by Sicily. Among the one thousand and one reasons to fall in love with this central Mediterranean paradise is Donnafugata's Ben Ryé dessert wine. Made with Zibibbo (or Moscato di Alessandria) grapes on the 83-square kilometer island of Pantelleria, Ben Ryé is Sicily's answer to Sauternes. But unlike the celebrated French botrytized dessert wine, Passito di Pantelleria is explosive in its intensity and unhinged in its sweet abundance. The parallels run similar to a subdued and elegant *crème brûlée* against an over the top *cassata Siciliana* with candied fruit, almond marzipan and creamy ricotta. Ben Ryé is delivered with technicolor brilliance and psychedelic potency.



*The elephant-shaped l'Arco dell'Elefante rock formation is one of the island's main natural attractions.*

In truth, Ben Ryé does not aspire to be Sauternes. Its identity is deeply linked to the volcanic island of Pantelleria not far from the Sicilian town of Trapani in the southwestern part of the island, and its winemaking methodologies reflect some of the Marsala philosophy. The Rallo family that owns Donnafugata comes from a Marsala heritage. The growing conditions here are extreme and the wine is the result of rugged hardship and adverse conditions. It reflects the uniqueness of its territory and proves to be a product that can be repeated nowhere else.



*Strong winds that lift off the sea are a big challenge to island viticulture. As a result, alberello vines (head trained bush vines) are trained at ground level and are protected by wind breaks.*

*Due to strong winds, even the olive trees are hunched over near ground level.*

Grapes are harvested from 11 single vineyards across the tiny island. They include Khamma, Mulini, Mueggen, Serraglia, Gibbiuna, Barone, Martingana, Bukkuram, Favartotta, Punta, Karace, Begeber and Monastero. These vineyard sites range in altitude from 20 to 400 meters above sea level. Soil profiles are all volcanic and highly rich in minerals with



sand and crushed lava stone. The vineyard sites include steep, terraced slopes that extend to the sea. Almost all of the grapes are planted as head-pruned vines called *alberello pantesco* in local dialect. This low bush helps to protect the fruit from the high winds that lift off the sea. These vines are so unique, they have been included on the UNESCO World Heritage List for agricultural practices and cultural heritage. Owner Antonio Rallo says, "Vineyards close to the sea deliver power and vineyard sites in the higher altitudes deliver finesse." With 11 sites to choose from, Donnafugata is awarded enormous flexibility in terms of harvest times, ripeness and blending components.



Antonio Rallo of Donnafugata explains the different clones of Zibibbo (the grape used to make Passito di Pantelleria) in his experimental vineyards.

Once fruit is harvested, a part of the grapes are put aside for *appassimento* (or air-drying) in covered greenhouses. These open structures protect the clusters from extreme weather, but also allow enough wind to guarantee the delicate drying process. In the cellar, the dried grapes are fermented and added to fresh must. Usually the combination is 100 liters of fresh must against 70 kilograms of dried grapes. This is an important detail because Donnafugata can select the level of fresh fruit against dried fruit according to the vintage conditions. This combined process also means that the wine offers a unique level of freshness and acidity to counter the sweetness and the creamy consistency that distinguishes it. The resulting blend between fresh and dried fruit is aged in stainless steel for approximately seven months, with an additional 12 months in bottle. The house style has seen important tweaks, especially with regards to residual sugar that has risen from 118 grams per liter in the first 1989 vintage to 200 grams per liter in 2012. Despite the increase in sweetness, the wine has seen a similar rise in acidity that serves to keep the balance intact.



*The stunning beauty of Pantelleria's dry wall terracing earned UNESCO World Heritage status for the alberello vines of Pantelleria in 2013.*

This represents the most complete vertical of Ben Ryé ever performed. However, a few vintages are missing. The wine was not produced in 1991 because heavy rains destroyed the fruit during the drying process. Relatively new to the *passito* game, the Rallo family had not finished building the plastic covering used to protect the fruit during *appassimento* that year. I was not able to taste 1993 and 1994 because no bottles remain in their cellar.



Readers should also enjoy the video I shot on Pantelleria that you can see here:  
<https://www.erobertparker.com/members/winedata/articles/article1215.asp>



2013 Donnafugata Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé

■ Add to Print List

**RATING:** 93 points

**PRODUCER:** Donnafugata 

**FROM:** Italy Passito di Pantelleria, Sicily, Italy

**VARIETY:** Zibibbo

**DRINK:** 2016 - 2030

**ESTIMATED COST:** Not Found

**SOURCE:** eRobertParker.com, #Interim - January 2016 Jan 2016

So youthful and bright, the 2013 Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé (750-milliliter) is all about those primary aromas. An enormously fragrant grape like Zibibbo has plenty of those to go around. Fresh fruit tones of nectarine and floral tones of jasmine and honeysuckle appear upfront. Passito perfumes of candied apricot, peach cobbler, zesty orange peel, Moroccan preserved lemon and honey ooze forth from the bouquet in a second wave of aromatic intensity. The mouthfeel is sticky, rich and creamy in texture. Ben Ryé delivers a big dose of Sicilian sweetness on the close.

Importer(s):

Folio Fine Wine Partners, 550 Gateway Dr, Napa, CA 94558, (707) 256-2700, [www.foliowine.com](http://www.foliowine.com)

-Monica Lamer

2012 Donnafugata Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé

■ Add to Print List

**RATING:** 94 points

**PRODUCER:** Donnafugata 

**FROM:** Italy Passito di Pantelleria, Sicily, Italy

**VARIETY:** Zibibbo

**DRINK:** 2017 - 2035

**ESTIMATED COST:** Not Found

**SOURCE:** eRobertParker.com, #Interim - January 2016 Jan 2016

The 2012 Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé is the result of a dry vintage and healthy concentration of sugars. Ben Ryé's taste profile changes enormously when you get to these younger vintages. Passito di Pantelleria is a wine that shows a very distinct jump in evolution just a few years into its aging process. Once it makes it past that first plateau, the wine then embarks on an excruciatingly slow progression that takes decades to complete. In fact, looking back at this retrospective, I can't say that any of the wines felt "old" or flat. Even the inaugural 1989 vintage is beaming with life. I have the same high expectations for this vintage.

Importer(s):

Folio Fine Wine Partners, 550 Gateway Dr, Napa, CA 94558, (707) 256-2700, [www.foliowine.com](http://www.foliowine.com)

-Monica Lamer

2011 Donnafugata Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé

■ Add to Print List

**RATING:** 93 points

**PRODUCER:** Donnafugata 

**FROM:** Italy Passito di Pantelleria, Sicily, Italy

**VARIETY:** Zibibbo

**DRINK:** 2017 - 2030

**ESTIMATED COST:** Not Found

Born from a challenging vintage that saw too much rainfall in parts of Sicily and not enough in others, the 2011 Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé manages to keep pace with some of the best vintages that precede it. My feeling is that this is a slightly more technical wine that shows the expertise of Donnafugata's winemaking team. By 2011, they had grown accustomed to the new winery and the newer vineyard plantings. This wine shows a bright amber color and classic passito aromas of candied fruit, honey and maple syrup.

2010 Donnafugata Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé

■ Add to Print List

**RATING:** 96 points

**PRODUCER:** Donnafugata 

**FROM:** Italy Passito di Pantelleria, Sicily, Italy

**VARIETY:** Zibibbo

**DRINK:** 2017 - 2035

**ESTIMATED COST:** Not Found

**SOURCE:** eRobertParker.com,  
#Interim - January  
2016  
Jan 2016

I am smitten by the 2010 Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé and I look forward to tasting the wine again as it continues its evolution. This vintage presents a very graceful and feminine side to Ben Ryé with dried rose and almond blossom. As those perfumes lift, the wine reveals lasting tones of candied fruit, honey and brown sugar. There's a noticeable contribution in the form of baking spice, cinnamon and nutmeg. This vintage produced lower yields than average, but the wine boasts a tonic and sharp sense of acidity as a result.

Importer(s):

Folio Fine Wine Partners, 550 Gateway Dr, Napa, CA 94558, (707) 256-2700, [www.foliowine.com](http://www.foliowine.com)

-Monica Lamer

2009 Donnafugata Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé

■ Add to Print List

**RATING:** 94 points

**PRODUCER:** Donnafugata 

**FROM:** Italy Passito di Pantelleria, Sicily, Italy

**VARIETY:** Zibibbo

**DRINK:** 2017 - 2035

**ESTIMATED COST:** Not Found

**SOURCE:** eRobertParker.com,  
#Interim - January  
2016  
Jan 2016

The 2009 Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé is slightly penalized by the fact it follows the extraordinary 2008 vintage. On first impact, the wine appears one notch down the intensity ladder and its aromas are not as vibrant or buoyant. Having said that, this vintage certainly holds its own just as soon as it takes shape in the glass. The bouquet offers steady aromas of caramel, Graham cracker and toasted almond. Those are the aromas you find on one side of the spectrum. The other side is redolent of citrus, white peach, candied orange peel and white mineral. On a more curious note, I also detected a hint of cured meat or roasted chestnut.

Importer(s):

Folio Fine Wine Partners, 550 Gateway Dr, Napa, CA 94558, (707) 256-2700, [www.foliowine.com](http://www.foliowine.com)

-Monica Lamer

2008 Donnafugata Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé

■ Add to Print List

**RATING:** 97 points

**PRODUCER:** Donnafugata 

**FROM:** Italy Passito di Pantelleria, Sicily, Italy

**VARIETY:** Zibibbo

**DRINK:** 2016 - 2048

**ESTIMATED COST:** Not Found





**SOURCE:** eRobertParker.com,  
#Interim - January  
2016  
Jan 2016

Here is another passito that rises like a phoenix from the ashes. The masterful 2008 Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé is a work of art and is – with some distance – the wine I mostly vividly remember from this tasting. This expression is uniquely curvaceous and opulent, although it never feels heavy or flat. The bouquet opens to extraordinary aromatic definition and gold rays of brilliant luminosity. Floral notes are mixed with apricot, stone fruit, toasted pine nut and wild sage. This vintage is the result of some of the most stringent fruit selection seen so far in the Ben Ryé line. The estate's 11 vineyard sites were harvested separately to create the perfect blend of site-specific fruit. This vintage also represents the first time the wine exceeds 200 grams per liter in residual sugar. The fresh acidity creates a perfect balance and you don't necessarily taste that extra sweetness. This wine is near indestructible and should age for decades more to come.

Importer(s):

Folio Fine Wine Partners, 550 Gateway Dr, Napa, CA 94558, (707) 256-2700, [www.foliowine.com](http://www.foliowine.com)

-Monica Lamer

2007 Donnafugata Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé	Add to Print List
<p><b>RATING:</b> 93 points</p> <p><b>PRODUCER:</b> Donnafugata </p> <p><b>FROM:</b> Italy Passito di Pantelleria, Sicily, Italy</p> <p><b>VARIETY:</b> Zibibbo</p> <p><b>DRINK:</b> 2016 - 2038</p> <p><b>ESTIMATED COST:</b> Not Found</p> <p><b>SOURCE:</b> eRobertParker.com, #Interim - January 2016 Jan 2016</p>	<p>The 2007 Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé comes from a very interesting growing cycle that is highly characterized by dry Sirocco winds from Africa. Those winds took the appassimento process into super drive and you can taste the extra sugar and cloying richness of the wine as a result. The bouquet reveals candied fruit, pressed flowers, brown sugar, honey, toasted almond and caramel. This is a complete and creamy wine with a dense and lasting sense of syrupy sweetness.</p> <p>Importer(s):</p> <p>Folio Fine Wine Partners, 550 Gateway Dr, Napa, CA 94558, (707) 256-2700, <a href="http://www.foliowine.com">www.foliowine.com</a></p> <p>-Monica Lamer</p>
2006 Donnafugata Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé	Add to Print List
<p><b>RATING:</b> 95+ points</p> <p><b>PRODUCER:</b> Donnafugata </p> <p><b>FROM:</b> Italy Passito di Pantelleria, Sicily, Italy</p> <p><b>VARIETY:</b> Zibibbo</p> <p><b>DRINK:</b> 2016 - 2045</p> <p><b>ESTIMATED COST:</b> Not Found</p> <p><b>SOURCE:</b> eRobertParker.com, #Interim - January 2016 Jan 2016</p>	<p>Lots of new changes characterize this vintage. Most importantly, Donnafugata inaugurated a new winery in the Khamma area of Pantelleria. The family's vineyard holdings had blossomed to 11 different vineyard sites, allowing for micro vinifications and more control on the wine's style and quality. With the 2006 Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé, the Punta Karace, Arco dell'Elefante and Martingana vineyards start to emerge as the top growing sites. This year also saw steep diurnal temperature shifts that contribute to the wine's complexity and acidity. The 2006 vintage also starts to feel young (compared to the previous wines in this vertical) and promises a long drinking window. The wine is fleshed out and generous.</p> <p>Importer(s):</p> <p>Folio Fine Wine Partners, 550 Gateway Dr, Napa, CA 94558, (707) 256-2700, <a href="http://www.foliowine.com">www.foliowine.com</a></p> <p>-Monica Lamer</p>
2005 Donnafugata Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé	Add to Print List
<p><b>RATING:</b> 95 points</p> <p><b>PRODUCER:</b> Donnafugata </p> <p><b>FROM:</b> Italy Passito di Pantelleria, Sicily, Italy</p> <p><b>VARIETY:</b> Zibibbo</p> <p><b>DRINK:</b> 2016 - 2038</p> <p><b>ESTIMATED COST:</b> Not Found</p> <p><b>SOURCE:</b> eRobertParker.com, #Interim - January 2016 Jan 2016</p>	<p>The 2005 Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé is a wine I know well. Although my professional reviews of this Sicilian dessert wine started with 2004, I had the opportunity to taste 2005 many times in the years to follow. When I first tasted the wine I gave it 95 points and that's exactly what I think the wine deserves today. In terms of the 2004 vintage, on the other hand, my score has diminished with time because that vintage has been less consistent in its aging evolution. This vintage remains steady and intact. It boasts a bright gold and amber color, and ripe aromatic intensity with dried peach and honey. The wine is also very successful in terms of mouthfeel where it shows a long and silky texture.</p> <p>Importer(s):</p> <p>Folio Fine Wine Partners, 550 Gateway Dr, Napa, CA 94558, (707) 256-2700, <a href="http://www.foliowine.com">www.foliowine.com</a></p> <p>-Monica Lamer</p>
2004 Donnafugata Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé	Add to Print List
<p><b>RATING:</b> 89 points</p> <p><b>PRODUCER:</b> Donnafugata </p> <p><b>FROM:</b> Italy Passito di Pantelleria, Sicily, Italy</p> <p><b>VARIETY:</b> Zibibbo</p>	<p>The 2004 Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé doesn't live up to the high standards set with the three vintages that proceed it. This passito opens to a dark amber hue that shows more brown than most of the other wines presented at this tasting. This edition reveals slight signs of oxidation or aldehydes with soapy lavender, dried cherry and apple skin. Ultimately, this vintage doesn't achieve the same level of balance</p>

2003 Donnafugata Passito di Pantelleria Ben  
Ryé

■ Add to Print List

**RATING:** 92 points

**PRODUCER:** Donnafugata 

**FROM:** Italy Passito di  
Pantelleria, Sicily,  
Italy

**VARIETY:** Zibibbo

**DRINK:** 2016 - 2032

**ESTIMATED COST:** Not Found

**SOURCE:** eRobertParker.com,  
#Interim - January  
2016  
Jan 2016

The 2003 vintage was also very different on Pantelleria compared to Europe. This vintage brought record heat on the mainland but the tiny Mediterranean island saw enough rainfall to replenish water reserves after three years of drought. Flowering started early and Zibibbo vines enjoyed a long growing season. In fact, the quality here is nothing to sneeze at. Ultimately, this dessert wine is slightly demure, shy and closed. As it takes on more air in the glass, the wine begins to show delicate balsam notes and cola with candied fruit and crushed oyster shell. The finish shows piquant spice with nutmeg and dried ginger that adds to the wine's elegant persistence.

Importer(s):

Folio Fine Wine Partners, 550 Gateway Dr, Napa, CA 94558, (707) 256-2700, [www.foliowine.com](http://www.foliowine.com)

-Monica Lamer

2002 Donnafugata Passito di Pantelleria Ben  
Ryé

■ Add to Print List

**RATING:** 93 points

**PRODUCER:** Donnafugata 

**FROM:** Italy Passito di  
Pantelleria, Sicily,  
Italy

**VARIETY:** Zibibbo

**DRINK:** 2016 - 2035

**ESTIMATED COST:** Not Found

**SOURCE:** eRobertParker.com,  
#Interim - January  
2016  
Jan 2016

The 2002 vintage is remembered as a difficult one across Europe. Thanks to strong sea breezes, this vintage was cooler than average on Pantelleria but it was ultimately spared the heavily rains and humid conditions that caused so much damage on the mainland. The Rallo family describes this as a very dry year. In fact, the 2002 Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé shows another jump up in sweetness to 170 grams per liter of residual sugar. The bouquet is slightly more masculine in personality with tar, resin and Teriyaki sauce behind the dried fruit and honey. Those pungent balsamic aromas of sage and wild rosemary are also very attractive. The quality of sweetness is simplistic and shows less overall dimension, but the wine excels on all other fronts.

Importer(s):

Folio Fine Wine Partners, 550 Gateway Dr, Napa, CA 94558, (707) 256-2700, [www.foliowine.com](http://www.foliowine.com)

-Monica Lamer

2001 Donnafugata Passito di Pantelleria Ben  
Ryé

■ Add to Print List

**RATING:** 98 points

**PRODUCER:** Donnafugata 

**FROM:** Italy Passito di  
Pantelleria, Sicily,  
Italy

**VARIETY:** Zibibbo

**DRINK:** 2016 - 2045

**ESTIMATED COST:** Not Found

**SOURCE:** eRobertParker.com,  
#Interim - January  
2016  
Jan 2016

Here comes the good stuff. The 2001 Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé is a knockout wine that represents the pinnacle of quality in a passito dessert wine. This is a wine of profound beauty and soaring aspiration. In my mind, the wine is bigger than the tiny Mediterranean island of its birthplace. This outstanding vintage makes a lasting statement on the potential of air-dried Zibibbo. It embodies so much beauty and complexity starting with its brilliant amber hue and its delicate complexity. The bouquet shows peach cobbler, honey-roasted almond, candied orange zest and Marsala-like caramel. The wine is at a perfect moment in its drinking window and could pair with foie gras or other gastronomic delicacies. Soapy floral tones appear at the back as do dusty mineral notes. This wine really has it all, including crisp acidity that is perfectly matched to the wine's supple and creamy texture. This is a Sicilian



Wines Tasting History

Sauternes.

Importer(s):

Folio Fine Wine Partners, 550 Gateway Dr, Napa, CA 94558, (707) 256-2700, [www.foliowine.com](http://www.foliowine.com)

-Monica Lamer

2000 Donnafugata Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé

 Add to Print List

**RATING:** 88 points

**PRODUCER:** Donnafugata 

**FROM:** Italy Passito di Pantelleria, Sicily, Italy

**VARIETY:** Zibibbo

**DRINK:** 2016 - 2025

**ESTIMATED COST:** Not Found

**SOURCE:** eRobertParker.com, #Interim - January 2016  
Jan 2016

From a very hot and dry year, the 2000 Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé offers a less convincing presentation. The bouquet lacks the purity and focus that this wine so easily delivers in slightly cooler, wind-driven vintages. The nose delivers a quick succession of dried apricot, almond marzipan, brown sugar and caramel characteristics. You get loads of dried fruit, with sun-shriveled apricots in center stage. Compared to the others in this vertical, the vintage is one-dimensional in personality and heavy in texture. It offers an obvious and straightforward style. It is also slightly shorter in persistence.

Importer(s):

Folio Fine Wine Partners, 550 Gateway Dr, Napa, CA 94558, (707) 256-2700, [www.foliowine.com](http://www.foliowine.com)

-Monica Lamer

1999 Donnafugata Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé

 Add to Print List

**RATING:** 89 points

**PRODUCER:** Donnafugata 

**FROM:** Italy Passito di Pantelleria, Sicily, Italy

**VARIETY:** Zibibbo

**DRINK:** 2016 - 2025

**ESTIMATED COST:** Not Found

**SOURCE:** eRobertParker.com, #Interim - January 2016  
Jan 2016

The 1999 Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé is heavy, syrupy and slightly less nuanced. The wine doesn't show the same level of depth or focus as some of the others in this historic vertical. The aromatic intensity is also less generous and the wine shows easy layers of dried apricot, pineapple chips, dried herb and dusty mineral. The bouquet is far from neutral, but it doesn't deliver the high-pitched potency you normally get with the deeply aromatic Zibibbo grape. The mouthfeel is creamy and rich with thick consistency. There is less overall dimension.

Importer(s):

Folio Fine Wine Partners, 550 Gateway Dr, Napa, CA 94558, (707) 256-2700, [www.foliowine.com](http://www.foliowine.com)

-Monica Lamer

1998 Donnafugata Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé

 Add to Print List

**RATING:** 91 points

**PRODUCER:** Donnafugata 

**FROM:** Italy Passito di Pantelleria, Sicily, Italy

**VARIETY:** Zibibbo

**DRINK:** 2016 - 2028

**ESTIMATED COST:** Not Found

**SOURCE:** eRobertParker.com, #Interim - January 2016  
Jan 2016

The 1998 Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé represents another slight departure from the house style set by this celebrated dessert wine over the years. According to the estate's winemaking notes, 1998 is the first of a series of long, dry and very hot vintages on the tiny wind-swept island of Pantelleria. In fact, the acidity is not as zesty or prominent compared to other editions. The wine opens to a lighter golden and amber color with a slightly leaner consistency. It's appearance is bright with crystalline luminosity. The bouquet is very floral with almost soapy-like tones of lavender and dried rose potpourri. This vintage is highly characterized by floral aromas.

Importer(s):

Folio Fine Wine Partners, 550 Gateway Dr, Napa, CA 94558, (707) 256-2700, [www.foliowine.com](http://www.foliowine.com)

-Monica Lamer

1997 Donnafugata Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé







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**RATING:** 93 points

**PRODUCER:** Donnafugata 

This was a warm vintage with high summer temperatures followed by much cooler weather prior to harvest. The 1997 Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé

## Wines Tasting History

<p><b>FROM:</b> Italy Passito di Pantelleria, Sicily, Italy</p> <p><b>VARIETY:</b> Zibibbo</p> <p><b>DRINK:</b> 2016 - 2030</p> <p><b>ESTIMATED COST:</b> Not Found</p> <p><b>SOURCE:</b> eRobertParker.com, #Interim - January 2016 Jan 2016</p>	<p>represents one of the first minor stylistic tweaks executed on this famous Sicilian desert wine over its long production history. Specifically, the residual sugar has been raised up to 150 grams per liter from 115 grams per liter in the 1990 vintage. This wine also shows a more evident acidic vein that has been achieved to specifically break apart that extra softness and sweetness. The bouquet offers aromas of dried prune and raisin that you will recognize in the vintages to follow this one. The wine's inherent complexity also shines through thanks to added tones of brown sugar, smokey dust, dried herb and crushed mineral.</p> <p>Importer(s):</p> <p>Folio Fine Wine Partners, 550 Gateway Dr, Napa, CA 94558, (707) 256-2700, <a href="http://www.foliowine.com">www.foliowine.com</a></p> <p>-Monica Lamer</p>
<p>1996 Donnafugata Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé</p> <p><b>RATING:</b> 94 points</p> <p><b>PRODUCER:</b> Donnafugata </p> <p><b>FROM:</b> Italy Passito di Pantelleria, Sicily, Italy</p> <p><b>VARIETY:</b> Zibibbo</p> <p><b>DRINK:</b> 2016 - 2028</p> <p><b>ESTIMATED COST:</b> Not Found</p> <p><b>SOURCE:</b> eRobertParker.com, #Interim - January 2016 Jan 2016</p>	<p> Add to Print List</p> <p>The 1996 Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé shows a sophisticated and elegant side that is hard to achieve with the Zibibbo grape, which normally tends to be more immediate and intense in its aromatic delivery. This wine offers a surprising level of nuance and subtle background shadings that make it more difficult to read upon initial evaluation. The bouquet is slightly less aromatic on first examination, but it builds momentum with time to offer steady pulses of dried fruit, caramel, balsam herb and licorice. Those ethereal overtones are beautifully paired against the wine's overt sweetness and stickiness. This vintage shows its evolution, but it also proves to be very focused and exquisitely defined.</p> <p>Importer(s):</p> <p>Folio Fine Wine Partners, 550 Gateway Dr, Napa, CA 94558, (707) 256-2700, <a href="http://www.foliowine.com">www.foliowine.com</a></p> <p>-Monica Lamer</p>
<p>1995 Donnafugata Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé</p> <p><b>RATING:</b> 88? points</p> <p><b>PRODUCER:</b> Donnafugata </p> <p><b>FROM:</b> Italy Passito di Pantelleria, Sicily, Italy</p> <p><b>VARIETY:</b> Zibibbo</p> <p><b>DRINK:</b> 2016 - 2024</p> <p><b>ESTIMATED COST:</b> Not Found</p> <p><b>SOURCE:</b> eRobertParker.com, #Interim - January 2016 Jan 2016</p>	<p> Add to Print List</p> <p>The 1995 Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé is, in my view, among the most challenging wines in this flight. I noticed a vaguely aldehydic note of bruised apple skin that was hard to avoid. Beyond those pungent tones are attractive aromas of clove, cardamom, caramel and honey that take a little extra effort to identify. The mouthfeel shows good texture and creaminess, and this vintage is perhaps a bit flatter and fatter than some of the others. But the wine ultimately makes a good impression on the palate, thanks to its richness, consistency and balanced acidity.</p> <p>Importer(s):</p> <p>Folio Fine Wine Partners, 550 Gateway Dr, Napa, CA 94558, (707) 256-2700, <a href="http://www.foliowine.com">www.foliowine.com</a></p> <p>-Monica Lamer</p>
<p>1992 Donnafugata Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé</p> <p><b>RATING:</b> 95+ points</p> <p><b>PRODUCER:</b> Donnafugata </p> <p><b>FROM:</b> Italy Passito di Pantelleria, Sicily, Italy</p> <p><b>VARIETY:</b> Zibibbo</p> <p><b>DRINK:</b> 2016 - 2035</p> <p><b>ESTIMATED COST:</b> Not Found</p>	<p> Add to Print List</p> <p>After this vertical tasting, only two bottles of the 1992 Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé remain in Donnafugata's historic cellars. This wine provided me with a fantastic drinking experience that is impossible to beat. Most interesting is the wine's acidity that first appears very prominent and bright. Within a few moments, however, that freshness blends into the background and retreats to a very comfortable place of balance and harmony. That shifting acidity is a very unique quality. The bouquet is fully loaded with apricot, candied fruit, honey, roasted chestnut and</p>



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## Wines Tasting History

**SOURCE:** eRobertParker.com,  
#Interim - January  
2016  
Jan 2016

powdered nut. As this dessert wine evolves in the glass, it begins to emit pretty tones of balsam herb and dried mint. The wine flaunts its sunny disposition throughout.

Importer(s):

Folio Fine Wine Partners, 550 Gateway Dr, Napa, CA 94558, (707) 256-2700, [www.foliowine.com](http://www.foliowine.com)

-Monica Lamer

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1990 Donnafugata Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé

■ Add to Print List

**RATING:** 89 points

**PRODUCER:** Donnafugata 

**FROM:** Italy Passito di  
Pantelleria, Sicily,  
Italy

**VARIETY:** Zibibbo

**DRINK:** 2016 - 2028

**ESTIMATED COST:** Not Found

**SOURCE:** eRobertParker.com,  
#Interim - January  
2016  
Jan 2016

The 1990 Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé opens to a dark amber color and shows a rich and thick consistency overall. Technically, this vintage has slightly less residual sugar compared to 1989, but you tend to feel it more here. This wine is slightly flatter and heavier in texture. The bouquet is layered and deep with dried fruit, almond cookies, mint and licorice followed by autumnal aromas of earth and wild porcino mushroom. There's even an interesting note that recalls dried meat or bresaola that I did not find in the other wine presented in this vertical.

Importer(s):

Folio Fine Wine Partners, 550 Gateway Dr, Napa, CA 94558, (707) 256-2700, [www.foliowine.com](http://www.foliowine.com)

-Monica Lamer

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1989 Donnafugata Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé

■ Add to Print List

**RATING:** 92 points

**PRODUCER:** Donnafugata 

**FROM:** Italy Passito di  
Pantelleria, Sicily,  
Italy

**VARIETY:** Zibibbo

**DRINK:** 2016 - 2026

**ESTIMATED COST:** Not Found

**SOURCE:** eRobertParker.com,  
#Interim - January  
2016  
Jan 2016

The first vintage produced, the 1989 Passito di Pantelleria Ben Ryé sets a steady course for future vintages to come. This inaugural wine is amazingly true to form and demonstrates that Donnafugata's vision has remained consistent over this past quarter century. Indeed, this was one of my favorite wines presented in this vertical. The bouquet shows evolution with aromas of caramel, chestnut, candied fruit and butterscotch. The color reveals deep amber and browning hues. As it warms in the glass, the wine offers delicate tones of wild mushroom, licorice and crushed oyster shell. The mouthfeel is thick and viscous and the 14.5% alcohol does pop through against the medium sweetness. Fruit was harvested the third week of August from sea-facing vineyards. With time, Donnafugata would opt to source more fruit from vineyards further inland at 800 meters above sea level. The Marsala overtones are evident in terms of both taste and style.

Importer(s):

Folio Fine Wine Partners, 550 Gateway Dr, Napa, CA 94558, (707) 256-2700, [www.foliowine.com](http://www.foliowine.com)

-Monica Lamer