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## Donnafugata Hosts Intimate Dinner And Wine Tasting

by Vinesh Vora | March 6, 2023 | 0 comment



*Tasting the flavors of Sicily, one course at a time*

Last week we had the amazing opportunity to attend a dinner and wine tasting presented by the family-owned winery, Donnafugata. For those unfamiliar, Donnafugata has spanned over the course of 5 generations and is still run within the family to this date. Harvesting grapes from unique territories and vineyards across Sicily, Donnafugata has become a wine brand encapsulates the rich history and flavors of Italy. And with the goal of showcasing all Sicily has to offer, Donnafugata currently produces wines from 461 hectares of vineyards across its Contessa Entellina, Pantelleria, Vittoria and Etna estates with 10 indigenous Sicilian grape varieties in production. And with so many varieties of wine to offer, saying we were excited to try this wine and dinner pairing would be an understatement.

The dinner was hosted in a private room at Ci Siamo in Manhattan. Upon arriving guests were offered a glass of the Donnafugata Dolce & Gabbana Rosa. Even by the first few sips, we knew that this rosé was one of the best on the markets. With other rosés, we found that the level of acidity and sweetness to be a bit too much to enjoy. But with this rosé, we were pleasantly surprised at the care and delicateness the wine had. With a beautiful pale pink color, the D&G Rosa had a medium level of acidity and body to it with notes that highlighted strawberry, jasmine, cream, and peach. What made this rosé even more fascinating was when we learned that Donnafugata has a partnership with the iconic fashion house to create the art and bottle for their wine. The collaboration was born because the two brands have a shared passion and love for their native land of Italy. According to Donnafugata, both brands have a strong commitment to showcasing the excellence of Italy and maintaining their own sense of creative expression which to the inception of this incredible.



As guests sat down, we were able to peek at the menu for tonight's dinner. The meal followed a traditional Italian dinner format where there was an antipasti of bread, salad, and meats, followed by a pasta course, then a hearty meat source, and ending with a lovely dessert.

Up first was the antipasti which consisted of Patti di Salumi, cast iron focaccia, and an insalata di mare. This was all paired with the Sul Vulcano Bianco 2022. We found that this wine pairs perfectly with beginning food pairings such as salads and breads. There is a deep yellow color with notes of yellow apples on the notes followed by hints of herbs. Upon first sip, we were blown away by how fresh and savory this wine is. And it is important to note that this wine has grapes harvested near a volcano so we found clear notes of minerality in the wine as well. The best equivalency we could draw would be if you took the minerality of a Riesling and reduced the sweetness greatly to achieve this delicious wine. The pairing of it with the salad helped cleanse the palate with each sip and accentuated some of the lighter notes of the dishes served for the antipasti course.





The next course was the pasta course which consisted of fusilli in a tomato and buffalo butter sauce as well as a cavatelli alla scoglio. The wine pairing for this course was the Floramundi 2021. As the servers showed guests the wine, we could not help but admire the artwork on the label. For those who are very interested in art, Donnafugata has made a point to have each bottle's artwork represents an Italian motif specific to the region the grapes were harvested in. In the case for this bottle, the woman in the art piece representing a Sicilian puppet who is creating flavors and notes found in the wine. The wine is a beautiful ruby red that has aromas of cherries and other red berries. This wine is smooth and refreshing while holding a balanced acidity to it. The notes of this wine paired perfectly with a pasta in a deep tomato sauce such as the ones being served or can even pair beautifully with a balsamic centered dish.



Our third course was a heartier course of an arctic char, braised brisket, smashed potatoes al forno, and glazed carrots. This was all paired with Mille e una Notte 2018 and 2009. Before getting to the wine, we would be remiss to mention how delicious this course was. The fish was cooked to perfection and was so moist and flakey. The brisket was in a league of itself. Packed with so much savory flavors, the brisket practically melted in your mouth and immersed your palate in sweetness, savoriness, and bursts of umami. As for the two wines, they were delicious on their own and when paired with the meal, accentuates the flavors of the brisket and fish to new heights. These wines elevated the flavors in both meat dishes, for the fish playing with the delicateness and softness of the flavors, and with the brisket packing in more umami flavor and playing with the savoriness. The 2018 vintage had complex aromas of nutmeg, tobacco, and hints of chocolate. On the palate it has bursts of acidity with a medium body. The flavors we got were notes of plum, cherry, raspberry, with hints of mocha and finished with a slight bitter note. The 2009 vintage had aromas of dark red fruit and baking spices. Smoother on the palate, the notes we tasted were spicier than the 2018 having flavors of pepper, tobacco, and cinnamon. This vintage we think pairs better with red meat and darker sauces that allow the spices in the wine to shine.



Last but not least was the dessert course and a chocolate budino was served. The cake was so rich as velvety and had deep notes of bittersweet chocolate with each bite. This dessert is a chocolate lover's wet dream and is something we could go back to Ci Siamo for exclusively. The pairing for this was the Ben Ryé 2020. This wine was incredible and had such a packing of flavor in every sip. Something comparable to what you might think of a port with intensity of flavor without the extreme booziness that comes with it. This wine felt fresh and vibrant, in a league of its own. The color was a bright amber with reddish tones. An intense aroma of fruits like orange zest present itself. And even with the first sip, you immediately know that the notes presented are that of peach, honey, and even orange blossom. The sweetness is intense, but not overbearing which helps it play well with a rich and chocolatey dessert like this one. In some cases with the pairing, this wine helped reinvigorate our palates so that way it wasn't bogged down too much with the chocolate richness in the dessert.





Our lasting thoughts of this event was that we were surprised and incredible satisfied with the tasting. Donnafugata's portfolio is massive and expansive, containing flavors and notes for any occasion. It is clear that this family owned business is one that will last generations to come, especially with the clear passion and desire to make good wine. Every wine presented to us was delicious, paired with a variety of flavors, and from some research, very affordable considering the complexities that each wine had. Do not walk, but run to your nearest store that sells wine and try a Donnafugata wine out for yourself.

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