

Wine review: Donnafugata Ben Ryé 2021

Ottawa, ON

December 2023

Matt's review:

Ben Ryé is a Passito di Pantelleria wine, a storied style of sweet white dessert wine produced on the small volcanic Italian island of Pantelleria which lies in the Strait of Sicily between the coasts of Sicily and Tunisia. Ben Ryé is made from the Muscat of Alexandria grape, locally referred to as Zibibbo which is derived from 'zabīb' in Arabic which means dry grapes or raisins. It's here where the small vines with the volcanic soils and sea influence produce such aromatic and concentrated grapes that are further intensified thanks to the drying process in the hot Mediterranean sun before the raisinated grapes are pressed and fermented into this luscious and refreshing dessert wine that is in a league of its own. For those that haven't tried it yet expect a style of dessert wine like France's Sauternes or Canada's Icewine with well over 100g/L of residual sugar, and with a totally unique Mediterranean dried fruit character. As you may expect, the unique terroir and production techniques of this Passito di Pantelleria wine yields one of the most delicious, complex, and refreshing dessert wines you can imagine.


Ben Ryé 2021 is showing beautifully now and will for decades to come. Enjoy with rich desserts and salty Mediterranean dishes alike. Tasted December 2023. 95+ points. Matt Steeves - <http://www.quercusvino.ca>

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