

The 2024 Harvest at Donnafugata

August 28th, 2024 - This year's growing season has seen little rainfall and periods of above-average seasonal temperatures. The start of the "100 Days of Donnafugata Harvest" began earlier at Contessa Entellina estate, then on Pantelleria Island and Vittoria estate. The harvest will conclude on Etna vineyards.

At **Contessa Entellina**, the 2024 growing season has generally seen low rainfall and above-average temperatures. The favourable rains recorded in the first and second halves of May were beneficial. In June and July, thanks to the water reserves available in the estate's reservoirs, supplementary irrigation was carried out in many of the estate's vineyards, supporting the growth and development of the vines.



A special focus has been placed on agro-meteorological monitoring using a network of sensors to track crucial microclimatic data. By integrating artificial intelligence, this data is analyzed in conjunction with 7-10-day weather forecasts. This integration offers valuable insights for making informed agronomic decisions and optimizing resource use to ensure the best grape quality and health, all within an environmentally sustainable framework.

The climatic conditions have led to an early harvest by about 10 days compared to the usual timing. In the high-altitude vineyards, the harvest of **Chardonnay and Pinot Nero** grapes for sparkling wine production **began on July 22**; harvest continued according to the different ripening times of the other grapes; production is lower in quantity; grape quality is very good.

It should be noted that in August, to date, around **45 mm of rain** has already been recorded which has certainly been beneficial for the vegetative-production cycle of the vineyards yet to be harvested. The harvest should finally be completed by the first ten days of September, approximately 2 weeks earlier than last year.

In **Pantelleria**, where **Zibibbo** grapes are cultivated using the traditional "alberello" head-trained bush practice, which this year celebrates 10 years since its UNESCO recognition, the growing season has been characterized by low rainfall and sometimes higher average temperatures.

The harvest began before mid-August with the collection of grapes from the earliest ripening districts, destined for drying for the production of Ben Ryé wine; the harvest continued according to the different ripening times of the grapes in the 16 districts where Donnafugata vineyards are located. Production is lower while grape health and quality are very good. The harvest will conclude this last week of August.

At the **Vittoria** estate, apart from the colder-than-average early winter months, seasonal temperatures have generally been higher, with limited rainfall recorded to date. This weather trend has resulted in **Frappato and Nero d'Avola** vines budding earlier, in March. Afterward, irrigation was brought forward, helping to maintain a good balance between vine growth and production.

The harvest began earlier, shortly after mid-August. The Nero d'Avola harvest ended on August 26th. The Frappato harvest will take place, and conclude, in the first week of September, approximately two weeks earlier than last year. Thanks to the excellent phenolic ripening of these red grapes, the quality is perfectly in line with the winery's objectives.



At the Donnafugata Estate on the northern slopes of Mount **Etna**, between Randazzo and Castiglione di Sicilia, temperatures have been somewhat higher than average for the region. The winter was mild; spring progressed steadily with rainfall in line with seasonal norms. Overall, vine growth has been favorable, with consistent budburst due to well-timed and adequate rainfall in May and June. The higher temperatures recorded in June and mid-July were managed well by the vineyards, thanks to the ample water reserves in the sandy, deep volcanic soils.

The grapes already reached veraison, are perfectly healthy, and are regularly proceeding towards ripening, also benefiting from 52 mm of rain recorded in August, up to today. The harvest is likely to start in the first ten days of September, approximately one week in advance, with the picking of grapes for rosé wine. This will be followed by the harvest of **Carricante**, and then, in October, the harvesting of **Nerello Mascalese** and **Nerello Cappuccio** for red wines.

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