



DONNAFUGATA

PRESS RELEASE

## *From Vinitaly 2009 to 2010 a year of memorable work and events*

### **April 2009 – Vinitaly, record visitors at the Donnafugata stand**

Another record edition for Donnafugata at Vinitaly. Great commitment from the winery, whose 25-member staff turned out to welcome the big flow of dealers and even larger one of wine buffs. One thousand five hundred bottles were opened and approximately 30,000 samplings served. The Donnafugata stand was also visited by Agriculture Minister Luca Zaia, who announced that José Rallo had been named Cavaliere della Repubblica (an honor bestowed for exceptional work).

### **May 2009 – Open Cellars, the traditional event for wine buffs**

Once again, Donnafugata hosted Cantine Aperte, the traditional Italian Wine Tourism Movement event, in its 16th edition. Wine-lovers followed the special route created to explore the historical family winery in Marsala and visited the splendid new underground barrique cellar. And there was a lot of room for tasting, from Anthilia, the winery's classic white, to the much-acclaimed Ben Ryé Passito de Pantelleria. Plus entertainment for the children, enabling parents to better enjoy this eagerly-awaited event.

### **June 2009 – Linea Verde looks at the Pantellerian Garden**

Linea Verde – the RAI 1 TV show devoted to agricultural and environmental topics – aired a fine feature on the Pantellerian Garden at Khamma that Donnafugata had donated to the FAI (Fondo Ambiente Italiano, the Italian National Trust) in 2008. The circular layout and size of the garden, built of lava-stone drywalls (and one of the few restored exemplars that can be visited) guarantee the ideal microclimate for protecting from wind and drought a century-old orange tree, a valuable “vitamin factory”. Self-sufficient from the water-supply standpoint, the Donnafugata Giardino Pantesco is an agronomic system that looks to the future and reminds us of the importance of water, a scarce and precious resource.

### **July 2009 – Italian mayors raise a toast to Ben Ryé**

For the third time Ben Ryé won the Grand Gold Medal at the international “Mayors’ Choice” competition held by the Wine Cities Association. It closed in high style, with the presentation of a bottle of the “Son of the Wind” to the President of the Italian Republic Giorgio Napolitano.

### **August 2009 – Nighttime harvest and Goblets of Stars: a great fete for premium wine**

Floodlights illuminating the La Fuga vineyard: thus the 2009 grape harvest at Donnafugata's Contessa Entellina estate began on August 10, the night of S. Lorenzo. Following tradition, the Chardonnay grapes, the earliest to ripen, were picked at night to keep their aromatic profile from daytime heat. And this year it happily coincided with Calici di Stelle, the Wine Tourism Movement event that drew more than 1,000 Italian and foreign wine-lovers to Donnafugata, delighted to make this lovely occasion a part of their Sicilian vacations.



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### **September 2009 – Pantelleria and heroic viticulture**

The Pantelleria grape harvest was a time to take a good look at heroic viticulture, the kind that gets excellent products from the extreme conditions of growing grapes on mountains or the smaller Italian islands. With the cooperation of Cervim (the Studies and Research Center for Mountain Viticulture) and the Italian Agriculture Ministry, the island of sun and wind was host to spokespersons from some of the most significant heroic viticulture territories: Constantino Charrère (Les Crêtes) for the Aosta Valley, Casimiro Maule (Nino Negri) for the Valtellina, Will Stürz (Kellerei Cantina Tramin 1898) for the Alto Adige, Salco Foti for Mt. Etna, Heidy Bonani for the Cinque Terre. Together with José Rallo (Donnafugata) and Agriculture Minister Luca Zaia they discussed the importance of preserving and promoting these cultivations, for the extremely high quality they achieve, for their typicality and for the landscape protection they guarantee.

### **October 2009 – The grape harvest ends: an excellent year.**

At Contessa Entellina it was a rainy year: from October 1, 2008 to September 30, 2009 rainfall reached 33 inches versus an average of 27 for the past seven years.

In the summer the temperatures were a little higher than seasonal averages but with big differences between day and night (for example, on July 16 the highest was 103°F and the lowest 62°F). Towards the end of July some vines were thinned, but only in the most productive vineyards.

In the 2009 harvest grapes the winery has just recently introduced were picked as well, such as Alicante Bouchet, Tannat and Petit Verdot. These are vines traditional to several countries in the Mediterranean basin, like France, Spain and Italy (the Alicante, in particular, has been in Sicily for more than a century). Donnafugata has been experimenting with them for some time with optimal adaptation ability and therefore they will become part of the blend for some of the winery's reds, creating wines with greater personality and complexity.

The quality of the whites is excellent. For the high-end reds the same outstanding quality was reached on smaller production because the rainfall in the second part of September made it necessary to pick the grapes more selectively.

Pantelleria, too, was a source of satisfaction. The harvest began on August 12 on some of the smaller portions of land and was fully underway from August 17 on, ending on September 19. Good temperature differences between day and night helped to enhance the aromas of the Zibibbo, grown low bush-style on volcanic soil.

### **November 2009 – New DOP and IGP denominations**

To immediately enter into the spirit of the new Common Market Organization for wine, from the 2009 vintage on all Donnafugata wines will carry the DOP (Denomination of Origin) and IGP (Protected Geographical Indication) acronyms, replacing the former DOC and IGT, respectively. The new rules for wine have, in fact, changed the denomination system in European Union countries, to harmonize the system protecting and denominating wines with that of other agricultural food products. For the time being the use of the new denominations is optional but becomes compulsory as of January 20, 2011.



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### **December 2009 – 20 years of Ben Ryé, the Italian sweet wine loved worldwide**

Donnafugata celebrates the 20th harvest on Pantelleria, giving Ben Ryé a new art label. The image portrays the love, dedication and hard work of heroic viticulture on a unique and fascinating island. A charming and engrossing portrait revealing the essence of this wine, loved the world over. From the technical standpoint the “Son of the Wind” is true to itself in the 2008 vintage, too, and shows all the extraordinary complexity reached in recent years. A Ben Ryé that confirms the finest promises, impressive and most elegant. A wine with great longevity, intriguing right from the start.

### **January 2010 – Wine tourism, visitors increasing at Donnafugata sites**

In 2009 there were 9,412 wine tourists who chose to get personally acquainted with Donnafugata, visiting the historical cellars in Marsala and the vineyards and vinification cellars at Contessa Entellina and on Pantelleria. A record-setting number of visitors, up 4.5% from 2008. Donnafugata’s wine tourism project is aimed at both wine-lovers and wine experts, tailoring tours and guided tastings to meet their needs.

### **February 2010 – Wine tourism: the historical Marsala cellars open on Saturdays, too**

To meet the needs of the many wine tourists arriving on the weekend, Donnafugata opens its historical Marsala winery on Saturdays as well. This is a further step in a well-devised hospitality program that the Sicilian company has never stopped developing in recent years to meet the growing demand for knowledge about premium wines.

### **March 2010 – José Rallo wins the Premio Firenze Donna**

José Rallo joins other “talented women” winning the Premio Firenze Donna 2010, dedicated to women outstandingly distinctive in their professions, businesses or commitments to society. This is the motivation for awarding the prestigious prize, given to José Rallo in the beautiful setting of the Cinquecento Room in Palazzo Vecchio: “For being the face and voice of one of Italy’s most prestigious wineries and also the female symbol of Sicily’s innovative territorial growth. And furthermore, successfully combining business commitment with an uncommon musical talent”.

*Marsala: March 30, 2010*

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