

## **2017 harvest at Donnafugata**

**Contessa Entellina, Pantelleria, Vittoria and Etna: generally below average rainfall, early ripening and harvest. A decrease in quantity and peaks of absolute excellence in quality: very healthy and well-ripened grapes reached the winery, that have given rise to wines characterized by aromatic intensity and finesse, softness and elegance.**

**CONTESSA ENTELLINA** – In the 2017 vintage **555 mm of rainfall** was recorded, a slightly lower figure compared to the average\* (661 mm) for this territory. Rainfall was mainly concentrated in autumn and winter and therefore, during the months of June and July, we intervened with emergency irrigation; thus the vineyards were able to complete the vegetation-production cycle in a regular way.



**Temperatures**, particularly between July and August, were higher than seasonal averages and this resulted in the ripening of all the varieties cultivated 1-2 weeks earlier than usual. Despite the maximum temperature peaks, in this period of the summer, the wide **variation** between day and night **temperatures** gave rise to healthy grapes that had reached optimal aromatic and phenolic ripeness.

The **harvest** started at the beginning of August – in the high-altitude vineyards – with the harvesting of the Chardonnay and Pinot Nero grapes destined for the production of the metodo classico sparkling wines. Then harvesting continued in other plots of Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and Viognier; on 10 August the nighttime harvest of the Chardonnay *La Fuga* was completed. The Merlot was harvested from 16 to 18/8, Grillo from 16 to 26/8, Syrah from 17 to 22/8, Grecanico between 20 and 30/8, Nero d'Avola from 23/8 to 2/9. Tannat, Alicante Bouschet and Petit Verdot were harvested between 29/8 and 4/9. The harvest concluded between 6 and 7/9 with the harvesting of the Cabernet Sauvignon and the last plot of Catarratto.

At Contessa Entellina, in **quantitative** terms, a **drop of about 15%** compared to the company's average was recorded. The **quality of the vintage is very positive**: thanks to careful management of the agronomic practices and vinifications, the harvest has given rise to whites with great finesse and aromatic intensity; perfect phenolic ripeness has given rise to reds that express excellent elegance.

**PANTELLERIA** – On the island of the sun and wind **379 mm of rainfall** was recorded, a lower figure compared to the average\* (434 mm). This resulted in the need, in some vineyards, to perform cluster thinning in order to balance the crop load with soil water availability, to favor optimal ripening of grapes.

The **Zibibbo** harvest at Donnafugata traditionally continues for about 4 weeks, in the 14 districts where the company has its vineyards that differ in altitude, exposure, proximity to or distance from the sea; this year, instead, – due to early ripening – the harvest was shorter, starting on 17/8 and concluding on 4 September.

The harvest began in the early districts – in Martingana and Punta Kharace – with the grapes destined for withering, and then gradually continued in Karuschia, Khamma, Bukkuram, Tracino, Bugeber, Favarotta, Gibbiuna, Serraglia, Monastero, Mueggen, Barone, Ghirlanda.

On Pantelleria, in **quantitative** terms, a **drop of about 20%** compared to the company's average of recent vintages, and a slight recovery only compared with 2016 that was definitely a low-yielding harvest. **Absolute satisfaction with the quality** achieved with all the interpretations of Zibibbo: the *dry* one, Lighea, the Moscato Kabir and the Passito Ben Ryé.

(\***VITTORIA/ACATE** – In the 2017 vintage **496 mm of rainfall** was recorded that corresponds to the average figure\* for the territory (495 mm); however, **temperatures** were higher than the average, particularly between July and August. Thanks to the emergency irrigation and careful crop load management, healthy and perfectly ripe grapes were produced.

The climatic trend of the vintage resulted in **ripening about 10 days earlier than usual**; the **Nero d'Avola** harvest began on 30/8 and concluded on 5/9, while that of **Frappato** began on 5/9 and concluded on 7/9. Overall, there was a **drop in production of about 10%**.

The wines of this vintage are characterized by fragrant and ample aromas; to the fruity and flowery that pleasantly predominate the Frappato, we add, in the Cerasuolo, a wealth of spicy nuances that are complemented by refined softness and persistence on the palate.

**ETNA** – In the 2017 vintage, overall, there was **678 mm of rainfall**, less than the average\* (788 mm), recorded on the north side of Etna where Donnafugata has its vineyards in 5 districts, between Randazzo and Passopisciaro. However, it should be noted that, during almost the entire month of January, snow covered the vineyards, slowly releasing a significant supply of water into the ground.

The soils were frequently worked to increase volume, increasing the quantity of air in the soil and thus favoring the activity of the roots of the plants.

Green pruning – carried out between June and July – aimed to define the **vegetation-production balance**. The vegetative cycle finished regularly and gave rise to very healthy grapes.

The high summer temperatures resulted in ripening **about 10 days earlier** than the traditional grape ripening period in this territory: thus the Carricante harvest started on 22/9 and concluded on 25/9; Nerello Mascalese, instead, was harvested between 29 September and 12 October; in particular, in the Montelaguardia district the Nerello Mascalese was harvested between 30/9 and 8/10, and between 7/10 and 8/10 in the Marchesa district. Overall, the harvest saw a **drop in quantity of about 10%** compared to the average.

The 2017 vintage presents a **quality that reaches peaks of excellence**: the wines are characterized by extreme cleanliness, freshness and aromatic intensity; the perfect phenolic ripeness has given rise to very soft, elegant tannins.

(\***VINTAGE**: in Contessa Entellina, Pantelleria and in Vittoria/Acate the period from October 1 to September 30 of the following year is considered; for Etna/Randazzo from November 1 to October 31; **RAINFALL**: average obtained from SIAS, (Sicilian Agrometeorological Service), the average is calculated at Contessa Entellina from the harvest 2003, in Acate and Randazzo from 2007 and on Pantelleria from 2013.)

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