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Donnafugata: The Vibrancy of Sicily in Every Glass

Sicily is a land of light and vibrant colors. These colors are embedded into the people, places, foods, and culture of the island. Donnafugata embodies Sicily through their craftsmanship, hospitality, and use of color. Drinking Donnafugata wine is a Sicilian escape, each sip transports us to the fresh air, tropical climate, and piercing blue waters of the Mediterranean. Come away with me to Donnafugata.

Last fall I had the pleasure of spending a few days with [Donnafugata](#). I was blessed to visit their vineyards of Contessa Entellina and Pantelleria, and their historic cellars in Marsala. While there I met three members of the Rallo family: Gabriella, matriarch, innovator in Sicilian viticulture, and inspiration for the labels; daughter José, head of management and a gifted vocalist; and son Antonio, agronomist and gifted winemaker. While there I tasted many Donnafugata wines and enjoyed warm hospitality from the entire family. Donnafugata hold a special place in my heart.



Gabriella and José Rallo



Antonio Rallo

I was thrilled to receive the email asking me if I wanted samples of some of Donnafugata’s new release wines because after having seen the vineyards, touched the soil, dined at their table, and tasted back vintages, I now have a deeper connection to their wines. However, before visiting I had written several articles about Donnafugata. The experience I had first hand really comes through in their wines. When I speak of vibrancy, it is in the glass. Their web site is an extension of their winery. I encourage you to visit it, take in the colors, words, and images.



Contessa Entellina Vineyards

“To know Sicily one must know Donnafugata.”



Vineyards on Pantelleria



historic cellars of Marsala

Here are the wines I sampled and the meals I paired with them:

Grillo is a refreshing grape indigenous to Sicily. I don't like to compare grapes but for reference if you enjoy Sauvignon Blanc you will love this wine. It is truly summertime in a glass, pairs with a wide variety of food, or perfect to just sip and enjoy.



2016 Donnafugata 'SurSur' Grillo Sicilia DOC Sicily Italy (\$20): pale lemon; medium aromas of white stone fruit, tropical fruit, citrus zest, white floral notes, fresh cut grass; lively on the palate with loads of lime zest and grassy notes, pronounced racy acidity, light and refreshing with a mouth-coating, long zesty finish. [Click here](#) to locate this wine.



2016 SurSur paired with homemade Chicken Tiki Masala



Pantelleria, the island off the coast of Sicily where Zibibbo grows, is hard to describe. In some ways it is like paradise; however, for the grapes life is harsh. The wind blows non-stop, the land is dry, the soil volcanic. The vineyards are terraced and the vines must grow in bush form for wind protection. Manual labor is a fierce commitment but the results are well worth it. Due to its slight touch of sweetness upon entering the palate this wine makes an ideal pairing with foods that offer a touch of heat.



2016 Donnafugata ‘Lighea’ Zibibbo Sicilia DOC Sicily Italy (\$20): Crafted of 100% Zibibbo, also known as Muscat of Alexandria; pale lemon; pronounced aromas of ripe stone fruit, jasmine, orange blossom, tropical fruit, lychee, lime zest, and a trailing hint of dried herbs; enters palate with a tease of sweetness that migrates into juicy fruit and lime zest, light and refreshing with pronounced acidity creating a balanced wine with a medium finish. [Click here](#) to locate this wine.



2016 Lighea paired with homemade Habanero-Apricot Chicken Sandwich with grilled peaches topped with balsamic vinegar.



Nero d'Avola is the signature red grape of Sicily. Indigenous to the island, it grows well everywhere. It can be a struggle to find a good red wine to pair with seafood. So many reds easily overpower fish. However, Sedàra is a perfect seafood accompaniment. It provides balance, not overpowering or disappearing, its acidity and tannins are well-balanced at medium to make this an ideal food wine. Serve with a slight chill for maximum summer enjoyment.



2015 Donnafugata Sedàra Nero d'Avola Sicilia DOC Sicily Italy (\$16): Predominately Nero d'Avola with some added Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah, and other grapes; medium- ruby with scarlet hues; medium+ aromas of fresh picked blackberries, cherries, blueberries, and cranberries, dried violets, sweet baking spice, black pepper; a medium body wine with medium acidity and tannins, fresh and elegant on the palate, easy to drink, youthful and pleasing. [Click here](#) to locate this wine.



2015 Sedàra paired with grilled halibut, sauteed spinach, and watermelon feta salad.



To learn more about [Donnafugata](#) and view their entire portfolio of wines I encourage you to visit their [web site](#). They also welcome guests so if you are planning a trip to Sicily please stop by for a visit.

My Song Selection:

Get your own bottle of Donnafugata wine and let me know what song you pair with it. Cheers!

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DONNAFUGATA

SICILY

WINE

2015 DONNAFUGATA SEDÀRA NERO D’AVOLA SICILIA DOC SICILY ITALY

2016 DONNAFUGATA ‘LIGHEA’ ZIBIBBO SICILIA DOC SICILY ITALY

2016 DONNAFUGATA ‘SURSUR’ GRILLO SICILIA DOC SICILY ITALY

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