

## Donnafugata Golf Resort & Spa, Sicily reviewed

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**Donnafugata Golf Resort & Spa in Sicily is the tranquil destination as we wrap up our three part series discovering some of Italy's most alluring hidden getaways...**

Any tour of secluded corners of Italy would be incomplete without a visit to the coastal fringes of the gorgeous Sicilian countryside – and it's harder to think of a more tranquil, spirit-replenishing base for exploring this off-the-beaten-path corner of the largest island in the Mediterranean than the Donnafugata Golf Resort & Spa.

For those escaping executive mayhem, top of the list of the hotel's embarrassment of benefits will be the wellness centre whose special touches include a vast range of organic herbal teas and a sauna with a view.

Food from the signature restaurant Il Carrubo juggles Sicilian culinary heritage with modern innovation, but with an Arabic tinge – Sicily lies just shy of 100 miles to the north-east of Tunisia, hence the two conflicting theories of how the Donnafugata got its name. In Italian, it loosely translates as 'woman in flight', an allusion to a local legend about Queen Maria Carolina, who fled here from Naples, though it's also the Arabic word for 'fountain'.

The local wines from the restaurant's well-appointed Carrubo cellar are consistently stunning and the rooms, done out with classic southern Italian décor (including an abundance of lava stone), overlook a verdant pastoral space. It couldn't be more picturebook idyllic.

The nearest town, Ragusa, is heaven for architecture buffs (most of its honey-coloured sandstone piles date from the late 17th century), perched on a limestone hill between the Cava San Leonardo and Cava Santa Domenica valleys, while the nearby Marina di Ragusa, Punta Secca, Sampieri and Santa Croce offer pristine Mediterranean coastline at its best.

Quiet and restful, yes: but there's no shortage of distractions. Traditional Sicilian restaurants are sprinkled liberally throughout the city (Osteria dei Sapor Perduti's sweet and sour rabbit being one highlight). Also contributing to me taking half an hour to do up my dress on the final day was a visit to Dolceria Bonajuto – Europe's oldest manufacturer of rich, dark (milk-free) chocolate, and something of an institution in the hilltop town of Modica.

The area is no tourist trap, despite the allure of being the location for cult Italian TV series *Inspector Montalbano*. If tranquillity, rejuvenation and a liberal approach to your waistline appeal, there are few places where life is sweeter than this unspoilt corner of Italy.

Donnafugata Golf Resort & Spa: getting there

The closest airport to Donnafugata is Comiso, 20 minutes away. Direct flights are available from Stansted with Ryanair. British Airways (Gatwick) and easyJet (Gatwick and Manchester) fly direct to Catania, which is 90 minutes' drive away. (*Zarina Sahn*)

Link: <http://www.director.co.uk/travel-donnafugata-golf-resort-spa-sicily-reviewed-17661-2/>