





Issue 10 - Dec. 12th-17th, 2011 - Expressly for wine lovers, professionals and opinion leaders the world over Registration number 709, Courthouse of Siena, March 31st, 2001 - Editor-in-chief: Alessandro Regoli

News



A record auction in Hong Kong

When the auction world moves to Hong Kong, records get shattered almost on a weekly basis: the Acker Merrall & Condit 800 lots auction - with some "treats" from Romanée Conti, Château Mouton Rothschild and Château Petrus among them - that took place on December 8th was worth something like 9.1 million U.S. dollars to the American auction house. And the finest of those lots, made up of 55 Romanée Conti vintages from 1952 to 2007 (pictured above), was sold for the record sum of 813.000 U.S. dollars, the single highest price for a single lot in 2011. Yet another signal that the epicenter of wine auctions has definitely moved East.



OperaWine www.operawine.it

Masters of Wine goes to Italy for its next symposium

"After Napa Valley (2006) and Bordeaux (2010) it's time to acknowledge, in our symposium, Italy's oenological, productive and cultural role". So said Lynne Sherriff, President of the Institute of Masters of Wine, the most influential organization in the wine world, during the presentation of the eighth International Symposium of Masters of Wine, which will take place in Florence in May 2014. A decision that showcases how the British Institute is more and more interested in Italy each year - and a decision that comes right on the heels of its first Italian Master Class, created with Piero Antinori's Great Brands Institute to take place in the Tuscan birthplace of Tignanello. Can the first Italian Master of Wine be that far away?

First Page

Italian Wine in the world for Jancis Robinson

In the U.K., a market that often anticipates trends and fashion, Italian wine is not represented as it should be. Such is the opinion of the British Master of Wine - and "Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire" - Jancis Robinson in her interview with Winenews: "on the British market choice is limited to a selection of wines chosen by the big importers who focus almost exclusively on inexpensive wines, making great wines all but unavailable, but that are easily obtained on the American market". The issue is twofold: a narrow bouquet of possible choices of wines and territories, which does not faithfully represent the great diversity of Italian winemaking, and the almost total absence of those wines that can shift British taste from French productions to Italian ones. "The British consumer is crazy about French wines, and knows just enough about Italian wines. But then, the volume of production of the great French wines make them more easily available, even though the most famous productions from Burgundy and Bordeaux have recently increased prices so much as to be all but unreachable for most people. It's a situation that - according to Robinson - can be a tremendous advantage for great Italian wines: the British consumer of fine wines, faced with the "ludicrous" prices of top French wines, is bound to turn his attention elsewhere, maybe towards top-tier Italian wines, especially those from Piedmont". But the situation, according to the British Master of Wine, is far from ideal even on the Asian market, since "I don't think that Italian wine has that big of a footprint, like French wine". And in order to close the gap with their "French cousins", it would be better to bet on a single notion, rather than on the richness of vines and terroirs of Italy: "the Asian market is conquered by betting on a brand name, which for Italy could be the notion of "luxury", supported by quality productions. Only after that, following the trail of top wines, one could focus on mass wine and big numbers". Different markets, different trends and different consumer targets, then, but it's still Italy versus France...

Focus

Gancia's major stakeholder is now Russian

After the American Constellation Brands group bought 100% of Tuscan winemaker Ruffino, another Italian brand changes its flag: 70% of the Gancia group, the historical winemaker from Canelli, Piedmont that invented the Italian "classic method" in the mid 1800s, is now property of the leading Vodka producer and distributor Russian Standard Corporation, whose assets are worth more than 5 billion U.S. dollars. The new President is the founder, Roustam Tariko, but management of operations remains Italian, with Paolo Fontana as Ceo and Edoardo and Lamberto Vallarino Gancia family representatives. No official figures were given, but according to rumours the deal was green-lit for less than 150 million Euros. Thus Gancia becomes the latest in a series of foreign-owned Italian brands that almost entirely follows the trail between the U.S. and Tuscany: from Montalcino's Castello Banfi, owned by the Mariani family, to II Palazzone, in the heart of Brunello territory, owned by Time Warner's former Ceo Richard Parsons. Not to mention the "Tenute di Toscana" holding, owned by Marchesi Frescobaldi, Mondavi and the Russian Spi Group that owns, among others, Tenute dell'Ornellaia in Bolgheri, Tuscany.





www.vinitalytour.com



OperaWine www.operawine.it

Report

The Italian food industry holds in 2011, thanks to exports

2011 is all but over and it's time for a review. Not an entirely positive one, as far as wine & food is concerned: according to data from Federalimentare, Italy's main food industry association, the food industry has had a rough year, saved only by exports (up 10% from 2010), with a 2% drop in domestic consumptions and a 1.5% drop in national production. Waiting for 2012 that looks anything but rosy.



www.vinitalytour.com

Wine & Food

Another record for Italian wine: the best wine spa in the world

Wine in the glass, but not only. Bacchus' nectar is changing the nature of thermal baths and is on the rise as a wellness treatment. "Wine Therapy" is the rage in spas all over the world. Gayot.com, an online guide to the "good life", recently created a ranking of the best wine spas the world over. Number one on the top 10 is the Italian "Adler Thermae Spa & Relax Resort" in Bagno Vignoni, in the heart of Tuscany. With its "Bacchus' ritual" (a massage and a bath in wine) and other treatments, Adler took the lead over competitors from places as diverse as South Africa, the U.S., Spain and France.

For the record

Assoenologi's President is now a "Chevalier"

Giuseppe Martelli, Italian oenologist and general manager of the Italian oenological association Assoenologi, was recently knighted by the French Minister for Agriculture Bruno Le Maire. Martelli, now a "Chevalier de l'Ordre national du Mérite Agricole", was given this honour for "his contributions to agriculture in general and viticulture in particular".

