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News



UK and Japan, "friends" of wine

The UK and Japan are not top-tier global markets for wine per se, but that does not mean they should not be treated with the utmost attention, given their trendsetting role for Europe and Asia. This is the opinion of David Pearson, CEO of Opus One, and Angelo Gaja. Gaja, fresh back from a trip to the land of the rising sun, has pointed out its value for Asian markets: "Italian wine enjoys a very favourable position, both price-wise and image-wise, also thanks to the professionalism of a lot of players". Not to mention the many Japanese restaurateurs who learned Italian cuisine in Italy, brought it home and then exported it to China, Singapore and so on ...



Thanks to exports

2013 is all but over, and the definitive data about exports over the last 12 months are but a few weeks away. In the meantime, though, data regarding the first 9 months of 2013 look more than comforting, because even if volumes have gone slightly down (0.34% less than 2012), average values have gone the opposite way, with 2.42 Euros per litre (11.9% more than 2.16 Euros in 2012), a sum that puts Italy closer to France, even if the "cousins" are still very far apart. This is what the data from the Study Centre of Assoenologi can tell us so far; that 2013, even though the crisis is still alive and kicking, guarantees a comforting trend regarding exports, a possible prelude to a 2014 that we hope will be even better.

Report

A less sparkling Eve

There will be fewer toasts to the end of the year in Italy, according to the Wine Economic Observatory analysis: roughly 72 million "mushroom-shaped" corks will soar through the air during the holidays, 69 of which will be "Made in Italy", like Franciacorta, Trentodoc, Prosecco and so on. 10 million Italian bottles will be uncorked during the same period the world over, while Champagne slows down in Italy (300.000 bottles less), Cava rises slightly (50.000 more) and other sparkling wines are stable.



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First Page

Technology increasingly helps winemaking

"The Economist" magazine has recently published a feature focused on the wine world today, and the role of modern technology in its operations. The title is "Bacchus to the future", and even though the role of man is still primary, and few microcosms are more resistant to change than wine, there are more than a few surprises. In the Napa Valley, for example, there are no more harvesters, but only one person who drives a huge harvesting machine 12 feet from the ground, letting a single man harvest 20 tons of grapes, enough to create 18.000 bottles of wine. Today, the selection of single grapes can also be done optically: in a mere 30 milliseconds, the device confronts the shape, the dimensions and the colour of every single grape, and eliminates those that do not fit the criteria chosen by the oenologist. The screw-cap produced by Vinperfect contains a small reservoir, which allows the oenologist to introduce into the bottle the exact amount of oxygen he wants the wine to come into contact with during the ageing period, and it looks like it could be the definitive solution to the chemical compound that is responsible for the "corky" flavour created by some corks. Reverse osmosis, on the other hand, is a more controversial technique: it started being used in the '90s to remove unwanted chemicals, which might not meet the favour of Bacchus nectar aficionados. But the most interesting find of all is the use of modern technology in the vineyard itself, with an ever more precise analysis of the elements that create a great terroir, and a growing attention to factors like the consumption of water and other natural resources, using wireless sensors, cameras and GPS terminals in the vineyards. Then comes the analysis of the thousands of chemical compounds in wine itself, in order to understand their influence on taste, but it is no small feat, and is still a work in progress. The genome of grapevine, on the other hand, was fully sequenced back in 2007, and scientists are apparently very close to uncovering the real relationship between terroir, plant, wine and man's sensory perception.

Focus

Supertuscans and the Liv-ex 100

The fine wines market is slowing down for the third year in a row, but not for everybody. 2013 has brought good news for Supertuscans (Masseto above all), Champagnes (Cristal especially) and Burgundy wines (with the ever-present Romanée Conti). This, in a nutshell, is the year in review according to the Liv-ex 100 index, a sort of benchmark index for the blue chips of the world of fine wines. 2013, all in all, has been a tough year nonetheless, with the optimism of the first quarter rapidly squashed by the suboptimal results of the "en primeur" sales in Bordeaux. At the end of November the index fell 2.5%, and even though Bordeaux still dominates, its presence is slowly shrinking, because the market is moving outside its traditional boundaries, with collectors ever more interested in Burgundy, Italy - mainly Tuscany - and the Rhone. Supertuscans got the lion's share of this attention, with an 18.6% growth in 2013, especially thanks to Masseto and its 2006 vintage, which has been the top performing wine in the last 11 months, with a 44.5% growth in value, while the 2002 vintage has grown 31.1% (not to mention the great performance of Sassicaia).



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Wine & Food

D'Agata and Vinality for "Vinality International Academy"

After "Merano Wine Festival" and "Gusto Cortina", Ian D'Agata, the Italo-Canadian wine communicator, will join forces with Vinality International for "Vinality International Academy", the educational initiative created for market players operating abroad in order to spread and deepen the culture of Italian wine and help Italian wines get front and centre on world markets. The project will be launched at Vinality USA (Feb. 3rd, New York), and will feature lessons on Italian varieties and tastings for selected participants, all belonging to the international who's who of the world of wine.

For the record

Vinality and Fieragricola are "strategic"

According to Paolo De Castro, President of the Agriculture Commission of the European Parliament, Vinality and Fieragricola are "strategic actors for the quality

wine & food products sector. A unified system", De Castro said from Verona, "must be created in order to protect a sector that is worth 250 billion Euros".

