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News



A year of wine and culture

2013 might well go down in history as one of the most important years ever for the culture of Italian wine, both in some of the most important places of culture in Italy and abroad. The exhibition expressly dedicated to it, hosted at the Vittoriano in Rome and curated, among others, by Massimo Montanari, Professor of History of Nutrition, was certainly one of these events, as well as the partnership that has ultimately led Prosecco to become the official wine of the Hermitage Museum (pictured above) in Saint Petersburg, and the hosting of Amarone producer Allegrini in many important events of the Peggy Guggenheim Foundation during the entire year.



SMS

2013 in the media

2013 in the wine media began with the ruckus between Antonio Galloni and "The Wine Advocate" magazine, and also saw Monica Lerner reach the court of Robert Parker as well as Kerin O'Keefe join the team of "Wine Enthusiast" magazine. The most important rankings have seen Spain go for broke, with the top spots on both the Top 100 of "Wine Spectator" and the Top 50 of "Decanter". Rankings and lists, moreover, are apparently becoming more and more important compared to guides, in a world that is seeing the incessant growth of wine on social networks, blogs and websites. Finally, there was only one wine that got top marks from all major Italian wine guides in 2013, and it was Primitivo di Manduria Es 2011 by Gianfranco Fino.

First Page

The legacy of 2013 for the world of Bacchus

What did 2013 leave to the world of Italian wine for 2014? Here is a quick recap from WineNews of what has come to pass in the last 365 days. As for certainties, Italian wine exports are in all probability going to go over 5 billion Euros in value, reaching a new historical record. Foreign markets, according to both producers and figures, are more essential than ever, since the domestic market is in a downward spiral that looks direr year by year, even if it is still the source of roughly 50% of all revenues (excluding top producers and terroir, who get 60 to 70% of their revenues from exports). 2013 has also seen a sort of "rebalancing act" involving mature markets, like the United States, Germany, the UK, Canada and Japan - those who have given the most encouraging answers - and the fabled "emerging" ones, who have failed to keep up their growth rates in the last two years, be it because of prohibitionist policies, like Russia, or a downturn in their domestic economy (not to mention anti-dumping probes regarding wine imported from the EU), like China. A lot of winemaking firms have changed hands, Argiano above all: Brazilian investors acquired the top-tier name in Montalcino, and Chinese hands have reached Chianti Classico for the first time ever. Politics-wise, 2013 marked the 50th anniversary of the so-called "Desana Law", which created Denominations of Origin, and the definitive halt from the EU towards the liberalization of planting rights. Not to mention the presence of CMO funds in the next Common Agricultural Policy, as confirmed by Paolo De Castro, President of the Agriculture Commission of the EU Parliament, during the 2013 edition of Vinality, and the fact that they will be used inside Europe as well. Nothing is certain, on the other hand, regarding .wine and .vin Internet top-level domains so far, and in Italy, Nunzia de Girolamo has become the 7th Minister for Agriculture in 6 years. Back in October, De Girolamo had told WineNews that a "Committee of Sages" would be soon created for the management of the "Wine and Oil Pavilion" at the 2015 Milan Expo, but so far nothing has happened.

Focus

12 months of unusual wine news

2013 was rife with unusual news, from the first wines made on the Tuscan island of Gorgona, thanks to the partnership between Marchesi Frescobaldi and the inmates of the prison historically situated on the island, reaching the market, to the infamous report penned by analysts at Morgan Stanley that hinted at a possible shortage of wine at a global level in the years to come, which was rapidly debunked by many experts (and by Federico Castellucci, President of the International Organization for Vine and Wine - the "UN of wine" - directly to WineNews). Many bottles, as usual, were bought at astronomical prices, like the eye-popping 474.000 Euros an Asian collector paid for 12 bottles of Domaine de la Romanée Conti 1978 during a Sotheby's auction which took place in Hong Kong. Generally speaking, the world of auctions has seen the "Old World" back into the fray, even if the Far East is still dominant, and Italian wines have done very well, Supertuscans and Masseto above all, which according to the Liv-Ex index have shown the best growth performances in value, in a year that has been generally negative for the great wines of Bordeaux.



Report

World champs, again

We have been remembering a lot of things that took place in 2013, but a lot more would be worthy of our attention; therefore, we are closing our recap with one of the best, so we can look forward to 2014 with optimism. Even if Italian Association of Sommeliers AIS is in a bit of turmoil, as Franco Ricci is creating the Italian Federation of Sommeliers, the World Champion of Sommeliers is Italian once more - Luca Martini has received the crown of the "World Wide Sommelier Association", after Luca Gardini.



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Wine & Food

The first Brunello harvest without Franco Biondi Santi

Italian wine in 2013 has had many protagonists, but one of the most important sadly passed away. Franco Biondi Santi, "Lord of Brunello", a man who undoubtedly loved Montalcino, its wines and its territory dearly and sincerely, has left us, and the 2013 harvest at his Il Greppo Estate was the very first one without him. It was also the first with his son Jacopo at the helm of the family firm, and according to him, it could be "an exceptional vintage" - Franco Biondi Santi's last gift to Italian wine and to his land.

For the record

Italy in the "Decanter" Top 50 ranking

Rosso di Montalcino Pian dell'Orino 2010, at spot number 3, is the best Italian wine tasted by the editorial staff of renowned British magazine "Decanter" in 2013, out of over

3.200 wines, according to its "Top 50 - Wines of the year" 2013 ranking. Spain got the top spot, but no less than 10 wines out of 50 come from the "Belpaese".

