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News



Masseto superstar in HK

An 18-bottle lot of Masseto 2001 was sold at 11.775 Euros (+17% over its base price), a bottle of Richebourg Henri Jayer 1985 went for 9.532 (+6%) and a 24-bottle lot of Masseto 2002 went for 8.075 (+29%). These were some of the most notable transactions at the recent Hong Kong wine auction by Gelardini & Romani Wine Auction, the first of its kind specializing in Italian wines. The total revenue was over 300.000 Euros, with 86% of all lots sold and 98% of all Italian lots sold, and an average mark-up of 47% over base prices. Masseto stole the show, with 6 of its lots in the top 10, accompanied by Biondi Santi: a 6-bottle lot of Brunello Riserva 1955 went for 4.374 Euros.



China, wine and the State

According to a Vinexpo report, China is already the second country for wine consumption of bottles sold for over 10 Dollars on the shelves. And in any case, the general consensus is that it will be the market to watch at a global level for wine from here to 2020. It is therefore paramount, for Italy, to get over the 32.8% drop of exports in volume, and the 3% drop in value, registered there last year. And to do so, as Prime Minister Matteo Renzi stated at Vinality, State visits will be an indispensable tool. "Like the Government's visit to China next June, and I want the world of wine to participate in its business forum, because there is so much room for improvement". With wine, and Italian agro-food, that must be given a first-row spot, and not merely an also-ran seat.

Report

Prosecco's boom in the UK

Even if alcohol consumption in the United Kingdom has dropped back to 1990 levels, with an 18% drop between 2004 and 2013, it definitely has not hindered the explosion of Italian sparkling wine there. According to the Rabobank report, Italian sparkling exports in the UK in 2013 have grown 40.3%, led - of course - by Prosecco, which is considered "an affordable luxury" by English wine lovers, as Stephen Rannekleiv, one of the report's authors, stated to "The Drinks Business" magazine.



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First Page

France honours Italian wine and its producers

For quite some years Italy has looked up to France and its wine with a badly concealed mix of admiration and envy, both because of a national fascination for all things foreign and more importantly, because of the undeniable success of its productive model. However, in a few decades Italian winemakers have collectively put their chips on quality and territories to get much closer to their French counterparts on a lot of markets in the world, even if the average prices of exported wines are still much lower than French wines. But now, an endorsement for Italian wine has come from quite the pulpit, none other than France itself. "Small Italy is over. Italy and its wines, now have all the characteristics of a great player", one can read in an op-ed of the French magazine "Vitisphere", which is one of the cornerstones of wine information in France. The op-ed also criticizes the stiffness of France, and its historic preference for a rigidity that has led the country to the point where "it can no longer create vineyards for everyday wines" and that, in turn, has led France to import 4.5 million hectolitres of "on tap" wine from Spain in 2013 alone, confining itself to only DOP and IGP wines and foregoing other market shares entirely. The magazine also openly praises the heterogeneity of Italy, which was recently showcased at Vinality. "If there is a country where winemaking is truly pluralistic", the op-ed reads, "it is Italy, since every Region showcases its wines, but also its tourism, its natural parks (with environmental protection being the leitmotiv of all firms), and its agriculture, which integrates vine growing. There are more than 250.000 firms that make wine in Italy. In France, that number is less than 80.000. The two countries make the same amount of wine (42-43 million hectolitres per year), but a French vineyard produces 500-600 hectolitres, while in Italy it is roughly half that - while Italian firms also produce fruit, olive oil and cheese. Italian wine keeps on growing abroad, and its average price with it". Quite the compliment, all in all, from the country that has historically been one of Italy's main rivals.

Focus

Italy's most profitable winemakers

Marchesi Antinori from Tuscany with a 39% ratio, followed by Sicilian winemaker Cusumano (33%), and Cantine Ferrari of Lunelli from Trentino-Alto Adige with a 30% ratio: these, according to a ranking relative to 2013 and compiled by Italian journalist Anna di Martino for the financial section of the national newspaper "Corriere della Sera", are the three most profitable winemakers in Italy, according to the ratio between the firms' EBITDA and their yearly turnover. At spot number four the Santa Margherita Group, led by Ettore Nicoletto, and Marchesi de' Frescobaldi is at number five - both firms have the same ratio, 28.4%. Among the top five winemakers, though, the biggest leap belongs to Sicilian winery Cusumano (Diego Cusumano pictured right), one of the firms that has catapulted Sicily to the forefront of the Italian wine scene in the last 10 to 15 years, since their ratio has gone up over 8%. The ranking also includes names - with ratios hovering between 28 and 18% - such as Masi, Falesco, Ruffino, Guido Berlucchi, Umberto Cesari, Barone Ricasoli, Donnafugata, Terra Moretti, Allegrini, Tasca d'Almerita, Argiolas, Feudi di San Gregorio, Planeta and Umani Ronchi, in that order.



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Wine & Food

The top territories and news in 2013 on wine-searcher.com

Moscato d'Asti, Brunello di Montalcino and Chateaufeuf-du-Pape: these, in this order, are the top three wines and territories that have been looked up the most in 2013 on the renowned wine portal www.wine-searcher.com. There is also a list of the most looked up critics on the website, which is led once more by Robert Parker, the inventor of the 100 points scoring system. The most read news of 2013 was "From Sex to Sangiovese, Savanna Samson", which narrated the debut of the former adult performer in the world of winemaking with "La Fiorita" estate, in Montalcino.

For the record

Sir Alex's cellar goes under the hammer

One of soccer's global living legends, Sir Alex Ferguson, has accumulated over 5.000 bottles of fine wines in his cellar over the years, which will soon go under the hammer at

Christie's: the projected revenue is over 3 million pounds, and the lots will include a 6-liter bottle of Sassicaia 2005, signed by Sir Alex himself.

