



OperaWine
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Italian Weekly Wine News.it



Issue 13 - Jan. 2nd-7th, 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



Italian luxury in a glass

Piero Antinori, at the helm of one of Italian wine's most famous and ancient brands, producing "legendary" labels such as Solaia and Tignanello, at number 31, and Nicolò Incisa della Rocchetta, "inventor" of the most renowned Italian wine in the world, Tenuta San Guido's Sassicaia, at number 46: this is Italy in the "Luxury Power 50" ranking of the British magazine "The Drinks Business", which compiled it "exclusively for their influence on the production and consumption of luxury goods". At the top are the leaders of the true giants of wine & beverages: Paul Walsh, Diageo's Ceo, at spot 3, behind Pierre Pringuet, Ceo of Pernod Ricard, and Lvmh's Bernard Arnault, Europe's wealthiest man.



Champagne, dreams and reality on the horizon

It might be a time of crisis, but 2011, for Champagne producers, will be remembered as their second best year ever, with a 3.5% increase in sales over 2010, for a total of 4.1 billion Euros (roughly as much as the export of Italian wines in its entirety!). 330 million bottles were sold in France (still the leading market, with 55% of total consumption) and in the world, and prices increased between 3% and 5% on average. But even if these numbers are the stuff of dreams, the Comité Interprofessionnel du Vin de Champagne is keeping its feet firmly on the ground: the competition is fiercer than ever and the market is less profitable, so, in the next three years, a growth of "only" 2% in volume is expected...

Report

Farewell, "Snifter"

2012 begins on a sad note for Italian wine: Giulio Gambelli (born 1925), nicknamed "Snifter" for his innate talent and special sensibility for tasting, father of many of Tuscany's legendary wines and creator of many prestigious labels of Chianti Classico and Brunello di Montalcino, passed away on January 3rd. He learned his craft from an exceptional teacher, Tancredi Biondi Santi, author of one of the bottles that embodies Italian wine in its entirety: the 1955 Riserva di Brunello di Montalcino.



First Page

Trends: Italian wine possibilities in 2012

This is not exactly a "revelation" on our part, but an attempt to understand what the fault lines for Italian wine in 2012 will be, among global financial tensions and "domestic" news that won't bring a smile to producers' faces, like the introduction of a new land tax for agriculture and skyrocketing fuel prices. Still, "vineyard Italy" might have some aces up its sleeve. Export will still be the antidote to hard times on the domestic market. And for Italian wines, Asian markets, China first and foremost (but keeping an eye out for India) will be as important as ever, since they represent a "natural" harbor for great brands, and a less immediate, but of potentially paramount importance, for lesser ones. The domestic market, which has been in a constant slump these past years, could get even more complicated because of the crisis, but many producers seem to want to go back to investing more aggressively in it - if not to bolster consumption, at least to keep it steady. A domestic market that could react fitfully, with a "back to classics" approach - that is, to labels and companies that can count on their brand or on their style and continuing quality standards. A reassuring "hunt" for certainties, so to speak. 2012, in all probability, will see the gap between low-price (5 Euros and under) and fine wines (50 Euros and up) get even wider, further polarizing consumption. But it could also become the year of the revenge of the "second vin" - whose price is at the halfway point - that have suffered in the recent past but that, due to a context as fluid as the one that awaits us, could gain positions, thanks to a quality that is often close to that of the "crus", and to the competence of ever more informed consumers. The idea of environmental sustainability, moreover, will still be attractive - wines made with biological and/or biodynamical techniques are poised for a rise in the "Old World", but with the potential to do the same on the other side of the Ocean, first and foremost in the U.S. And, demand for more drinkable and balanced wines will also rise, even if global warming will keep on moving the organoleptic profile of wines in the opposite direction, particularly regarding alcohol content.

Focus

The Italian producers' wishlist for 2012

Recovery of the domestic market, "a step back on the increase of Vat and the reintroduction of a land tax" and confirmation of 2011's results: this is the "good news" that Italian wine producers hope to hear in 2012, knowing that it'll probably be a tough year nonetheless. "If 2012's market results will allow us to keep what we gained back in 2010 and 2011," says Francesca Planeta, of the famous Sicilian firm, "it'd be great, because growth will be nigh on impossible". "We hope for the same results of the last two years", echoes Francesco Zonin, standard-bearer of one of the country's most important wine groups, "and for a recovery of the domestic market, but signs aren't good". Marilisa Allegrini, head of the famous Venetian brand, shares those hopes "because an increase in consumption would mean that the country is doing better overall". Some hope for "a step backwards on lmu, the new land tax that will hit winemakers and agriculture hard," explains Ornella Venica, of the prestigious Friulian brand. "I hope for a cancellation of the Vat increase on wine, even if it's a pipe dream, to try and bolster internal consumption", says Enrico Viglierchio, Ceo of Castello Banfi, one of Montalcino's top brands.



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Wine & Food

Veneto, the most beautiful wine territory for "Wine Enthusiast"

Not a ranking, but a selection of the 10 most beautiful wine territories the world over, not only from an oenological point of view but also considering the allure that history, art and culture exert on the visitor: this is the reason why, according to the American magazine "Wine Enthusiast", Veneto was the only Italian territory to be selected. It is true that the cream of Venetian wines - Prosecco, Amarone, Soave - flies all over the world, but in order to enjoy it in Verona or Venice, not to mention the incomparable Venissa, one cannot help but choose the territory itself for one's wine holidays.

For the record

No laurels from Unesco for Neapolitan Pizza

2010 saw the Mediterranean diet crowned as World Heritage by Unesco, but 2012 won't be the year of Neapolitan Pizza. According to a recent Unesco meeting that took

place in Dubai, the only Italian candidate for the title of World Heritage in 2012 is going to be the traditional violin-making craft of Cremona, in Lombardy.

