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News



"Three-starred" ladies

There are two women at the top of the group of top Italian female chefs: Annie Feoldé, of Florence's "Enoteca Pinchiorri", and Nadia Santini, of "Dal Pescatore", in Canneto sull'Oglio (Mantova). They have just received the fabled "three stars" of the Michelin Guide once more. But, then comes a platoon of 47 female chefs with at least one star, out of a global total of a little more than 110. An apparently curious performance, in a country whose female citizens are familiar with gender issues - but, Italy is also the place where kitchens have always been the undisputed realm of women, and whose expertise and curiosity now give quite the medal to our country.



A greener future for cities?

The phenomenon of "city vineyards", even though still quite small, is going through an expansive phase, judging by the latest examples. One could mention the vineyard at Clos Montmartre, in Paris, with Gamay and Pinot Noir grapes, or Venissa, smack in the middle of the Venice lagoon, where, thanks to renowned Prosecco vintner Bisol, one can once more witness growing Dorona grapes. Or, the Forty Hall Vineyard in London, a newborn city vineyard, which follows in the footsteps of Vienna's Heuriger wine, produced since 1784. Thessaloniki, in Greece, hosts 480 indigenous grape varieties, and the Queens County Farm Museum's Winery, in New York, dates back to 1697. New entries include D'Augustine Vineyard, in Los Angeles, and the Neighborhood Vineyards Project in San Francisco.

Report

Farewell to "Novello"?

The first outcome of the latest harvest, "Novello" wine - once a staple of every Italian autumn - seems to be relentlessly headed towards becoming a thing of the past, according to the latest mass retail sales data by IRI Infoscand: 4.5 million bottles were sold in 2010, but only 2.9 in 2013. The output of the 2014 vintage, moreover, offers no solace, since even big names like Cavit, Gruppo Italiano Vini or Banfi did not venture over 150,000, 130,000 and 100,000 bottles, respectively.



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First Page

Sassicaia 2011, the "darling" of all guides

Sassicaia 2011 Tenuta San Guido, created by Marchese Mario Incisa della Rocchetta - a true Italian wine legend of worldwide - is the one single wine awarded the very best grades possible by all 8 major Italian wine guides, according to the ninth edition of the usual yearly cross-analysis compiled by WineNews. Regardless of the tasting methods of the single volumes, then, this is the undisputed and undisputable result. To paraphrase the famous cyclist Fausto Coppi's description, penned by Mario Ferretti during the 1949 Giro d'Italia: "Only one wine alone in the lead, its label is white and blue, its name is Sassicaia". The great red from Bolgheri, created back in 1968 by no less than Giacomo Tachis, and currently "curated" by oenologist Graziana Grassini in the winemaking firm led by Nicolò Incisa della Rocchetta, has therefore been the only wine in Italy awarded the fabled "Three Glasses" of the "I Vini d'Italia" guide by "Il Gambero Rosso"; "Five Bottles of the 'I Vini d'Italia' by "L'Espresso"; "Three Stars" of the "I Vini di Veronelli"; "Five Bunches" of the "Duemilavini" guide by Bibenda; the "Great Wine" award - given to the very best from an organoleptic point of view - by the "Slow Wine" guide by Slow Food; a mention in the index of the most pleasurable wines in the "Annuario dei migliori vini italiani", authored by Luca Maroni, and, last but not least, the top marks of the two "new kids on the block"; that is, the "smiley face" of Doctor Wine (given to wines that score higher than 95/100) of the 2015 "Guida Essenziale ai Vini d'Italia", penned by Daniele Cernilli, and the "Four Grapes" of "Vitae - La guida vini", the guide of Italian Sommeliers Association AIS. An undisputed and undisputable achievement for Sassicaia 2011, for our first analysis of Italian guides that had to tackle eight guides instead of the usual six. And which, in turn, makes one think once again about the great diversity in judgement of Italy's best professional tasters, that even considering an unavoidable variability in results from vintage to vintage, still fails to group up a "best of the best" that can comprise the very best of the country in 10 to 20 single wines.

Focus

The magnificent 8 of Italian cuisine

The results of the 2015 edition of the Michelin guide are in, and even though there has been a lot of movement for "one-starred" venues, with 27 new entries and 24 names lost (either due to a downgrading or to restaurants going out of business), there has been no change at all on the "top floor" of the restaurants awarded three stars, after one new entry each in the past two editions. There are still eight "magnificents". They are the collective tip of the spear of an Italian culinary movement that is overall growing thanks to the use of better and better base materials and to a respect for tradition that does not preclude reinvention and innovation, without losing one's identity. And, here they are: Niko Romito of "Reale" in Castel di Sangro, L'Aquila; Enrico Crippa of "Piazza Duomo" in Alba, near Cuneo; Massimo Bottura of "L'Osteria Francescana" in Modena; Massimiliano Alajmo of "Le Calandre" in Rubano, Padova; Heinz Beck of "La Pergola" at the Rome Cavalieri Hilton; Cerea brothers (pictured right) of "Da Vittorio" in Brusaporto, Bergamo; "Enoteca Pinchiorri" in Florence, with Annie Féolde and Nadia Santini of "Dal Pescatore" in Canneto sull'Oglio, Mantova.



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Wine & Food

The "unusual stars" of the 2015 Michelin Guide

Among the 332 venues worthy of at least one "star" for the 2015 Michelin Guide of Italy, more than a few restaurants are decidedly out of the ordinary. One could mention Macelleria Damini in Arzignano, near Vicenza - a family-run butcher shop and restaurant for four generations - "L'Imbuto" ("the funnel") in Lucca, hosted by the local Museum of Contemporary Arts, and "Le Tre Lune" ("the three moons" in Calenzano, Florence, whose three founders joined forces to bring a touch of French cuisine to the very heart of the "Granducato": quite the variety, indeed.

For the record

Agricultural EU funds: now scheduling

The Italian government has officially ruled that the new round of European Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) funding for 2015-2020 for a grand total of over 23 billion

Euros can now be affixed to a specified time frame. "Our choices", Minister Martina commented, "were not ordinary: now we will work together with Regional Authorities".

