



News



Brunello goes to Umbria

Nothing official has come out yet, but, if the hubbub is anything to go by - more than two years after the "King of cashmere" Brunello Cucinelli (pictured above), officially announced he wanted to become a winemaker - the rumours are already outlining the future of his venture. It should be in Solomeo, Umbria, included in the 70 hectares of the "Agrarian Park", the centrepiece of "Project for Beauty", but the one certainty is there are 6 hectares of vineyards with both indigenous and international varieties. Mum's the word on the inauguration date, but it should be no later than 2016. The structure should give a wide berth to futuristic looks, favouring tradition and land.

First Page

"Mr. Monfortino" Conterno to buy Vigna Arione

It is very difficult, if not impossible, to buy vineyards dedicated to the production of Barolo. Prices are sky-high for the land where one of the best Italian wines in the world is made, considering that there are no more than 2.067 hectares in 11 municipalities, and 670 vintners producing 12.7 million bottles a year - and 78% are going abroad. Almost no one is selling. But, from time to time, something ends up on the market, and when that happens potential buyers - which are often other local "wine artisans" that have cash and can invest, unlike what happens in other prestigious terroirs - go for it, no matter the price tag. This has sometimes happened, even recently. For example, Barolo producer Roberto Conterno, at the helm of Giacomo Conterno winery - maker of the "Monfortino" label - is officially the new owner of the cru of Barolo Arione in Serralunga d'Alba, as WineNews reported first. He bought the lot (9 hectares, 3 for Nebbiolo for Barolo, 1 each for Barbera d'Alba and Nebbiolo d'Alba and 3.5 with woods for the fabled white truffle of Alba) from the brothers Maurizio and Claudio Rosso, owners of the Gigi Rosso winery, in Castiglione Falletto. The contract was signed this Thursday. In the last few months, Vigna Arione had been in the sights of an unnamed big American business group, but the deal did not go through, and the Rosso family decided to sell to Conterno. It was not the only sale in the land of Barolo to take place lately. Last year winemaker Pio Cesare, in Alba, bought vineyards in Mosconi cru in Monforte d'Alba (8 hectares in all, mainly dedicated to Barolo, but also Barbera and Dolcetto). Moreover, another top name in Barolo, Paolo Scavino winery in Castiglione Falletto, is about to buy vineyards in Ravera, a great cru in the Municipality of Novello, as the firm confirmed to WineNews. All these deals have gone down without a word regarding the sums involved, but according to rumours, and considering both the few hectares on sale in the area and the high prestige enjoyed by both wine and territory, 1 million Euros per hectare might not be off the mark. And some say that prices are destined to go up even more...



2020, the next frontier

The quite ambitious goal that Prime Minister Matteo Renzi announced during last year's edition of Vinitaly in Verona - namely, doubling Italian wine exports in value by 2020, from 5 billion to 10 billion Euros - appears to be a little farther away, since 2014 closed its books with no appreciable growth over 2013. According to Italian Minister of Agriculture Maurizio Martina, though, the goal is still within grasp: "5.1 billion Euros in exports is a result that should not be belittled", he told WineNews, "and one that I, for one, did not take for granted in such an unusual year. Our goal for 2020 is still within reach, but we will have to work hard for it, with no respite, and we will have to see 2015 as the right year for a ramp-up, thanks also to the Expo, which will surely help in this regard".

Focus

100/100, an award to all of Italy

WineNews was the first to report that Robert Parker's "The Wine Advocate" magazine has officially bestowed its "mythical" 100 points to both Brunello di Montalcino Tenuta Nuova 2010 Casanova di Neri and Brunello di Montalcino Madonna delle Grazie 2010 Il Marroneto - and it has understandably been quite the beneficial jolt, not only for the land of Brunello, but for all the world of Italian winemaking, as such an honour has been given to Italian wines a grand total of only five times since 1978. As Monica Larner, Italian editor of the prestigious magazine, explained, the scores are indeed mainly the acknowledgement of "the supremacy of Sangiovese, which has definitely left the scandal of "Brunellopoli" in its past, showing that when there are the right conditions, terroir, weather, and the producers' know-how, Sangiovese exceeds all expectations, like its 2010 vintage has just done". But, on the other hand, Robert Parker himself has stated that "Italian wine, from a qualitative standpoint, is doing better and better all the time, and the new generations are showing remarkable growth, from the southern Regions to Tuscany and Piedmont".



Report

Culinary consultants

At the latest edition of the "Forum on Italian Cuisine" Minister of Agriculture Martina sought the opinions of 25 of the country's top chefs, led by Paolo Marchi, founder of "Identità Golose". The delegation offered its perspective on how to go forward: better teaching for "new bloods", less bureaucracy for businesses, the origins of typical products and food as culture. "I wanted a work meeting with these chefs because we have to get on par with everything that has not been done all these years", the Minister stated.



Wine & Food

Tignanello and Zonin, the most admired Italian brands worldwide

Tignanello (Antinori), at spot 12, and Zonin, at 18, are Italy's representatives in the 2015 edition of the "World's Most Admired Wine Brand" ranking, compiled by "Drinks International" magazine. A jury of over 200 professionals in the global wine world compiled the ranking. Two of the biggest Spanish wine heavyweights, Torres and Vega Sicilia, are at the very top, followed by Australian brand Penfolds. The ranking used five main criteria: quality of the wine, relationship with its mother country and territory, relationship with its target taste, market positioning and general appeal.

For the record

Rock stars love Italian wine (and terroirs)

Venerable queen of pop Madonna proposed a virtual toast to Italy during her recent visit, and was given a bottle of Sassicaia 2011 as a gift from anchorman Fabio Fazio, who

will host her on RAI3 next Sunday. Furthermore, rumours say, Katy Perry is close to buying a winemaking estate in Tuscany, namely in the Siense Chianti.

