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News



All hail Her Majesty Pizza

Heads of State like Barack Obama (who, together with his wife Michelle, has been promoting a gigantic food education programme for youths in the U.S.), pop queens like Madonna (in tip-top shape, at 53), actresses and singers like Jennifer Lopez: these are only some of the VIPs enamoured with pizza, and the list could go on and on - if it were a political party, it would be in power globally. It is Italy's true godmother abroad, because it gets people of all ages, nationalities and social stature to agree on a thoroughly enjoyable subject indeed - even for those who, either for work or out of habit, are always shooting a glance towards the scales...



SMS

A glass half full...

During an unprecedented global crisis, Winenews recently commented on the wine situation. The sector is in dire straits, but did not tank. In a nutshell, consumption dropped in producing countries and spiked in "new countries"; turnover dropped in Italy and export in value grew (as our post-2011 harvest survey on 50 wineries, for a total turnover of 1.8 billion Euros, showed); turnover grew 5% among wineries that invested in quality, promotion and export; consumption "polarized" (good for fine and cheap wines; "on tap" wine grew in value; there is a crisis in "hip" territories, but the gap between "famous" and "less famous" is widening (regardless of the companies' footprint!). But the world of wine keeps on investing in "hardware" and human resources (sales, export, marketing).

Report

The two sides of Spain

If there is a winning Spain, it's the soccer one, as they are the current European and World Champions, headed by the player-vigneron Andres Iniesta. Iniesta, after winning everything there was to win on the field, did pretty much the same with his "Denominación de Origen Manchuela" whites - wines from Castile, precisely where "losing" Spain illegally planted 9.240 hectares of vineyards in 2003-2004, and ended up being fined 54.9 million Euros by the European Union Court...



First Page

"Vineyard Italy" is moving: in 10 years many hectares and half the wineries are gone

"Vineyard Italy" is moving, no doubt about it: in 10 years' time many hectares are gone and there's about half as many wineries. These are the results of WineNews' analysis of the (not definitive) Istat, Italy's Institute of Statistics data of the 2011 Agricultural Census. From 2000 to 2010 the number of winemaking companies dropped from 791.091 to 383.645, and "Vineyard Italy" shrunk from 717.333 hectares in 2000 to 632.140 in 2010. Going into detail, there are interesting phenomena to be discovered, such as the very different behaviour of two of the country's most eminent regions: 12% of vine-growing hectares in Piedmont vanished, but in Tuscany only 3% did. Lazio was the region with the biggest drop (-45.7%). The Veneto region in 10 years basically stayed put, while the only region that increased its hectares was Trentino-Alto Adige (+11%), which is also the region that lost fewer companies than any other, percentage-wise (from 15.325 to 12.729, less 16.9%). Speaking of vineyards, the reduction plan in Sicily doesn't seem to have been a complete success: the Island is still the Italian region with the highest number of vine-growing hectares (121.796 in 2000, 110.699 in 2010 - a 9.5% drop), followed by Apulia (96.750 hectares in 2010 compared to 111.290 in 2000, less 13%) and Veneto (73.708 in 2010). Among the regions that lost the biggest number of winemaking companies, Lazio is still the worst performer, losing 70.5% of its wineries (from 69.371 to 20.845), followed by Liguria (from 2000's 12.544 to 3.940 in 2010, a 68% drop) and Calabria (less 61%, from 34.291 to 13.390). Southern Italy, even after the loss of nine percentage points (from 51% to 42%) is nonetheless still in the lead as far as wineries are concerned, since Apulia has 47.901, Campania has 41.624 and Sicily has 40.611. In spite of all of these negative data, though, Italian wine keeps on growing both in value and in quality...

Focus

The ID of Italian chefs and bon vivants

Young Italian chefs are ever more thirsty for knowledge of the inner workings of kitchens throughout the world and consumers are more demanding concerning quality: these are the "snapshots" that emerge from "Identità Golose", the convention on high-quality cuisine that recently took place in Milan. According to its creator, journalist Paolo Marchi, "I see a lot of young people that want to be part of a group, avoiding the typical Italian "lone wolf syndrome". And they want to know about everything, including the history of the raw materials they buy, and of the people who grow them. And this translates into a higher-quality product, as well as better service overall". And if the chef learns these things, the consumer ends up learning them just as well: "Consumers have raised their bar. It's no accident that McDonald's has started using Pdo and Pgi products in their burgers in Italy, since the concept of quality is now so widespread that buyers demand it in everything they eat". Still, according to the French Académie Internationale de la Gastronomie, Italian chef Massimo Bottura is no longer the best chef in the world: the new title holder is the Spaniard, Joan Roca.



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Wine & Food

"Organic wine" on the label gets green light by the EU

Organic wine lovers get welcome news from the European Union: starting from the 2012 harvest, EU wine producers will be allowed to use the term "organic wine" on their labels, according to a recent ruling by the Organic Production Committee of the EU. Dacian Ciolos, European Commissioner for Agriculture, praised the ruling, stating "this way, consumers will be given the certainty that an "organic wine" has been produced using stricter rules". Rules that imply lowering the permitted threshold of sulphites to 100 milligrams for red wines, and to 150 milligrams for white wines.

For the record

Frost poses "no risk for vineyards", experts say

February 2012 has been very frosty in Italy. But both Leonardo Valenti, Professor of Viticulture at Milan University, and Attilio Scienza, one of the main European experts on the

matter, concur: "it would take much lower temperatures for vineyards to be damaged. And after a dry autumn, this much snow could be a blessing in disguise".

