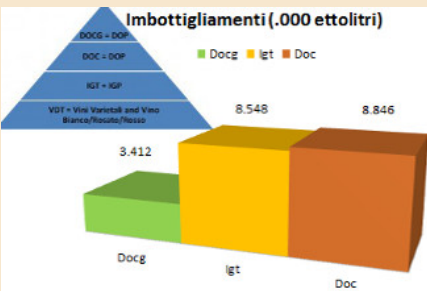




## News



## More DOCs than IGTs in 2014

The base is IGTs, then DOCs, and at the top, DOCGs. This is the pyramid, as theory goes, that represents the quality structure of Italian wines. But this pyramid has morphed significantly, according to Unione Italiana Vini's "Corriere Vinicolo". In 2014, DOC wines - 8.8 million litres bottled - have surpassed IGT wines for the first time (8.5 million), while DOCG wines are at 3.5 million. One of the reasons for this change is that some IGTs have become DOCs, like Prosecco (2.3 million hectolitres) and DOC Sicilia (more than 146,000). And, another million hectolitres might come from the new (and controversial) Denomination of Pinot Grigio, currently in the IGT Delle Venezie...



## Chinese shopping spree

The big names in Chinese wine are not content to be growing within China alone, and are looking at the "jewels of the crown" in both France and Italy, with a very keen eye. Cofco Greatwall Winery (100,000 employees, 5 winemaking firms and 4 billion Euros in revenue from wine only) has come to Italy to do some shopping. "We have already bought winemaking firms in Chile and Bordeaux", Li Zefu, Director Chief Wine Maker of Cofco, said, "and now we would like to do the same in Australia and Italy". They have started in Barolo, where Li Zefu and the Technical Manager Li Jin both are at the moment, as guests of Guala Closures Group - but after this "hunting tour" of sorts, the two will move to Tuscany, together with two representatives from Yunnan Rose Manor Winery.

## Report

### "Prosecco School" in China

Thanks to an agreement between the Consortium of Prosecco Doc and State-run Shanghai Trade School, the king of Italian sparkling wines is going to become a mandatory subject for students. Starting in 2016, the future catering and accommodation protagonists will study its territory, its production techniques and the way it is tasted and paired. Out of 200 million bottles of Prosecco Doc exported, only 1% currently goes to China, but it still went up 45% year-over-year...



## First Page

### "Vineyard Italy" is in perfect health

It is, of course, too soon to talk about the 2015 harvest, but the road towards this fundamental step of the vintage is as smooth as can be expected, and optimism abounds from north to south: "Vineyard Italy", overall - no region excluded- shows a marvellous green hue. Vines, thanks to a generous natural supply of water in winter and in spring, which turned into a natural reservoir of sorts, are in top form, despite the scorching month of July. Many of the top Italian oenologists share this feeling of general optimism, according to an informal survey conducted by WineNews, because the 2014 vintage was a much tougher one right off the bat, anyway. Naturally, it is impossible to try and forecast any kind of results at the moment. Currently, conditions are ideal, but some worries linger, especially regarding the possibility that the scorching weather might stay in place for the rest of the summer. Medium-term forecasts indicate constant hot weather until the end of the month, while August will be cooler and rainier. Still, Italian vineyards are in tip-top shape. After warding off late blight and powdery mildew back in the spring, plants seem to be enjoying marvellous health. There are few signs of water stress, and after all, a bit of drought before the veraison would not be a negative sign. On the other hand, plants currently manage to photosynthesize only during the early hours of the morning. When temperatures rise above 28 degrees Celsius, vine plants "shut down", and at 30 degrees, they stop breathing as well, halting all their activities (ripening included). This makes the timetable of the 2015 harvest a bit more uncertain, but it will be earlier compared to 2014, since last year conditions on the ground were the exact opposite of what they are now, but not by a lot. "At the moment, with the exception of very lean territories, plants are not showing signs of drought", Riccardo Cotarella, Professor at Tuscia University, President of Assoenologi and probably the most famous Italian oenologist in the world, commented, "This can lead one to look forward to a good season, but what happens in the next few weeks is what will shape the 2015 vintage, quality-wise".

## Focus

### Watch out for hot weather, oenologists say

"Right now", Leonardo Valenti, Professor of Viticulture at Milan University, said, "there is no problem, and except sparkling bases, which might be harvested in the middle of August, we're looking at standard times". "Vineyards are in excellent shape", Donato Lanati, head of research centre Enosis-Meraviglia, commented, "and bunches look good too, for an abundant production". "But", Carlo Ferrini, one of the most famous Italian oenologists, warned, "let's hope that the hot weather relents", even if "a bit of pre-veraison dryness would not be a negative thing, provided it is not a long one", Lorenzo Landi noted. Giuseppe Caviola, active in Italy and Argentina together with Attilio Pagli, says he is "very confident" about the harvest: "it would be better to have some rain in the next 2-3 weeks, but I'm feeling a lot less worried than last year". According to the "flying winemaker", Roberto Cipresso, "a bit of irrigation, in any case, would be fundamental and not a stretch". Vincenzo Mercurio, one of the top Italian oenologists, said he is "optimistic, as this time last year, things were already looking quite grim". "It is hard to say anything yet, but compared to 2014, this vintage is gold", Valentino Ciarla said.



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## Wine & Food

### Italy has too many "unprotected" DOs and IGs

Teaming up is the only way to properly defend denominations outside of Europe, according to the recent symposium titled "The origins of wine: environment, culture, and the law" which took place at the Italian pavilion of the Milan Expo. Even if both Rome and Brussels have vowed to defend denominations, Anglo-Saxon countries still find it hard to recognize them. Trademark laws rule there, so the only way is to include them in international treaties like the TTIP. Still it seems that in their current forms, 500 denominations are too many to be all safeguarded properly.

## For the record

### Castello Romitorio and the IWC

Brunello di Montalcino "Filo di Seta" 2010 Castello Romitorio, owned by renowned artist Sandro Chia, has recently received the "2015 Champion Red Wine Award" during

the 32nd edition of the International Wine Challenge, becoming once more, the best red wine in the world. The firm had received the same prize back in 2010.

