



News



“Wine Enthusiast” awards Gaja

“Wine Enthusiast” magazine, whose Italian editor is Kerin O’Keefe, has just given Italian wine one of its most important awards by choosing the renowned Piedmont winemaker Angelo Gaja as recipient of its 2015 “Lifetime Achievement Wine Star Award”. The award was given to Gaja because “it would be impossible to speak about the Renaissance of Italian wine without mentioning Angelo Gaja, both as a pioneer of the quality-oriented evolution of Italian wine, and as a promoter of its image worldwide”, the magazine wrote. “When I began”, Gaja told WineNews, “we wanted to change the image of Italian wine as “cheap and nice”. I would say that we made it”.



From words to actions

The themes on food and value of agriculture are front and centre thanks to Expo, as demonstrated by the great success of “Agriculture Day” promoted by Coldiretti, with Prime Minister Renzi, Carlin Petrin and many others. A clear message stood out during the event: the spotlight is not reserved just for final products or great chefs, but it must also shine on the entire production chain. Of course, show time is all well and good, like Italy giving the best it has to offer to heads of state or foreign institutions, provided it helps “Made in Italy” products. The fact that a lot more people now know the sector is worth 250 billion Euros, or 15% of GDP, is fundamental for the economic reprise of the country. Now, actions must come from the words.

Report

Organic wine is growing

Organic vineyards are growing in Italy, up 6.5% in the last year alone, reaching 70.000 hectares, or 11% of all Italian vineyards, and 1.300 certified winemakers. Even though numbers are still low in the grand scheme of things, mainly because organic wine has been labelled as such only since 2012 by law, consumption is going up - with 5.6% growth in the first months of 2015, and 49% of consumers that see organic wines as superior in quality compared to conventional wines, according to data from AIAB.



First Page

Italy and France on top of the world

The first two quarters of 2015, thanks to a great month of June, have definitely closed on a high note for Italian wine exports, with 6.5% growth, comparable to French wine exports, and better than Spain’s, according to the latest round of data coming from Italian State Institute of Statistics ISTAT. The year opened on a bit of a sour note, with a 6% dip in January, followed by a swift and decisive turnaround in March, April and May, which was spearheaded - as is now usual - by DOP sparkling wines, since their growth rate has managed to shoot above 20%. The total value of Italian wine exports has now reached 2.52 billion Euros. Bottled wines still represent the lion’s share of the total, having reached 1.92 billion Euros (up 5.4%), while sparkling wines have reached 406 million Euros (up 23.5%) and “on tap” and table wines have gone no further than 192 million (9.8% less). In the meantime, France has also done quite well for itself, since the first six months of 2015 have netted its wine industry 3.5 billion Euros in turnover, 7% growth compared to 2014, and, just like Italy, it is due to sparkling wines, which are worth 1.1 billion Euros (90% due to Champagne alone) - but Bordeaux and Burgundy, of course, have also done very well for themselves, with 899 and 399 million Euros respectively, according to data from the French Fédération des exportateurs de vins et spiritueux (FEVS). Champagne, in particular, is the best example of just how important it is to work on average prices, since it has managed to reach 26 Euros per litre with stable volumes, to 378.000 hectolitres, and value reaching 973 million Euros. Bordeaux, on the other hand, has gone up 6.3% in value, but down 1.6% in volume - still, the 2012 record (2.31 billion Euros in exports) looks to be far away. Finally, Burgundy has done well too, just like it did in 2013 and 2014, with 6.2% growth to 339 million Euros, an appetizer of sorts of a year that should reach 732 million Euros in exports. Generally speaking, the French growth is mainly due to the excellent results on the North American market, with export volumes going up 29% - thanks mainly to the Champagne and Cognac.

Focus

2015 harvest “plentiful and good quality”

The latest round of estimates compiled by Unione Italiana Vini (UIV), ISMEA and the Italian Ministry for Agricultural Affairs paint quite a rosy picture. Italian national wine production should hover around 47 million hectolitres, 12% more than 2014. Of course, caution is advised, considering that the rest of September, weather-wise, is going to be crucial, especially when it comes to quality of the great reds. Should this data be confirmed, Italy would once more be the top producing country in the world, since France’s production should yield 46.5 million hectolitres - a 1% drop - and Spain’s should go no further than 43 million (3% less). The estimates were recently made public in Franciacorta, at Cà del Bosco winery, one of the top names in Italian winemaking. If one considers single regions, the estimates describe a general growth in production, from Abruzzo’s 2% increase to the 20% growth in Franciacorta and Sicily: Piedmont is up 10%, Veneto 13% and Apulia 19%, but Calabria should go down 10%, Lombardy should go down 3% and Tuscany’s output should be stable. Quality-wise, the situation looks generally very good, and in some cases, excellent.



Wine & Food

Vespa commemorates the all-Italian US Open women’s final

The historic final of the 2015 US Open between Roberta Vinci and Flavia Pennetta will have its own wine. Its name is going to be Flarò, a rosè produced by Italian anchorman Bruno Vespa in his Futura 14 winery in Apulia. “Flavia and Roberta”, Vespa commented, “are from Brindisi and Taranto, respectively, the same area of Apulia where I make my wines. Since rosè is the quintessential Apulian wine, I think it is only right to dedicate mine to these two fantastic tennis players”. It will be introduced on the market this December, and a total of 13.000 bottles will be produced.

For the record

“The gang master system is Mafia”

Maria Nicolini, Mayor of the islands of Lampedusa and Linosa, has asked the Anti-Mafia Commission of the Italian Parliament to officially define the illegal job brokerage of

underpaid immigrant workers to Mafia activities: the move would surely help the entire Italian agriculture sector, where the gang master system sadly still exists.

