



News



Petrini and the "price to pay"

"We mustn't forget that the Italian wine & food system wouldn't function without migrants, and that we ourselves historically are a population of immigrants: the true Europe will be built on generosity and solidarity", Carlo Petrini, founder of Slow Food, stated during the 2015 Cheese Fair in Bra. He went on to say that "Slow food has denounced the gangmaster system in the vineyards", and thanked the Ministry of Agriculture for joining that fight, since "it isn't conceivable to pay 100 Euros for a bottle of Barolo and only 2 Euros an hour to the workers. Let's fight for a fair price for food. How can one pay 35 cents a litre of milk and think that the system is sustainable?"



"Irregular" agriculture

There is a healthy Italian agriculture, one that is very highly respected, that fully abides by the law and that respects the dignity of workers, and is without a doubt the vastly bigger part of the sector. However, another "dark side" does exist as well, since in 2015, as the Work Protection section of the Italian Carabinieri police stated, over 4.000 irregular workers (2.096 completely outside the legal system) out of a grand total of 12.182 were found in over 2.632 firms, over 8 million Euros in fines and a further 3 million in fines for violating laws on the safeguard of workers' health and safety in the workplace. The issue has been analysed last Wednesday at the Milan Expo, during a conference entirely dedicated to the matter - and, of course, those figures should give everyone pause.

Report

"Best Italian Wine Awards"

Barolo and Brunello are always neck and neck, and in this case - thanks to the 2015 "Best Italian Wine Awards", created by sommelier Luca Gardini and dedicated to the top 50 Italian wines - Piedmont won, with 10 wines to Tuscany's 6. Giuseppe Mascarello e Figlio Barolo Monprivato 2010 is at the top spot, followed by Giuseppe Rinaldi Barolo Brunate 2011 and by Duemani Igp Cabernet Franc Duemani Costa Toscana 2012. The first Brunello, at 6, is Tenuta Le Potazzine Brunello di Montalcino 2011.



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First Page

"Vineyards are culture", says Philippe Daverio

Italian beauty can be protected "by inventing brands and myths: wine is 50% wine and 50% myth, always. But myths must be built, since they are always partially drawn". During a conversation with WineNews, this is how renowned art critic Philippe Daverio described the term regarding wine. He then went on to explain that "Italian myths include Piedmont, Friuli, Central Italy and Tuscany - and Tuscans have been the first because they are mythomaniacs - while I have yet to see a person from Umbria being excessive. Sicilians have created a very strong myth, if one thinks of the names of places that have been taken out of literature, or of families with old surnames that have started making wine". Italy discovered its journey towards myths, after the methanol scandal, that is, when wine evolved from a drink to a piece of culture. "In Italy, we're used to seeing paintings as the only pieces of culture, but vineyards are culture as well, since their history is intertwined with Italian history" and even more so to the history of Europe, as Daverio defined it "a consortium of peoples based around wine". Still, "the Italian brand is too easily copied. Denominations and controlled origins work, but more rigorous checks are needed for DOCs. It is not easy, but it is necessary. And the real "Made in Italy" phenomenon, the one tied to the territory, has a lot of ground to cover yet. What is happening", he pointed out, "is that great international capitals are buying up lots of land. They bring their experience, but they lack the accent. And can one make wine without an accent, one could well ask"? Today, excellence is at the grasp of (almost) everybody. "The way to beat them? Uniqueness, and I would like to spur Italy to bet on its own uniqueness". One thing is fundamental, and that is "for local authorities to realize how much our national treasures are worth, for a sort of transversal improvement of sensibilities, to make better propaganda. We've forgotten this, but we invented it". Or maybe not, since the Expo is what it is: "I don't know, but Italy is a lucky country, and the Expo has worked, telling the world that the Expo on food is an Italian thing. And this is a fantastic result".

Focus

More optimism for the 2015 harvest

According to the comments of some of Italy's top winemakers, 2015 could turn out to become a great vintage. Weather conditions have held, and are still favourable around Italy. Barring unfortunate last minute events, the sun should keep on shining, and that is especially good news for the later red grape varieties. The harvest is probably going to be a warm one, but plants, thanks to a generous water reserve due to abundant rains in winter and spring, have managed very well, and quality should be a far cry from last year's vintage, even though it is too soon to tell for sure. Piedmont's whites and Dolcetto look particularly good, as well as Barolo - even if Nebbiolo still has to be harvested - and favourable comments abound on Veneto's Valpolicella. Caution still is the word in Tuscany, even if the word from Montalcino (and therefore Brunello) speaks of marvellous grapes and excellent ripening - and the situation looks good in Sicily as well. Overall the situation, with the clock ever closer to sounding the final hour, looks very good, echoing Renzo Cotarella, General Director of Antinori and his comment on the matter, when he defined the 2015 harvest "good or excellent".



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Wine & Food

A meagre, costly season ahead for Italian truffles

After a lot of rain both in Langhe and Tuscany, as anticipated, things look a lot better in the best territories for the coveted white truffles, but it has been too hot nonetheless, and that is why quantities will be scarce, and prices will go in the opposite direction. The first litmus test will be the 85th "Fair of White Truffles of Alba" and its famous world auction (Oct. 10th-Nov. 15th), while in Tuscany prices have gone up 50% year-over-year, to 1.500 Euros per kilo, and the situation looks quite difficult both in Marche and in Umbria, as well.

For the record

"The Harvest" returns to Milan's fashion district

From Oct. 5th to the 11th, "The Harvest" will once more take over Milan's fashion district, whose boutiques will host some of Italy's most famous sommeliers and

vintners for its 6th edition. The event will once more offer, in a single package, some of the very best of what "Made in Italy" has to offer in a variety of sectors.

