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News



Winemaking in Mozia

A grapevine has thrived on the Sicilian island of Mozia for over 100 years, since British merchant Joseph "Pip" Whitaker planted one to make a wine, Marsala, which could compete with Madeira and Porto. The ecosystem is unique, but there is no electricity, and one needs permission just to walk on the island, currently owned by the Whitaker Foundation. Winemaking is a mission that Tasca d'Almerita is carrying out there, for "12 more vintages" of Grillo wine with the Tasca-Whitaker brand, Alberto Tasca told WineNews, on the 15 hectares of the island's vineyards. So far, the Foundation has received royalties exceeding 200.000 Euros from the endeavour.



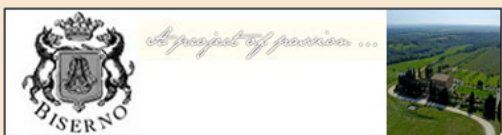
Tuscany and Piedmont

Even though one of the top strengths of Italian wine, as many are fond of saying, is the variety and uniqueness of its wines and its grape varieties, most of the attention is still focused on Tuscany and Piedmont, according to the latest search data from www.wine-searcher.com. Queries about Italian wine have gone up 37% since 2013, and Italy is the third most important country, after France and the US. Among Italian wines, Barolo is the subject of most queries, counting 655.000 during 2015 (12.17% of the total), followed by Tuscan IGTs (including Supertuscans like Masseto, Tignanello and Solaia), Brunello di Montalcino (10.3% of all queries), Valpolicella and Bolgheri (home of wines like Sassicaia and Ornellaia, with 4.7% Chianti Classico (4%), Sicily (3.5%) and Barbaresco (3%).

Report

China, Russia and the East

Italian wine & food exports are increasingly looking eastward, where both opportunities and difficulties abound. On the one hand, data regarding China is comforting, with 400 million Euros worth of shipments in the first 10 months of 2015, which will probably go up considering the new trade agreements regarding oranges and olive oil. Russia, on the other hand, is drinking ever more wine, but is drinking its own for now: imports have plummeted, and Italy has lost 23% in export value of non-sparkling wines.



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The future of wine is "typicalness and uniqueness"

According to Emilio Pedron - long-time, and one of the most important managers in the wine sector, formerly at the helm of Gruppo Italiano Vini, and currently head of Bertani Domains, owned by pharmaceutical group Angelini, including brands such as Bertani (Valpolicella), Puiatti (Collio), Val di Suga (Montalcino), Tre Rose (Montepulciano), San Leonino (Chianti Classico) and Fazi Battaglia (Castelli di Jesi), 500 hectares of vineyards, 4 million bottles a year and 24 million Euros in turnover (65% from exports) - there is a need for the "third revolution of Italian wine denominations". The revolution must hinge on a true rediscovery of the real and historical typicality of territories, getting the most out of the wine/territory duo, using science, which allows one to express potential in the best possible manner thanks to new technologies both in the vineyards and in the cellar. It will have to keep in mind the old and traditional technologies to create wines that are truly unique with features that cannot be duplicated in other territories and with other varieties; not look for "shortcuts", as legal as those may be (like disciplinary rules that can be "bent" from an ampelographic point of view) trying to be more tailored to the consumers' taste and likable to everyone, rather than trying to give more value to an identity. "This", he told WineNews, "refers to all Italian wine, since everyone has declared that typicality is its strongest feature, and this goes double for the most important territories and denominations, like the ones we operate in". Following the drive towards quality that has characterized the last 20-30 years in Italy - during which some have followed the critics' opinions, mainly foreign ones, in order to customize the style of their wines, nonetheless contributing to the growth of the sector and a process which is not to be repudiated - according to Pedron, now it is time to question oneself again to connect more with one's real past, not ignoring modernity, but staying in sync with the "nature" of a territory. And, scientific zoning should be used as well, "not to state what's better and what's worse, but rather, to support the value of diversity".

Focus

DOP prices up, IGTs down in 2015

The "on-tap" red DOP wines, Brunello di Montalcino, Amarone della Valpolicella and Barolo, and Alto Adige for whites, enjoyed the highest prices in 2015, according to data from ISMEA. Prices have gone up 8% over 2014, with whites outperforming reds 11% to 6%. Meanwhile, IGTs have gone down 8%. Brunello di Montalcino sold for 879.81 Euros per 100 kilos (up 13.5%), followed by Amarone della Valpolicella at 870.75 (down 3.2%), Barolo (749.53, up 6.2%), Nobile di Montepulciano (393.02, up +20.8%), Barbaresco (355.75, up +21.7%), Alto Adige Lagrein (348.70, up +2.6%), Valpolicella Classico (250, up 2.7%), Chianti Classico (240.24, up 35.8%), Valpolicella (238.86, up 3.3%) and Nebbiolo d'Alba (218.87, up 18.9%). Regarding whites, the top 5 are all from Alto Adige: Traminer went for 444.35 Euros, down 1.3%, followed by Pinot Grigio (270.24 Euros, up 9.3%), Terlan Pinot Bianco (268.55, up 11.7%), Chardonnay (262.18, up 12.4%), Pinot Bianco (257.52, up 0.4%), Trento Pinot Nero (231.43, up 10.2%), Cortese di Gavi (227.5, up 40.6%), Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco (222.33, up 8.6%), Trento (180) and Trentino Pinot Grigio (168.01, up 1.5%).



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Wine & Food

Italy against the European "deregulation" of grape varieties

The so-called "deregulation" process that the EU is pushing forward would allow winemakers from other EU countries to not only plant Italian varieties like Sangiovese or Glera, but legally call the resulting wine with that name. Italian Minister for Agriculture Martina recently declared his firm opposition to EU Commissioner Phil Hogan, but according to Ottavio Cagiano, General Director of Federvini, "the Commission seems to want to protect the geographical indication rather than the variety's name. And Italy must firmly oppose this view".

For the record

Mass retail wine sales go up in Italy

In 2015, wine sales in Italian mass retail stores have gone up 0.7% in volume and 1.3% in value, year-over-year, with average prices going up 0.6%, led by sparklings (Prosecco first and foremost), up 6.7% in volume and 6.5% in value, revealed data analysed by ISMEA, partner of Unione Italiana Vini's Observatory on Wine.

