



News



The "Golden Cellar"

The new "Golden Cellar" of Montalcino's Podere Le Ripi, owned by eclectic winemaker and VIP Francesco Illy, has been unveiled, and is made with over 750,000 bricks laid one after the other in four years, following the building techniques of ancient Romans and using sustainable building principles. The cellar will be inaugurated next February the 20th, during the "Benvenuto Brunello" preview, by Sebastian Nasello, winner of the 2016 "Giulio Gambelli Prize" for young oenologists promoted by ASET, and by the "Promising Young Oenologists" of the same prize, which will be crowned next February 16th, during the 2016 preview of Vernaccia di San Gimignano.



Amarone in court

The clash between the Consortium of Wines of Valpolicella and the Families of Amarone d'Arte association has had its first days in court in Venice, and one of the two parts of the clash is over, since the "procedure of urgency" has been dismissed. The procedure could have banned the use of the term Amarone on the part of the Families, but would have also made the proceedings last for a lot longer, and so, the judge will now have to rule on one proceeding only. The final word on the matter should come during this year, but the international proceeding regarding the attempt, on the Families' part, to register the "Famiglie dell'Amarone d'Arte" trademark at the European Office for the Harmonization of the Internal Market, still goes on.

Report

Frescobaldi invests, grows

Marchesi de' Frescobaldi, the winemaker from Tuscany that can boast a 700-year-old history, has seen its turnover grow, and apparently aims to acquire more properties in the region. Their 2015 balance sheet has closed at 95 million Euros (9% growth year-over-year), and the group led by President Lamberto Frescobaldi is currently on the prowl for new properties, with negotiations apparently already ongoing in top-tier Tuscan territories like Montalcino and Chianti Classico.



First Page

Farewell to Giacomo Tachis, the greatest of all

Giacomo Tachis, one of the founding fathers of Italian winemaking and one of the very few that have truly set it free from a narrow-minded perspective, making it a global success in the process, peacefully passed away at 82 last Saturday, the same way that he practiced his craft, in San Casciano Val di Pesa, near Florence. He was one of the architects of the winemaking "renaissance" of Italy, with some of the country's most famous wines - like Sassicaia, Solaia, Tignanello and San Leonardo - under his belt, and some of his choices, year after year, are still some of the most important insights for the success of our wines. Methods such as clonal selection, the use of small oak barrels for aging, high-density plantings, the lowering of yields, malolactic fermentation and so on, are now canon thanks to him. And these were the elements that made a frank dialogue possible between Italian and French wine, just like Tachis used to speak with his longtime friend and mentor, Emile Peynaud. Giacomo Tachis officially retired back in the spring of 2010, and he has been the true friend of all Italian wine for close to five of the 20th century's decades, thanks to his professionalism, his humility and his knowledge and passion for both science and the humanities. He was far more than a simple oenologist: he routinely quoted classical poet Archestratus of Gela as the father of gastronomy, and his private study was an archipelago of books. Part-scientist, part-alchemist, he had a very deep knowledge of chemistry, and was ever the inquisitive traveler on the paths of both history and literature. Thanks to his intellectual restlessness and his innate sensibility, he showed the way forward to a world of Italian wine that seemed to be endlessly lost in a labyrinth of failures. A deep knowledge of the past and a plethora of daring hypotheses were his hallmarks, together with his remarkable matter-of-factness, which can be all summed up in a single phrase: "wine is the human interpretation of grape". His career and the evolution of Italian winemaking are so deeply intertwined that one without the other would have no meaning, and the world of Italian wine is without a doubt a lesser place without him.

Focus

300 years of Chianti Classico

"Today marks the beginning of the celebrations for the 300 years of the announcement of Cosimo III de' Medici, that marked the boundaries for the production of wines in Chianti, Pomino, Carmignano and Valdarno Superiore", Sergio Zingarelli, President of the Consortium of Chianti Classico, told WineNews at the eve of the "Chianti Classico Collection 2016" (Feb. 14th-15th), which will not only host the preview of the 2015 and 2014 vintages, of the Riserva and of the 2013 Gran Selezione, but also be the first event that will celebrate the three centuries of the "Black Rooster". "Cosimo III", Zingarelli explained, "also created the Congregations of Vigilance, which oversaw the production of wine to make sure that quality standards were respected. They were proto-consortiums, and their heritage is one that we feel honored and bound to preserve and grow". And, many more events will take place, like the "Chianti Classico Stage" of the Giro d'Italia (May 15th), "Black Rooster" statues among the boutiques of Florence's Via Tornabuoni and in Palazzo Vecchio's Salone dei Cinquecento (Sept. 24th), and a concert directed by Zubin Mehta at the Nuovo Teatro dell'Opera.



Wine & Food

"No more Brunello on the label, ever", says Gianfranco Soldera

"Since 2013, my wine is called Toscana Igt Soldera 100% Sangiovese: that's when I stopped using the term Brunello di Montalcino", Gianfranco Soldera, owner of Montalcino's Case Basse, told WineNews. "I have no more bottles in the cellar", he continued, "and foreign buyers have acquired all the 8.600 bottles of the 2009 vintage. I'll start delivering them at the end of March, for a price tag of 220 Euros for regular bottles and 440 for magnums" - which, by the way, makes it one of the priciest wines in Italy. "I want to choose who to sell to", he concluded, "and foreign buyers pay in advance".

For the record

More food-related crimes found, stopped

The fight against food-related criminal activities does not ever stop: last week 1.300 kilos of illegal dairy products were seized near Bari, and in Rome, 7 people were arrested and over a million Euros' worth of property was seized near Rome from an organization specializing in food crimes with ties to the Moccia crime family.

