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News



Italy's most profitable

Yearly turnover is an important indicator for a business, but profitability on investments is just as important, if not more. According to an analysis on Italian wine producers by the Italian magazine "Il Mondo", the highest gross operating margin in 2011 belongs to Antinori with 40%, followed by Fratelli Lunelli (Cantine Ferrari), with 35%, and Masi Agricola, with 31.6% (pictured above: Piero Antinori, Matteo Lunelli and Sandro Boscaini). Then come Marchesi de' Frescobaldi with 29%, Santa Margherita with 28.3%, Cusumano (26%), Planeta (24%), Donnafugata (23.5%), Barone Ricasoli (22.2%), Allegrini (21%), Ruffino (20.7%), Guido Berlucchi (20.5%), and Argiolas (20%).



Sober? Never again

Another study on wine has just been published, this time from the University of Illinois, and the results are close to astonishing. According to "The Daily Mail", the University psychologists and researchers have found out that a glass of wine (or beer) can be a thinking aid: when given a questionnaire with logic as a topic, the percentage of correct answers was 40% higher among those who had a glass or two compared to those who drank none, because alcohol supposedly helps one's mind to find creative solutions, though it hinders analytical thinking. The researchers wanted to prove how an excessive concentration could stifle creativity, so a glass of wine, good for body and mind, is always more than welcome!

Report

Less wine, more binge drinking

Wine consumption is dropping in Italy (-1% in 2011 over 2010), and among youths the tendency to "binge drink" - consuming absurd quantities of alcohol in a single night - is rising, as a report on alcohol abuse made by ISTAT, Italy's Institute of Statistics, confirmed. 18.8% of youths 14 to 17 years old drink outside of meals (in 2001 it was 15.5%) and 31.9% of youths aged 18 to 24 who go to clubs and concerts are at risk of alcohol abuse, as well as a frightening number of "barely teenagers" (11 to 15 years old).



First Page

Italian wine gets around, says "Il Mondo" magazine

It's not all sunshine and roses, but Italian wine is one of the healthiest sectors of "Made in Italy" products. Turnover rose 7% in 2011 over 2010 - when the crisis bit back - mainly thanks to exports: +4.4% at home and +10.6% abroad. This is what emerged from the report penned by Italian journalist Anna Di Martino and published in the Italian weekly, "Il Mondo", a financial magazine published by RCS Group. It is a reliable picture, since the surveyed sample (77 winemakers with a turnover higher than 10 million Euros) represents 40% of the entire sector and 50% of all exports (2.198 billion Euros out of a grand total of 4.4 billion). "The interviews", Di Martino explained, "tell the tale of an important change: winemakers who earn a lot are not afraid to say so anymore, because they know that earnings are not a shortcut to riches, but a means to investing in their business and in the quality of their products, with returns that come after a long time - up to 20 years for new "sustainable" vineyards, for instance. And there are businesses that sacrifice margins and turnover to promote their brand or to tune up their distribution network, which is one of the sector's critical points - but if it is properly built and managed, especially abroad, it can insulate from market fluctuations. These are businesses that do not "drain" money from the market, but keep it flowing by reinvesting it". "Il Mondo" also published a top 10 list of wine makers by turnover, and Cantine Riunite & Civ, with 500 million Euros (+11.8% over 2010), is in the lead, followed by Caviro (171.1 millions, -9%) and Cavit (151.6 millions, +11.4%). Then come Fratelli Martini (150 millions, +8.7%), Mezzacorona (148.6 millions, +2%), Antinori (145, +10.1%), Campari Group (133.3 millions, +1.1%), Zonin (126 millions, +19%), Giordano Vini (118.3 millions, -4.6%), and Enoitalia (95 millions +21.3%). The outlook for 2012 is positive, but increasing prices for raw materials are a worrying possibility (2011's increases reached 30% in some cases). This carries over to the finished product price, which grew 5% since January, resulting in a 2% drop in domestic consumption. Italian wine gets around, but it should not rest on its laurels.

Focus

France and Italy together in China?

What if Italy and France, two historic rivals, found out that they might have to make common cause in order to win over that Asian market? Thierry Desseauve, renowned French wine critic asked the question: "What really separates France and Italy, since both make high-quality products", he told Winenews during an interview (available on winenews.tv), "is the concept of reputation. Italy's presence in the U.S., after all, was built on the network of immigrants it had there and on their restaurants - and the same happened in many other countries. France, on the other hand, worked hard on its top-tier wines - Bordeaux, Burgundy, Champagne - in order to build a solid reputation. But Asian markets are new ground for everyone, so something entirely different might be just what the doctor ordered for both". Meanwhile, a survey for promoting the biggest Asian trade event, the Asia-Pacific Vinexpo, revealed that 99.5% of wine sold in China is still, and that 91% of it is red. A good sign for both countries, since wine accounts for 39% of all sales of alcoholic beverages there: but competition from Australia is a clear and present challenge for both Italy and France.



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Wine & Food

Landscape, Architecture & Wine: looking for a new Maestro

The relationship between wine and architecture has produced many fine examples, from Arnaldo Pomodoro's "Carapace", the new home of Tenuta Castelnuovo's Sagrantino, to Mario Botta's "Petra", the Tuscan cellar of Terra Moretti Suvereto. But the new masterpiece might come from Spain, where Arquideas - the networking platform for Spanish students of Architecture - teamed up with the Wine Company of Northern Spain to create the international contest, "Landscape, Architecture & Wine", which will focus on a cellar with the potential to become a tourist attraction as well as a work of art.

For the record

A boom for enviro-friendly vacations

The crisis is shortening vacations and budgets alike, but it's giving new life to enviro-friendly vacations, which will reach a record 11 billion Euros in value (and 100 million people a year) in 2012, according to an analysis made by Coldiretti, one of Italy's main farmers' associations, presented together with the Italian Touring Club.

