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News



Nittardi's art on a label

"A vine leaf delighted by the wine filling the glass", is how Pierre Alechinsky, one of modern art's most important authors, explained the artistic label of Nittardi's Chianti Classico Casanuova 2009, the latest in a series of designer labels made for the renowned Nittardi Farm since 1981 and signed, among others, by A.R. Penck, Yoko Ono, Mitoraj, Emilio Tadini, Giuliano Ghelli, Valerio Adami, Mimmo Paladino, Tomi Ungerer, Friedensreich Hundertwasser and Günter Grass. All of the labels will be on view in the Galleria del Palazzo of Coveri Palace in Florence, from October 19th to the 28th and in Cenci Palace's Edieuropa Gallery, in Rome, from November 17th to the 26th.



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SMS

Seal of Quality for Italian restaurants?

The damages of counterfeit and "Italian sounding" Made in Italy products, have sadly become a well-founded talking point from an economic as well as reputation point of view. This goes double for the legion of "pseudo-Italian" restaurants scattered all over the world. It is definitely time, then, that the idea of a kind of "seal of quality" for Italian food enterprises abroad - to be assigned to restaurants, pizzerias and ice cream shops that satisfy the requirements of the governmental Committee for the protection and promotion of the Italian food industry - has been put back on the front burner. Provided, of course, that the 6 legislative bills regarding this "seal of quality" make it out of the government machine unscathed...

Report

A Nobile cause indeed

When a territory is truly virtuoso, it shows: Montepulciano, home of the Nobile is where the winemakers' consortium and the public are working together for the territory, for example renovating the town's medieval Fortress, where not only the yearly preview of Nobile, but a lot of public events take place. And "Wine Spectator" magazine promptly acknowledged this example not only reporting it, but also choosing Montepulciano as partner for its New York tour, starting October 24th.

First Page

Harvest over: volume down 14% from 2010, but prices spiking up to 35%. And quality is "variable"

August's predictions said 5% less compared to 2010. October's data, with grapes in the cellars, say 14% less, or 40.3 million hectoliters less, which in turn means the scarcest harvest since the 1940s, but grape, must and wine quotations up 5% to 35% in almost every region (after 2010's stalemate, and 2009's 30% less from 2008), says Assoenologi, Italy's oenological association, commenting the 2011 harvest. "It could've been a memorable year", director Giuseppe Martelli stated, "but even September didn't help make the difference. Grape and wine quality was quite mixed, and even within the same region the good is clashing with the excellent and the mediocre with the splendid. Overall, 2011 is very interesting for whites, with some fine and even excellent examples, and the reds are showing a notable polyphenolic charge, with clear chances of an evolution". But if weather alone influenced the quality, the decrease in quantity is due to uprooting and green harvests, especially in the South: according to Assoenologi, 9.300 hectares of vineyards were uprooted in 2010 alone, and 22.000 in '08-'09, particularly in Sicily, Apulia and Emilia-Romagna. Green harvesting, which makes the vineyard unproductive for a year, was applied to 13.000 hectares in Sicily alone. Veneto (7.930.000 hectoliters) is confirmed as the most productive Italian region and, together with Sicily, Apulia and Emilia-Romagna, produces 23.5 million hectoliters, which is 60% of all Italian wine. The markets, nonetheless, are sending reassuring signals, Assoenologi declared: "foreign sales in 2010 grew 11.9% in value and 11% in volume over 2009. And the figures regarding the first half of 2011 are showing further growth: 14.1% more in value and 15.4% more in volume. So there is a rebound, and it's showing. We're talking important performances, since in 2010 almost 50% of national production was exported, which means that wines from Italy, with a bit of cautious optimism, are back in business".

Focus

China to be wine's first market in 20 years

According to a recent report from the British International Wine & Spirits Research Institute, China will not only surpass the UK in consumption in about a year, but is well on its way to becoming the world's biggest market for wine in 20 years' time. According to IWSR's report, the only hurdle for foreign cellars in China is "the scant knowledge Chinese consumers have of imported wines. Formation is key". Back to the present, figures are showing that the best trade route for China goes through Hong Kong - 30% of all wines imported there are re-imported in the Middle Kingdom - where, from November 3rd to the 5th, the International Wine & Spirits Fair will take place. And Italy, thanks to Vinality (VeronaFiere), will be the Fair's partner country. A prime opportunity to hinder France's domination in Hong Kong, and to further increase Italy's market share there - which amounted to 20 million US\$ in 2010, for a 45% increase from 2009. Consumption in Asia-Pacific is markedly on the rise, according to data from Euromonitor International: particularly in China (+8.2% every year from 2009 to 2014) and in India (+21.4%).



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Wine & Food

Bottura & Vissani get top marks from Gambero Rosso

Massimo Bottura (Osteria Francescana, in Modena) and Gianfranco Vissani (Casa Vissani, in Baschi) were both awarded 95/100 by the 2012 edition of Gambero Rosso's "Restaurants of Italy", one of Italy's most important food guides, which gave the two chefs its highest grades in the "Three Forks" category (90/100 and up). Next, all with 93/100, are Heinz Beck's La Pergola, in Rome's Cavalieri Hotel (94), Massimiliano Alajmo's Le Calandre (Padua), the Iaccarino family's Don Alfonso (Sant'Agata sui Due Golfi), Enrico Crippa's Piazza Duomo (Alba) and Niko Romito's Reale (Rivisondoli).

For the record

From "mini-testing" to "mini-tasting"

Out of the States comes the news that the "mini-tester" format of perfume samples has been applied to wine: it's www.tastingroom.com, which sells not only standard bottles,

but also sets of six 50 ml. bottles of wines from California, Italy, France and other countries, allowing you to taste before buying the full bottle.

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