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News



Italy's fine wine champions

The Liv-Ex 1000 index, the biggest benchmark in the world for the fine wines market, grew 0.9% in July, also thanks to the great performance of the Italy 100 sub-index, which went up 1.5%. According to the "Liv-Ex most wanted 2017" ranking, which searched the most searched-for wines on the database in the first 7 months of the year, Sassicaia is the only Italian among an army of French wines, at spot 27, and it's the 10th most traded wine on the market. Furthermore, according to wine-lister.com, Marchesi Antinori's Solaja is the only Italian wine among those in wine lists of the world's top-rated restaurants that has grown the most since April, at spot number 11 for a 6.5% increase.



2017's wine guides

The 2017 editions of the most important Italian wine guides are a work in progress, but soon to be finalized, and according to some early indications from a WineNews survey they all indicate some common trends, like the fact that it is increasingly easy to be able to drink great wines at great prices all over Italy, a general growth in quality of southern Regions and an overall shift from robustness to elegance and freshness. Friuli's doing great for whites, with Marche, thanks to Verdicchio, and Abruzzo, with Pecorino, following closely, while Etna wineries are consolidating their cult status, and Sardinia is leaving a mark, particularly with its Vermentino, but also with its other wines. Campania's growth in quality is widespread, as well as the growth of sparkling wine regions like Franciacorta and Trentino.

Report

Italy's challenge to EU labelling

The Italian government has officially activated the two joint decrees that mandated an update on rice and pasta labels: from now on, the labels will have to include a clear mention of the country of origin of the raw materials used to make the finished products, one-upping the EU regulations on the matter. Italy implemented the same system for milk and dairy products in 2013, through EU decree 1169/2011, and for all kinds of meat in 2015.



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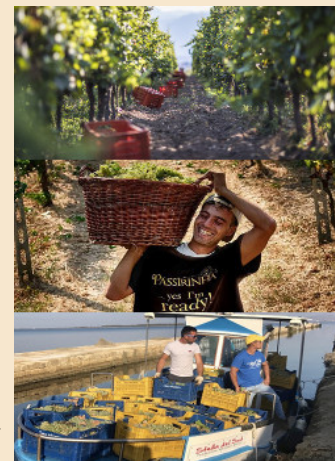
Assoenologi: 2017 harvest one of the scarcest

The 2017 harvest is one of the most enigmatic in recent times, but it carries one clear message: when vintages are evaluated, one must be able to give a comprehensive opinion, which is an increasingly harder task, even for the wineries of single territories, since crus - and the winemakers' different interpretations of the vintage - are ever more important. One should then proceed with caution until grapes are in the cellars, as some of the most prominent academics and oenologists told WineNews recently. And, that opinion seems to have found confirmation in the first production estimates by Italian oenologists association Assoenologi, chaired by Riccardo Cotarella. 2017 is going to be the scarcest harvest of the last 60 years, with no more than 41.1 million hectolitres, a 24% drop compared to 2016 (which reached 54.1). Veneto should retain the crown of top producer, with 8.6 millions (down 15% over 2016), followed by Apulia (6.7 million, a 30% drop) and Emilia Romagna (6.2 million, 20% less). Sicily looks to be in dire straits, at 3.9 million hectolitres forecasted (35% less year-over-year), and Abruzzi doesn't fare any better, at 2.7 million (a 30% drop). Piedmont's drop in production is less eye-popping (down 15%, to 2.16 million hectolitres), while Tuscany is expected to go no higher than 2.11 million hectolitres (also a 30% drop). Friuli Venezia Giulia will make, according to the estimate, 1.57 million hectolitres of wine (down 15%), while Lazio and Umbria will drop a stunning 40% (1.36 millions). Then there's Campania, the only Region in the green after a tough 2016 (1.35 million hectolitres, up 5%). Lombardy and Trentino should hover around one million (1.1 million, down 25% for the former and 1.09, down 10%, for the latter), and Marche's output will be around 710,000 hectolitres (down 25%), followed by Sardinia (640,000, down 20%). Valle d'Aosta, Liguria, Molise, Basilicata and Calabria combined will make around 740,000 hectolitres (30% less than in 2016). Furthermore, given that high temperatures and droughts are still present in central and southern Italy, "one cannot rule out the possibility of further heavy losses", Assoenologi stated.

Focus

The uniqueness of each vintage

Discussions abound on the quality of the 2017 vintage, for obvious reasons. 2017 has been a hot year, like 2007, 2009, 2011 and 2012; it's been an early one, like 2007 and 2011; it's been a dry one as well, like 2003 and 2012, and it has featured heat waves like those of 2011 and 2015. At the moment, it can be said that grapes are healthy, with high levels of sugar. The rest will depend on what happens when the harvest will be in the cellars, as well as the unique interactions between grape variety, soil and local climate. Predictions or forecasts are oftentimes hazardous for this reason, since they run the risk of overlooking the unique element that makes wine magical - the diversity of each vintage, which in turn makes it possible to distinguish between bottles from the same territory or the same winemaker. In the last ten years only 2010 and 2015 have been very good ones, and the others just average ones (2014 was a forgettable one, albeit a great one for Sicily), but not a single truly great one. In a direct comparison, hot vintages win 6-4 against cooler ones: 2007, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2015 and 2017 versus 2010, 2013, 2014 and 2016, with 2008 belonging to none.



Wine & Food

Grape values shoot up in the new Pinot Grigio denomination

The new "Pinot Grigio denomination", officially christened DOC delle Venezie, and created to give further value to a variety that has been a runaway success on world markets, is showing its effects. According to farmers union, Coldiretti, market quotes for those grapes are around 68-72 Euros per 100 kilos, compared to last year's 50-58. This is an encouraging sign for the Consortium led by Albino Armani, which will protect the denomination in all three Regions (Veneto, 11.500 hectares, Friuli 6.000 and Trentino 2.800), which, combined, grow 85% of all Italian Pinot Grigio grapes, and 43% worldwide.

For the record

Wine exports to grow in 2017, Coldiretti says

According to the latest estimates by Italian farmers association Coldiretti, wine exports have gone up 4.7% in the first four months of 2016 compared to the same four months of 2016 (which brought a new record in value, to 5.6 billion Euros), but overall growth at the end of the year should reach a remarkable 6.3% over 2016.

