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News



Barolo on the auction block

Quick-change artist Arturo Brachetti (pictured above) and Minister of Welfare Elsa Fornero, both hailing from Piedmont, were there, but the real protagonist at the "Asta del Barolo" - first at Zachys in New York and then at Castello di Barolo - was the fabled Piedmontese wine itself, raking in almost 50.000 Euros in two auctions. The highest price for a single bottle, a double magnum of Barolo Cerequio Michele Chiarlo, was 1230 Euros, but the top lot reached 5000 Euros. Green economy entrepreneur Antonio Bertolotto was the highest bidder for a 14-bottle collection of the best vintages (between 1998 and 2007) of the 14 winemakers of the Accademia del Barolo.



Wine and France's elections

It might be because a glass of Champagne always bodes well, or maybe because the opinion of the winemakers and of the territories of great wines count more than a little, given what they represent for both the country's economy and its prestige in the world, but at the end of the day it is no accident that François Hollande, the French Socialist Party candidate in the 2012 Presidential elections, concluded his campaign in Epernay, in the heart of the Champagne region. With the added bonus of closing the book on a bit of a diplomatic faux pas, since Hollande, after his victory on April 22nd, is said to have toasted with a glass of red wine. And in France, clearly, the backing of all winemakers is equally precious...

Report

Wine marketing and cinema

The movies can be a useful tool for conquering the wine markets. For the first time, the "Discover" line of the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (Canada) will be dedicated to Italy - thanks to the contribution of the Great Brands Institute, led by Piero Antinori - with "Discover Italy", by James Fitzpatrick, made to further charm Canadian consumers (where Italian wine has a 20% market share). The "travelogue" of the winemaking "Belpaese", from North to South, will premiere on May 8th in Rome.



First Page

Less wine, but better quality wine for Italians

It is indeed true that less and less wine is consumed in Italy, but the domestic market does not offer bad news only. "For those who make upper-tier wines, the numbers are holding up, and in some cases they have grown", as Marcello Meregalli, CEO of Gruppo Meregalli - a leading company in the distribution of quality wines in Italy, with a turnover of 50 million Euros - puts it. "Quality sparkling wines from Italy have grown, and most of all, some historical denominations, which have begun to price their wares in a "smarter" way", he explained to winenews.tv, "that is to say, more attuned to the current market situation. Prices that oscillate between 10 and 20 Euros at the wine shop, and that hover around 20 Euros a bottle in restaurants as well": wines, then, that come out of the winery with a price tag of 5 to 8 Euros per bottle. And, quality pays off in mass retail as well: Brunello di Montalcino (with an average price of 17.2 Euros), for example, grew 14.8% in 2011 over 2010. It seems, then, that in a time of crisis consumers are more inclined towards drinking fewer bottles of wine, but higher quality. "If we open our closets we discover we have four coats of the same colour, or we look into our pockets to find a new cell phone every six months. And maybe we have skimmed on personal pleasures. Now that we're back to counting nickels and dimes because of the crisis, we're spending money to satisfy our body's needs, and wine is part of those". Slowly but steadily, the mantra of "price/quality ratio", which has been - and still is - guiding consumer choices about wine, seems to have fallen in favour of more "functional" choices (table wine, gift wine, a special bottle for dinner guests). So what's in store for the Italian market? "This tier, which was considered middle, has now become middle-upper because of the crisis, will consolidate, and this bodes well for the quality product that sells for 5-7 Euros and up at mass retail and at 10 Euros at the wine shop. Sparkling and foreign wines are doing well, and not only the collectibles: for foreign wines, we're back to pre-crisis levels".

Focus

"The 50 Best Restaurants in the World"

As Winenews predicted on the eve of the award ceremony, which took place on April 30th, René Redzepi, chef of Copenhagen's Noma restaurant, was once again crowned king of the "The 50 Best Restaurants in the World" awards - a joint venture between San Pellegrino water and "Restaurant magazine" - for three years in a row. Italy has fared well, but no more than that, since only three of the restaurants that were in last year's ranking were confirmed this year: the Osteria Francescana in Modena of Massimo Bottura (pictured at the side) slides from fourth place to fifth, Alajmo's Le Calandre, in Rubano, is stable at number 32, and Paolo Lo Priore's Il Canto di Siena, slides from number 39 to 46. Among those who didn't make it in the ranking are Carlo Cracco's Cracco in Milan (at number 33 in 2011), Antonio and Nadia Santini's Dal Pescatore in Canneto sull'Oglio, Mantova (number 38 in 2011), and Davide Scabin's Combalò in Rivoli, Torino (number 28 in 2011). Overall, Europe is confirmed as being the homeland of haute cuisine, but the U.S., South America and Asia are becoming noteworthy opponents. Info: www.theworlds50best.com



www.vinalitytour.com



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Wine & Food

A reality show to get a foot in the English door

If you make wine, and you're looking for growth opportunities in the U.K., you might want to try your hand at the talent show that will take place on May 24th at the "London International Wine Fair": the contenders will have three minutes to showcase the qualities of their wine before a panel of journalists and wine merchants, and have the possibility of striking a deal with one of the big names of wine in England. And if you're not a business, but you do have innovative ideas, the name to look for is Tesco, which is currently looking for good ideas to kickstart. Info: www.londonwinefair.com

For the record

Ornellaia's record patronage

Wine can be a boon for the arts: case in point, the record 144.500 Euros that 111 bottles of Ornellaia, signed by Chinese artist Zang Huan, raised at a Sotheby's auction in Hong

Kong. The "Ornellaia 2009 Vendemmia d'Artista L'Equilibrio" project has now raised 800.000 Euros for the restoration of international artistic heritage.

