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News



Sting: "wine makes me happy"

"The thing I like the most about wine is that it makes me happy. The best thing about making it is seeing the smile of those who drink it. A bottle of wine is like a magical song with a 'message'". This is how singer and winemaker Sting described his relationship with wine at the inauguration of the "Anteprime di Toscana" event. He sang "Message in a Bottle", visited the Consortium of Tuscany's less known denominations, tasted their wines and brought wines from his Il Palagio Estate, together with wife Trudie Styler and the rapper Shaggy. Sting will also be in Montalcino this weekend, and will create the celebratory tile for the 2017 harvest, rated with 4 stars by the Brunello Consortium.



More delays for CMO funds

Even though the regional and national rankings for the distribution of 2017-2018 EU CMO funds for promotion in non-EU countries have finally been officially approved, the matter still is not settled. The funds (100 million Euros in total, 70 administered by Regional authorities and 30 by the Ministry for Agriculture), according to WineNews sources, are still in limbo, due to the fact that State agency AGEA has apparently still not signed the contracts, which to all intents and purposes, would finally allow recipients to use the money, and they will not be able to do so in time for the next deadline, which is next Feb. 20th. Rumours have it, additionally, the matter won't be settled before the end of March, when, realistically speaking, it would not be too soon to speak about the 2018-2019 round of CMO financing.

Report

Barbera's comeback

2017 might have been a pivotal year for Barbera and Asti, as volume was up for bottled wines of the denominations of the Consortium of Barbera d'Asti and Monferrato wines (6.3% more, over 21 million) - but the prices of grapes, bulk wine and vineyards have also followed suit, even if only slightly. "The perception of quality", Consortium president Filippo Mobrìci said, "has gone up, and so have prices, also thanks to Nizza. Four years ago Barbera d'Asti was at 0.9 Euros/litre, now it's around 1.5-1.6".



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Italian and EU wine in 2017 according to ISMEA

No matter which figures one chooses to look at, the 2017 harvest will be remembered as one of the scarcest ever. According to EU data, European wine production last year slumped to 145 million hectolitres (14% less y-o-y), said the latest report by State agency ISMEA. The same data also points out an 18% drop for France and a 15% decrease in Spain, but official data from these countries is still to come. Regarding Italy, ISMEA and UIV are saying 40 million, and oenologists association Assoenologi is saying 38.9, so the drop should hover between 26 and 28%. Moreover, says ISMEA, "This drop in production also comes with a 6% one in European resources. This less than proportional reduction of the "production + stock" figure is due to the fact that the 2017/2018 harvest has begun with over 170 million hectolitres of stock, 3% more than in 2016". Last July, French wineries held 54.4 million hectolitres, Spanish ones 33.9 and Italian wineries 46.2 (national data has been updated to December 2017). One thing, though, is sure, and it's that prices have shot up: table wines are 49% more expensive, GI wines cost 15% more and PDO prices have gone up 8%. At the end of 2017, according to ISMEA data on origin prices (average quotes, excluding VAT, of the latest vintage on the market), the "top three" red PDO wines are Brunello di Montalcino (1.017 Euros/hectolitre, up 13.9% y-o-y), Amarene della Valpolicella (850 Euros, no variations) and Barolo (820, up 0.6%). Alto Adige is still the king of whites: Traminer Aromatico is at 445 (up 7.2%), Pinot Grigio at 323 (up 11.5%), and Terlan Pinot Bianco at 323. Then comes Prosecco di Conegliano e Valdobbiadene, at 275 Euros (up 7.9%). Market-wise, the domestic one has gone up 3% y-o-y in value in mass retail (last year's turnover reached 1.5 billion Euros, according to IRI) and growth came from abroad as well, but not as much as France or Spain. France in particular, according to Business Strategies' Non-EU Countries Observatory, has overtaken Italy in the U.S. in 2017, with 1.649 billion Euros' worth of wine sold versus 1.644.

Focus

Italian non-EU exports lagging in 2017

A missed opportunity, in a nutshell, describes the performance of Italian wine in non-EU countries last year, says an analysis of customs data on the eight markets that absorb 90% of national exports (U.S., China, Canada, Japan, Switzerland, Russia, Norway and Brazil) by Business Strategies' Non-EU countries Observatory and Nomisma - Wine Monitor. Exports have gone up 5.9%, to 3.4 billion Euros, but France and Spain have done better (up 9.8 and 9.7%), and so did Australia and Chile (up 12 and 7.2%). In the last five years Italian wine has grown 33% outside the EU, but not as much as demand has in countries like Switzerland (up 5.4%) and most importantly the U.S. (up 4.5%, a growth rate that is less than half the one of general wine imports). France has overtaken Italy as the main exporter in the U.S. in value, a good December notwithstanding, reaching 1.649 billion Euros versus Italy's 1.644, due to the slow growth of average prices (up 1.5%, 2.77 Euros/litre, compared to France's 3.1% growth to 6.07), weakness in Asia (Italy is at 313 million Euros in China and Japan, France is at 1.73 billion) and demand for sparklings (up 11%) that has not driven the one for bottled still wines (up 4.6%).



ARNALDO CAPRAI

Viticoltore in Montefalco

CAMPAIGN FINANCED ACCORDING TO EC REGULATION N.1308/13

Wine & Food

Italy overtakes Germany as world's top sparkling wine producer

Italy has produced over 660 million bottles of sparkling wines in 2017, mainly thanks to the "Prosecco galaxy", and has become the world's top producer of these wines, taking Germany's place at the top of the podium after 20 years. The data comes from Italian Observatory of Sparkling Wines OVSE, and additionally, according to farmers association Coldiretti, exports have followed suit, reaching a new record in value, at 1.3 billion Euros (up 14% compared to 2016), and the United Kingdom is the main market.

For the record

Farinetti expands to Chianti Classico

Eataly founder Oscar Farinetti's Fontanafredda wine group has expanded its reach by acquiring Chianti Classico estate Il Colombaio di Cencio, including its 110 hectares

of land (15 for vineyards, most for Chianti Classico, and 7 rented ones) and a 36.000 square-foot wine cellar, in the Municipality of Gaiole in Chianti, near Siena.

