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News



The latest bachelorette party fad? Among pots and pans

The latest fad for a bachelorette party in the last few hours before getting a husband is to spend it in the kitchen. And not just any kitchen, but in a restaurant to learn all the right secrets from a "Michelin starred" chef, to look good in front of your future in-laws. The idea comes from the "La Credenza" restaurant in San Maurizio Canavese, in Piedmont, with chefs Igor Macchia (pictured above) and Giovanni Grasso as teachers for the soon-to-be brides. The subject? How to get the groom at the table as well through the many secrets of Italian cuisine...



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SMS

Food & wine anti mafia

At the end of the week in which Italy commemorated the 20th anniversary of the slaughter in Capaci - the assassination of one of the paladins of the war on Mafia, Judge Giovanni Falcone - a mention to those who fight it through wine & food is due. Because it is indeed true that, as Fipe-Concommercio stated, "the criminal holding of catering is the biggest restaurant chain in Italy, with 5.000 establishments, 16.000 employees and a 1 billion Euros turnover", but is also true that there are enterprises like Libera Terra, the project founded by Father Luigi Ciotti, whose cooperatives manage lands confiscated from mafia families and produce excellent wines, pasta and so on. Such products have a powerful ethical meaning, and their producers deserve at the very least a heartfelt thank you.

Report

Grana and Parmigiano on their knees after earthquake

The 6.2 Richter quake that struck Emilia Romagna seven days ago brought one of the region's most important productive sectors to its knees: estimated damages to livestock farms and structures run up to 250 million Euros. But the worst damages were in store for the thousands of wheels of Parmigiano and Grana that were destroyed, according to the two Consortiums, while an official estimate should come from the Ministry of Agriculture at a later date.



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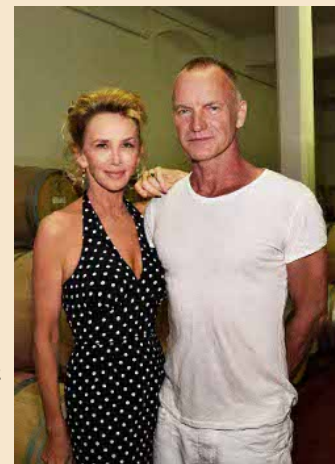
Italian wine & food's future is in foreign capital

The wine & food industry is one of the true crown jewels of the Italian economy, but it has to come to terms with its structural weaknesses. How? By accepting a consolidation of businesses and a steadily growing injection of foreign capital, a well-established trend that could well give the industry the breathing room and growth opportunities it needs. Such is the opinion of French bank Crédit Agricole analysts, who begin by noting how the sector employs 400.000 people with a yearly turnover of 127 billion Euros: figures comparable to the French economy, whose wine & food sector employs 412.500 people with a yearly turnover of 150 billion Euros. The difference lies in the fragmentation of businesses, "a distinctive trait of the Italian wine & food industry", as the French analysts remarked - to the point that, with an equal turnover, there are 10 times more businesses of this kind in Italy than in the UK. But it is in the comparison with France, where the added value of the industry is comparable to ours, that the biggest differences stand out: according to Crédit Agricole's report, in 2005 France had 3.552 businesses with more than 20 employees while Italy had only 2.719, and those with more than 250 employees in France were three times as many as Italy. Furthermore, there are three driving sectors in Italian wine & food: milk and dairies, "a particularly effective example of the creation of added value", synonymous with Grana Padano and Parmigiano Reggiano, which represent 40% of all cheese exports (for a total of 1.9 billion Euros); confectionery, with the Ferrero family and Perfetti group firmly in the lead, and of course, wine. Italy climbed back to the top in the world ranking of wine exports, but only in volume, with Germany and the States as its traditional core markets. As far as exports in value are concerned, France is still far ahead (7.6 billion Euros against 4.4 billions). So, in order to grow, as our French "cousins" write in the report, investments are a must, and for a healthy sector like the wine & food industry, it won't be a big problem, if the fear of a "foreign invasion" can be kept in check.

Focus

"Divino Tuscany" ends at Sting's place

"Everything is beautiful in Tuscany: nature, architecture, art and people. And of course the food is delicious, fresh, healthy and tasty. Everything here is done with style and elegance". These are the words of one of the world's most loved rock stars and could easily sum up why "Divino Tuscany", the cult event created by American wine pundit James Suckling, has been such a success. The event ended last Sunday with a "dejeuner sur l'herbe" in the Il Palagio Estate, Sting's property in the heart of Chianti. Over 400 wine enthusiasts from the four corners of the world attended the three day event, enjoying wines, food, the wonders of the Renaissance, landscapes, culture and arts. The gran finale: a poolside buffet with homemade bread, traditional cheeses and cured meats and a myriad of garden products, but with the big stars of Bacchus' nectar firmly at centre stage: Brunello, Chianti, Supertuscans and the like, but the most successful bottles were Mr & Mrs Sumner's (Sting's real last name) - "Casino delle Vie", "Sister Moon" and a third Chianti label, ready for its debut, with a name that needs no more words, "When we dance".



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Wine & Food

"Cantine Aperte" merrily turns twenty years old

"Cantine Aperte" (Open Cellars) has turned twenty this year. Since 1992, the intuition of Montalcino's Donatella Cinelli Colombini - opening the gates of winemakers and estates to the general public - has turned into an "unmissable" event for all the Italian wine aficionados. Tomorrow, the who's who of Italian winemakers will be waiting for visitors from all over the world, from Tuscany's Castello Banfi to Sicily's Feudo Arancio, to Marche's Umani Ronchi to Veneto's Astoria Vini and Umbria's Caprai (info: www.movimentoturismovino.it).

For the record

Blind tasting with a twist in Hong Kong

According to the results of a blind tasting that recently took place in Hong Kong, with vintages of Margaux, Lafite, Tignanello and Sassicaia, the Chilean Sefia took first

and second place. Its 2008 and 2010 vintages took the podium, leaving Sassicaia 2005 and Margaux 2011 with the bronze medal. Lafite 2005 was last.

