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News



Italian wine & U.S. Congress

Discussing the future of Italian wine in the States: this was Vinality's mission together with some of the country's top producers, which last Thursday met the Congressional Wine Caucus - with more than 200 Congressmen and 15 Senators among its ranks, founded in 1999 by Congressman Mike Thompson (D-St. Helena) and George Radanovich (R-Fresno). Cristina Mariani-May (Castello Banfi), Matteo Lunelli (Ferrari), Marilisa Allegrini (Allegrini), Daniela Mastroberardino (Terredora), Luca Paschina (Casa Vinicola Zonin), Odila Galer-Noel (Gruppo Italiano Vini), and Ambassador Claudio Bisogniero where among those who attended the meeting.



SMS

Finally?

Many words have been spent talking about it, but this might just be the right time for it to become a reality: nutritional education might finally become part of Italian schools' coursework. Trade association Federalimentare will soon sign an agreement on the matter with the Minister of Education, University and Research, Francesco Profumo. As Federalimentare's President Filippo Ferrua stated, "we have worked a lot on it through the School and Food program created with the Ministry: it is a key initiative to spread the correct culture of sport and eating among younger people, and it will soon be integrated with another agreement with the Ministry". Let's hope that this time nutritional education will truly become a part of public education, because after all, "we are what we eat"...

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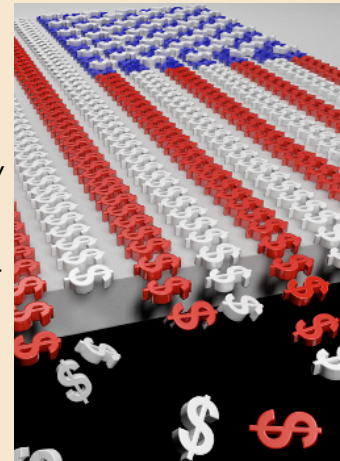
Global stocks of wine going down, says Rabobank

Maybe Angelo Gaja was right when he predicted a few months ago that sometime down the road there would not be enough wine to meet the growing thirst for Bacchus' nectar in the world. And the 2012 "Rabobank's Wine Quarterly Q2 Report", a sort of pulse-check of the sector, after the first half of the year is over, the famous market research agency just proved him right, since it looks like "wine stocks have just hit their lowest point in 10 years, and the industry is getting closer to a point of equilibrium after years of excessive supply". Of course, since it is of macroeconomic and aggregate data that Rabobank is talking about, their point must be taken with caution and with due exceptions in mind, and it's an easy guess to imagine that while some winemakers might easily get "sold out", some others might be in dire straits when they want to clear their warehouses. But according to the report by Rabobank, this is the general trend. It's not all sunshine and roses, either: some market measures (like wine CMO in Europe), but also climate change, have brought production down and prices of wine grapes and "on tap" products up in the last years; two factors that on the one hand "are good news for many producers that have seen their income drop in recent years, but on the other hand the rise in prices has been fast and noteworthy, and many firms are having a hard time transferring those higher production costs to consumers", the report states. However, the 2012 harvest, globally speaking, looks to be more abundant than the last one so far - 2011 being the year of low yields the world over. In California the forecast is for yields above average and the Old World on the whole should reap a good harvest as well, according to Rabobank's analysts. Australia should harvest 1.66 million metric tons of wine grapes (+4% over 2011), while New Zealand should get 18% less than it did last year. Down goes Argentina as well (22% less), but South Africa should go up (+3.5%). In any case, says Rabobank, the optimal market equilibrium, in wine as well, is tied to a single key factor for the economy: a reprise of the Eurozone ...

Focus

A Stars & Stripes update

The American market is still a prime target for Italian wine, but imports are slowing down after a record 2011: 5.6% less in volume and 3.8% less in value in the first 4 months of 2012 over 2011, according to data from Lucio Caputo's Italian Wine & Food Institute. Italy is still the leading exporter in the States, though, both in quantity (23.5%) and in value (32.6%), but it is the only one of the "big five" (Italy, Australia, Argentina, Chile and France) to show a drop in business that, however, has not affected sparkling wines, which have grown 9.4% in quantity and 7.9% in value. The grand total reaches 3.4 million hectolitres, worth 1.9 billion U.S. dollars. Meanwhile, the U.S. has become the hometown of fine wines auctions once more, taking the lead back from Hong Kong in the first 6 months of 2012, according to the "Wine Spectator Auction Index", which monitors the prices of the great bottles sold at auctions (for Italy, Brunello di Montalcino Montosoli by Altesino, Solaia by Antinori, Sorì San Lorenzo by Gaja, Sassicaia by Tenuta San Guido and Barolo Cannubi Boschis by Sandrone are in the list); 45.3 million U.S. dollars' worth of wine were sold in the States, and only 35 in Hong Kong.



Report

Operation "Wine Black"

An international criminal organization specialized in contrabanding wine & spirits, based in Campania and with a turnover of close to 50 million Euros a year, was recently smashed by the Guardia di Finanza (Italy's financial police) chapter of Naples, in what has been called Operation "Wine Black", which resulted in more than 20 countrywide arrest warrants signed by the judges of the Naples Courthouse. The fight against counterfeiting and contrabanding, as always, continues.

Wine & Food

Italy's native grape varieties on a professorship in Peking

Italian native grapes are on a roll in China, thanks to the Milan University and the Agricultural Institute of San Michele all'Adige: from last Thursday until tomorrow, Penglai's Wine College and the University of Peking will host the varieties of Trentino, Sicily, Tuscany, Lombardy, Emilia Romagna and Veneto. "This side of Italian wines is not known in China", said Professor Attilio Scienza, who will lead the seminars, "and we must communicate that Italy is a winemaking country with many different regions, cultures and varieties". To do so, both introductory seminars and tastings have been planned.

For the record

Local dishes & wines rule the holidays

The Italian farmers association Coldiretti recently created a "Flags of Taste" ranking of the Italian regions that boast the highest numbers of local dishes and wines,

with Tuscany (465), Lazio (384), Campania and Veneto (370) at the top; an essential part of a vacation for 35% of tourists - much more than museums or shopping.

