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News



A reality show in the cellar

16 Chinese models (pictured above) will be the stars of a wine reality show. The Ciu Ciu winery in Offida (Ascoli Piceno) has been chosen as the location for some of the episodes of the "Dream Come Loren Top Model" show aired on Guangxi TV, which focuses on the participants' dream of becoming a top model. The firm, property of the Bartolomei family, will therefore be the place where the girls will try their hand at making wine, from selecting the bunches of grapes to the classic foot crushing, to the final taste of the must, of course while being taped all the time. As if to say: the road to beauty is, as always, peppered with hardships of all sorts.



SMS

Peace in Valpolicella

Peace has finally come to the Venetian hills of Valpolicella after the skirmishes between the local Consortium and the Famiglie dell'Amarone d'Arte Association. Davide Gaeta, winemaker, college professor and member of the Consortium, will be the peacemaker, as chairman of the negotiating table whose task is finding common grounds on the management of the denomination. There are many issues, from the position on the market to the promotion of one of Italy's most important DOCG denominations, and disagreements are commonplace. But, to win the challenges of today and tomorrow everyone must participate in order to reach a level of protection shared among all for the success of the production, the value of the brand and synergy with private firms.

Report

China comes to Burgundy

So far, Chinese currency Yuan has been used only for some second-tier châteaux in Bordeaux. But now a gambling industry entrepreneur from Macao has struck a blow to French pride: the billionaire bought the Gevrey - Chambertin Château for 8 million Euros. It is the first time that a Far East investor has ventured into the heart of France's most precious production, buying two hectares of vineyards (which produce 12000 bottles per year, some premier cru and grand cru as well) and an 11th century castle.

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First Page

Wine guides for 2013, a word from the authors

Italy's most important and widespread wine guides, from "Guida Vini d'Italia" by Gambero Rosso to Ais-Bibenda's "Duemilavini", "I vini di Veronelli", "Slow Wine" by Slow Food, Luca Maroni's "Annuario dei migliori vini italiani" and "I Vini d'Italia" by L'Espresso, are starting to bring many months of work and thousands of tastings to an end. According to an informal "survey" of the authors conducted by Winenews, the result is both confirmations and news of territories that after decades of living on the fringe of Italian winemaking, especially in the South, from Etna (which is now "a classic", says Marco Sabellico of Gambero Rosso) to Apulia, Campania, Abruzzo and Sardinia as well, are coming back to the fray thanks to extraordinary work in the vineyards and in the wine cellars, creating wines of absolute excellence capable of "threatening", so to speak, even untouchables like Brunello di Montalcino (the 2007 vintage has critics divided: some, like Ernesto Gentili of L'Espresso, consider it a great year, but others say it is impersonal and bland), Barolo (with the greatest vintage in the last 15 years, Slow Wine says), Barbaresco, Amarone, Chianti Classico and Bolgheri - which nonetheless confirm all the steadfastness and quality of the Italian standard-bearers abroad. But together with territories, two types of wines are on a roll on the market, sparkling wines and roses, and many firms are betting on them. Critics are divided on "bubbles" as well: Franciacorta remains the benchmark and Trentodoc is growing in quality. But for some, like Maroni, excellent results are common in Italy while for others, like Gigi Brozzoni (Veronelli), the bubbles of sparkling wines, to put it bluntly, are "of everything and everywhere", "is giving poor results and will deflate very soon". Different opinions, then, which come as no surprise considering that the 6 guides have very different criteria for evaluating wines. But there is one thing to be sure of, as Franco Ricci of Ais-Bibenda explained: "we are realizing more and more, year after year, that there are at least 1700 Italian winemakers that can make good wines, with an average quality which is extremely high everywhere".

Focus

China vs EU, Brussels responds

The controversy came out a few days ago, and it could soon truly escalate into an all-out conflict: China's Association of Wine & Spirits Industry has accused the EU of unfair competition because of the CMO wine (Common Market Organization) funds that were given to European winemakers (60% of 2012/2013 funded projects geared towards the Chinese market), thus creating an unfair business environment for Chinese winemakers, with more than half a million hectares of vineyards already planted. The Chinese winemakers have menacingly asked their Government to investigate on wine imports from the EU, and to act accordingly. The European answer came quickly: the EU Chamber of Commerce in Peking has stated that protectionist measures against European wines would damage Chinese consumers first and foremost. The stakes are very high, especially for the Old World. Yearly exports of wine & spirits from Europe to China are worth more than 1 billion Euros, and the import quota represents 30% of all wine consumed in China, in a market that is predicted to become the world's most important between 2015 and 2020.



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Wine & Food

As fine wines suffer in UK, Berry Bros. & Rudd bet on Italy

The consumption crisis that seemed to have spared the luxury goods market, and therefore the fine wines market as well, has just struck hard in the UK, where wine merchant Berry Bros. & Rudd, a trusted partner of the royal family for decades, has seen its earnings to March 31st plummet below zero from last year. The first cause of this is the slump of Bordeaux wines, paying the toll of an excessive growth in the past years, but the management of the merchant firm has a solution at hand: getting new clients by betting on new wine territories, starting with Italy and Burgundy.

For the record

Low quantities for the 2012 harvest

According to some of Italy's most famous oenologists (Riccardo Cotarella, Carlo Ferrini, Lorenzo Landi and Leonardo Valenti), further weeks of heatwaves in Italy might

definitely compromise the 2012 harvest not only for quantity, but for quality as well: Tuscany and Piedmont are among the regions that are suffering the most.

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