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News



Brunello, flag of the homeland

Is there a single wine that can be called the wine symbol of Italian national identity? Sure: it's Brunello di Montalcino Riserva 1964 of the historic "Il Greppo" Estate in Montalcino owned by the Biondi Santi family, where Brunello was born and where the tradition of one of the world's most renowned wines is treasured. So says Ais, Italy's sommeliers association. "It's an award," said Franco Ricci, director of Bibenda Magazine, "for the longevity of a great 100/100 wine, a trait that makes it the best wine of the 150 years of Italy as a nation". The President of the Republic, Giorgio Napolitano, sent a medal to the Ais/Bibenda award: the recipient was Jacopo Biondi Santi.



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An agricultural future

Just three days ago, before the world leaders at Cannes' G20 meeting, the billionaire and philanthropist Bill Gates reminded his audience that the salvation of the world's poorest populations comes from agriculture, a (insufficient) source of income for an entire continent, Africa, that the West must not leave on its own. But what goes for the most disadvantaged countries goes for the first world, too, because one cannot forget that everything is born, or born again, from the earth. This is an unforgettable fact for those who are entrusted with governing a world that changes ever more rapidly, a world that should retrieve its main role of agriculture - provided that everyone really believes in it, right now: farmers, financial institutions, politicians...

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First Page

Conquering China: not easy but together we can

True friends don't shy away from telling you hard facts. "Friends of Vinality" in Hong Kong - the 10 importers awarded during the International Wine & Spirits Fair for their contribution to the development of the Italian wine culture and market in the Asian country - where more than 350 players are operating, did just that. The importers, without curbing the enthusiasm of the more than 200 participating Italian producers at the Fair with "Vinality Tour", honestly spoke their mind: "there is definitely market, but in Hong Kong, which is easy to get to, there's some room to grow, but not much more. There's more growth opportunity in China, but it's a lot harder to get there, make oneself known and be appreciated". Such is the opinion of the great importers, who also pointed out that on the Hong Kong market, but even more so on the Chinese market, as of today, the stage is either for the great first-tier wines, where France (or rather, Bordeaux) rules, or the low-tier ones - 3 Euros or less in the cellars. To help the middle-tier products get a hold of the market, which represent the true soul of Italian wine, then, there's a lot to be done and results will come only through a lot of patience. First of all there is a culture of Italian wine to be created in the newly-born and enormous middle class: "It's hard enough as it is - say the importers - to understand a product when it comes from famous regions like Tuscany or Piedmont, let alone those from outside of those territories or wine brands". And there's a lot to do, starting with the basics, like sending free tasting samples to restaurants, producing information in Chinese, being "physically" present on the market, coming in person to showcase products and shake hands, because business over here is first of all personal relations. These things come with a hefty price tag and take for granted the capacity of the Italian wine world to act as a whole, something that in Hong Kong seems to have become a reality for the over 200 producers that participated under the "Vinality Tour" brand, a much appreciated victory for the importers, "because an event like this helps create a "brand Italy" that is yet to come".

Focus

Prosecco & Brunello triumph overseas

"Prosecco has shown that some wines are able to blossom again, despite hard times: this lively sparkling wine without frills has reached such popularity that it will soon surpass Champagne production. All due to the efforts of its producers, who paved the way to a new era". This is why Wine Enthusiast, one of the most popular wine magazines in the U.S., crowned the territory of Prosecco "Wine Region of the Year" at the 2011 Wine Star Awards, the Academy Awards of wine, not to mention that the laurels of best importer went to Enoce Ceola, head of Mionetto USA, the importing company founded by the Mionetto cellar, another first-tier name of Prosecco. No prizes, instead, for Bisol and Santa Caterina in the best European producers category, nor for Campari in the distillers category. That's not all, though, because the magazine also created a 2011 "Top 100 cellar selections", and this time Tuscany's in the spotlight: first on the list is Poggio Nardone's Brunello di Montalcino 2006, number six is Casanova di Neri Tenuta Nuova's Brunello di Montalcino 2006 and number eight is Le Macchiole's Paleo 2007.



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Report

Finance believes in wine too

Investing in wine is no longer a reckless gamble, but a solid financial option, no different than buying property - at least according to the U.K.'s Prestige Asset Management company, which is currently offering loans of up to 70% of the value of blue-chip wines, with wine itself as the only collateral and no previous credit check. This, of course, applies only to purchases of great wines from Bordeaux, Burgundy, Sauternes and a few other blue-chips, but loans will also be tax-deductible.

Wine & Food

Franciacorta makes Italian sparkling wines soar

In a wine market that should drop 11.6% in Italy, Italian sparkling wines keep growing: sales have grown 4.7%, following the remarkable performance of the Franciacorta wines (+16.7% compared to 2010), and exports of "classic method" sparkling wines from Eastern Lombardy shot up 30% in 2011. These figures come from a research of Bocconi University. Another research by AstraRicerche, about how Italians perceive the world of sparkling wines, shows that Franciacorta, both in notoriety and prestige, is second only to Champagne, and the top three labels are Berlucchi, Ca' del Bosco and Bellavista.

For the record

Women's favourite wines? The good ones

The era of "reds for men, whites for women" is definitely over. According to a survey by the English wine seller Oddbins, calorie counting is pushed to the background when women

choose their favourite wine, and quality becomes the single deciding factor. No sacrifices, then, when it comes to uncorking a bottle.

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