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News



A faithful wine

It is rare that a wine can keep true to itself decade after decade: sometimes it is due to the climate, which is unmanageable by definition, and sometimes it just "decides" to change, because of trends or because every oenologist has his own way of working. But there is one wine in Italy that, according to Jancis Robinson, one of Britain's most famous wine journalists, has kept its unmistakable style from its first harvest, in 1982, to the last vintage on the market (2006): "there is no other wine in the world", Robinson wrote, "that has changed so little as Marchesi Guerrieri Gonzaga's San Leonardo: with its complex bouquet and harmony that one would want all grand crus from Bordeaux to have".



SMS

Happy Birthday, Eataly NY!

Happy birthday, Eataly New York! The temple of quality food and Italian haute cuisine created by Oscar Farinetti at 23rd Street and Fifth Avenue, in the very heart of Manhattan, just turned two years old this week. And as the "New York Times", the "grey lady" herself, pointed out, it's a birthday garnished with record numbers that give the whole world of Italian wine & food hope and a mighty good reason to smile: 70 million U.S. dollars in gross income in the first year, 85 million dollars predicted income for the second year, 6 million visitors in the first year and 7 in the second year. But it's not all about numbers: Eataly is also a gamble, one that turned out to win big, beyond all expectations...

Report

Bartering lunch in Florence

Tough times call for tough measures. Such seems to be the motto of restaurant "L'è Maiala!" ("Tough times!" in Florentine dialect) in Florence, which will open this month. Clients will be allowed to pay the check with a barter, to be agreed upon reservation regarding what, how much and when to barter in exchange for a meal. Among the accepted barterers Tuscan foodstuffs will be given priority, but restaurant owners will also accept local handicrafts, antiques and modern art.

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First Page

"The sky is the vineyard's roof", Gaja says

For decades after decades man, because of exponential cultural, social and technological growth, has thought himself capable of "bending" the climate to his will. Instead, as the last few hard harvests have amply demonstrated, it is climate that dictates change. Angelo Gaja, one of Italian wine's top protagonists, is convinced of this and warns against premature forecasts about harvests, those that start to sprout up as early as July, because "it is necessary to wait at least to the end of August, after harvesting of early varieties has begun, to fully realize the losses in weight caused by hot weather and drought, even if a partial recovery is to be expected because after a scorching August there is usually a rainy September". But what one must never forget is a cardinal principle of oenology: "wine", Gaja explained, "is a natural product, and climatic conditions are what dictate the quantity of grapes - the sky is the vineyard's roof. It's not like producing steel, glass, bricks or plastic inside closed factories. It is a concept that finance, and those who usually comment on the economic results of the winemaking sector, often fail to grasp. Some are afraid that there will be a shortage of Italian wine, that not enough to keep our hard-earned exporting quotas will be produced". Exports have indeed allowed the sector to endure the economic crisis better than any other, but it is a sector that "in the last six months has stopped its race and has begun to drop, but I think it's nothing to worry about, the loss is concentrated on "on tap" wine. The important thing is to seize the opportunity of a drop in supply, and of a consequent rise in prices, to encourage producers to increase the overall quality of their products and learn how to sell them better". At the end of the day, then, everything depends on climate, both growing vines and marketing wine, because something will have to give way to change in the vineyard, "from irrigation for denomination wines to the application of past knowledge acquired, which must be rapidly integrated with research, technology and the winemakers and oenologists' capacity of observation".

Focus

The answer to hot weather? Good pruning

This year's drought has shown beyond a doubt how efficient management of the vineyard can make or break the outcome of quality wine production. Both Attilio Scienza, Professor of Viticulture at Milan University, and Marco Simonit, founder of the "Grape Preparer" school together with Pierpaolo Sirch and strong promoter of correct pruning of plants by hand, as opposed to mechanical methods, are sure of it. "Plants that have been pruned in an incorrect manner", Professor Scienza explained, "have been more damaged by the lack of water". This is because damage created by pruning incorrectly "reduces the plant's vascular capacity, the "veins" that bring nourishment and water from the roots: pruning, then, becomes a strategic factor for the high quality of the product - both grapes and wine - in threshold conditions like hot weather". Furthermore, all vineyards, according to Simonit, "should be treated carefully during winter pruning, to safeguard the hydraulic efficiency of the plant". But how? "By trying to hurt the plant as little as possible during pruning and not diminish its "reach" by damaging its vascular system more than necessary".



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Wine & Food

Italy's best wine lists according to "Wine Spectator" magazine

"Wine Spectator" magazine recently published its 2012 "Wine Spectator's Restaurant Wine List Awards", and four Italian restaurants were granted its "Grand Award": these "fantastic four" are Florence's Enoteca Pinchiorri, Rome Cavalieri Hotel's La Pergola, Verona's Antica Bottega del Vino and Il Poeta Contadino in Alberobello, near Bari. The award is usually given to restaurants that have more than 1.500 wines on their list, and include a great variety of winemakers and vintages, a selection of formats, and all of the above in sync with the menu, the locale, the service and the presentation.

For the record

A viticultural souvenir from 2000 years ago

A "wine souvenir" from two millennia ago was recently found in a Roman well (1st century BC) in Cetamura, on the grounds of Badia a Coltibuono, historical producer of

Chianti Classico: a handful of grape seeds that could lead to new discoveries of both viticulture and the history of Tuscany's landscape, thanks to DNA analysis.

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