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News



Tasca's "Sound of Wine"

250 chalices, 130 liters of wine and 10 musicians: put them together and you get "Sound of Wine", the video created by Sicilian winemaker Tasca d'Almerita (pictured above), with the Regaleali estate as their recording studio, which will represent Italy among the 9 finalists of the 2012 video contest of the renowned American magazine "Wine Spectator". The winners will be decided by an electronic public ballot, open until tomorrow at www.winespectator.com/video voting. The final ranking, up to the silver medalist, will be announced the next day, and the winner the day after that. And who knows, yet another international success might be around the corner for Italian wine...



From CO2 to H2O

Where is Italian viticulture going and how is work in the vineyards changing because of climate change? "It's going towards sustainability, which is mostly an anthropological and communication choice at the moment, but climate change is also highlighting changes in viticulture itself. There's less chemistry and less CO2 emissions, but the water problem is ever more urgent - and if one irrigates, then more CO2 is generated. A new way of producing grapes with less water must be created, using solutions that come from both genetics and from new techniques for plant management". This is the opinion of Attilio Scienza, Professor of Viticulture at Milan University and one of Europe's leading experts on the matter, which he stated during the 33rd edition of the "Enologica" event in Montefalco.

Report

The most beloved wines

Which are the 5 most beloved Italian wines worldwide in 2012? A media monitoring of the 50 most influential newspapers conducted by Klaus Davi & Co. has answered that question: at the top, with 22.5% of citations, particularly in the American press, are Sassicaia and Ornellaia, followed by a brand - Ruffino - cited in 17.8% of the articles monitored. Then come Bartolo Mascarello's Barolo (14.10%), which is enjoyed in France as well, followed by Pieropan's Soave (11.6%) and Mastroberardino's Aglianico (9.5%).



First Page

"Vineyard Italy" recovers, but is still in red: the 2012 harvest for Unione Italiana Vini-Ismea

With early grape varieties already in the cellar, the waiting game is still on for the lion's share of the 2012 harvest in most of Italy. But an important update comes from Unione Italiana Vini, led by Lucio Mastroberardino, and Ismea, which both confirm the drop in quantity that almost all winemakers suffered, but also point out that the September rains will bring a small rebound. The final figure should hover around 8% less than 2011 nationally, with the grand total of production below the 40 million hectolitres threshold, "but too much rain so close to the harvest could actually make things worse". And if 2011's scarce harvest was also due to structural reasons, like "paid uprootings, green harvests and neglect, this year the scarcity is entirely caused by hot weather and lack of water". All the same, though, both Uiv and Ismea point out that "thanks to the low incidence of plant diseases, grape quality is predicted to be good or even great, with a higher than average sugar content. What remains to be seen now is how the market will react, since the harvest is bound to be scarce in other countries as well. After last Spring's drop in production in the Southern Hemisphere, this year European wine cellars might turn out to be anything but full". In particular, the highest drops are in the Northeast: 21% less in Friuli, 12% less in Veneto, and 10% less in both Trentino Alto-Adige and Emilia Romagna. Likewise for Piedmont (8% less) and Lombardy (15% less), while central regions are either dropping in quantity, like Tuscany (10% less) and Umbria (with a 20% drop), or holding their ground, like Marche and Abruzzo, with only a very small drop in quantity for Lazio. In southern Italy, instead, Apulia suffered the most, with a 15% drop, but Campania - and especially Sicily - have been enjoying a productive reprise. "A lot fewer green harvests were done this year on the island and that put the Sicilian production once again firmly back in the green".

Focus

Planting rights, a European victory

As Winenews anticipated, European Commissioner for Agriculture Dacian Ciolos backtracked on the matter of planting rights, which were supposed to be abolished by the forthcoming 2015 wine CMO (Common Market Organization). The Commissioner's words leave no room for doubt, even if officialdom will come only on September 21st, the same day that the EU's "high-level group", which has been working for months to reach a compromise on the matter, will meet for the last time. "Regulation, and not micro-management, is necessary. Territories, vineyards and trade professionals must be part of this new regulation. Those who best know markets and opportunities are in the territories", Ciolos stated. This translates into a victory for the position of the European Parliament, backed by all the historical producers (France, Spain, Portugal, Germany) and, of course, by the Italian Minister for Agricultural Policies Mario Catania, who has welcomed Ciolos' words: "we are now sure of the fact that as far as Europe's control on the productive potential of wine is concerned, after the end of the current system in 2015, there will still be some kind of control on land used for planting vineyards".



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Wine & Food

No crisis in sight for French wine: exports grow 14% in 2012

There's no crisis in sight for French wine & spirits: their exports have grown a whopping 14% in the first six months of 2012 over 2011, mainly thanks to the Asian demand for Bordeaux wines and Cognac. Turnover has gotten 600 million Euros bigger, reaching 5 billion Euros thanks to the performances of Bordeaux wines (+31%, with 300 million Euros' worth of new sales) and Cognac (+20%, with 200 million Euros' worth of new sales). The data describing such an "exploit" was recently released by Fevs - Fédération des Exportateurs de Vins & Spiritueux de France (www.fevs.com).

For the record

Italians run from the shelves

The Coop Italia 2012 report on food consumption paints a grim picture for Italy: only 14% of the monthly budget for expenses goes to food and gross sales in mass retail have

dropped 1.4% in the first half of 2012. But less and less food is wasted, agriculture is healthier than in 2011 and organic products are growing on the market.

