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News



The war of the roosters

The "black rooster", symbol of Chianti Classico, beat the French National Rugby Team. The European Court of Justice recently ruled that the Consortium of one of Italian wine's most prestigious names was right in pointing out that the symbols of the two entities were too similar, and so French Rugby Federation FFR will not be able to use its own "rooster" as a brand for alcoholic beverages. But the EU Court simply rejected a decision of the European Commission on the appeal of the Office for the Harmonization of the Domestic Market, which had previously dismissed the Consortium's protest over a few judiciary technicalities. The ruling, then, can still be challenged.



The latest from China

E-commerce and the Chinese market are without a doubt the new twin frontiers of Italian wine, as wine exports of the "Belpaese" in the Asian country grew 35% in volume and 64% in value in 2011, reaching a grand total of 67 million Euros. Moreover, on November 11th the leading e-commerce website in China, alibaba.com, reached a daily turnover of 3 billion U.S. dollars. It is unclear how much of it is due to wine & food, exactly, but according to a representative of the Alibaba Group, the sales of Cavicchioli's Malvasia reached 13.000 bottles in the last month alone - and according to the forecasts of the analysts of Enfodesk, online sales of alcoholic beverages in China are bound to reach 2 billion U.S. dollars in value by 2014.

Report

Italy's best sommelier

Italy's best sommelier has been crowned: he is Dennis Metz, wine & food consultant for restaurants and former sommelier of Le Petit Restaurant, one Michelin star, of Cogne's Hotel Bellevue, of Cortina d'Ampezzo's Hotel Cristallo and Sporting Villa Blu, and at Cracco's in Milan - two Michelin stars - not to mention "Best Sommelier of Aosta Valley 2012". Metz was awarded the title last Monday in Milan by Italian Sommelier Association AIS and by the Franciacorta Consortium.

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First Page

Barolo "friendlier" than it used to be

Barolo is still associated to great personalities of the public sphere, and especially to Italian Prime Minister Mario Monti. In wine shops, though, the great Piedmont red is no longer a wine for special occasions (it is not even in the "top 5" of wines chosen for celebrations and the like, being at spot number 8) and it is becoming more closely tied to the pleasure of drinking a wine of superior quality. At the restaurant, instead, the king of Nebbiolo still retains its elitist allure and is still a special wine (only the category of "territory wines" is above it). This is the result of the "Barolo in the perception of restaurants and wine shops" survey, commissioned by the Accademia del Barolo (an association of 14 top winemakers in Piedmont - Azelia, Michele Chiarlo, Conterno-Fantino, Damilano, Poderi Luigi Einaudi, Gianni Gagliardo, Franco Martinetti, Monfalletto-Cordero di Montezemolo, Pio Cesare, Prunotto, Luciano Sandrone, Paolo Scavino, Vietti and Roberto Voerzio) and conducted by the Italian Institute for Studies on Public Opinion ISPO, headed by Professor Renato Mannheimer, on a sample of 50 restaurants and 50 high-tier wine shops. The results vary between the two also as far as types of consumers are concerned: restaurant clients are more apt to choose Barolo frequently (44%) while 56% of wine shop clients choose it only occasionally. Italian consumers are still more frequent than foreign ones (53% against 47%), and even though one of Italy's most important wines is becoming "easier" to choose and drink, in public opinion Barolo is still tied to great personalities - Mario Monti above all, followed by Scrooge McDuck and Superman. Unfortunately, due to the crisis, for 29% of the sample the consumption of Barolo is dropping, since consumers are looking for wines with a lower price tag, if they're not skipping wine altogether for budgetary reasons, with 61% feeling like it's unchanged and 6% feeling that it's going up. As far as the future is concerned, the majority of the sample feels that consumption will ultimately hold (59%), while 24% feel like it's going to drop and only 14% are convinced that it will go back up again.

Focus

An act of vandalism in Montalcino

During the night of Sunday, December 2nd, someone broke into the cellar of the prestigious "Case Basse" winery, in Montalcino, owned by Gianfranco Soldera (pictured right), and opened the spigots of the casks containing the 2007 to 2012 vintages. This act of vandalism towards one of Brunello's smallest - 23 hectares producing 10.000 bottles a year - but more prestigious names, confirmed by Soldera to Winenews, which in turn broke the news worldwide, translated into economic damage in the region of 5 to 7 million Euros: Soldera told Winenews that he has "no intention of giving up, because this is not only damage for us, but for all of the territory". Regarding the possible culprits, Soldera added that "to think that it was just some crooks who broke into a cellar 14 meters underground to empty the casks without stealing a thing, is nonsense". Police investigations on the matter are on going: in the meantime Cesare Turini - head of Heres, the exclusive distributor of Case Basse for Italy - has come up with the idea of an en primeur sale of the next vintages in order to help Soldera. Turini added, "whoever thought of damaging Gianfranco with this, will turn him into a myth instead".



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Wine & Food

There's a lot of Italy in the 2012 "The Enthusiast 100"

17 Italian wines (7 are Tuscan, and 6 from Montalcino) are included in the 2012 "The Enthusiast 100" ranking of the renowned American magazine "Wine Enthusiast". The first Italian wine, at number 4, is Brunello di Montalcino 2007 Tenuta Nuova di Casanova di Neri: 5 of the wines from Montalcino are Brunello, and 1 is a Moscadello, while the ranking also pointed out that Italian dessert wines, be they from Trentino or Sicily, are ever more prominent in the hearts and minds of American wine lovers. New territories, like the volcanic region of Etna, are also getting more and more time in the spotlight.

For the record

Three Italian stars in Hong Kong

The 2013 edition of the Michelin guide awarded its top marks, the fabled "three stars", to seven restaurants in Italy, but there is only one abroad that was worthy of

them. And it's quite literally half a world away, since Enrico Bombana's "8 1/2 Otto e Mezzo Bombana" in Hong Kong got the "three stars" for the second year in a row.

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