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Italian Weekly Wine News.it

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INTERNATIONAL

Issue 64 - Dec. 10th-15th, 2012 - Expressly for wine lovers, professionals and opinion leaders the world over
Registration number 709, Courthouse of Siena, March 31st, 2001 - Editor-in-chief: Alessandro Regoli

News



"Soldera affair", the latest

The "Soldera affair" might be close to a solution: the so-called "mafia lead" has been abandoned, and the hypothesis of a targeted act of vandalism is getting stronger according to the local news site, montalcinonews.com: the culprit might be someone who had a score to settle with the Soldera family, owner of the Case Basse Estate. "Someone", montalcinonews.com wrote, "who knew the area, the building and the habits of the owners very well and who also knew that there were no cameras or alarm systems. Therefore, local law enforcement, coordinated by Judge Aldo Natalini, might be closing the case this very weekend".



SMS

An absurd law

When a law aims to protect values, sometimes it hinders them. Such is the case of the EU ruling that allows a producer to label wine as "organic", but at the same time forbids those who have made sustainability a part of their productive philosophy, to say so on the label. Thus prohibiting all references to nature for wines that are not organic per se, but that might protect nature, the product and its consumers more than organic wines themselves. This is the situation that the "TuttoNatura" brand, which Fratelli Muratori have invested in from Brescia to Ischia, finds itself in: they are ready to sell the first Franciacorta without added sulphuric anhydride, and the ruling might force them to change the name of the entire project. As the Latins would have said, "Absurda lex, sed lex"...

Report

James Suckling's best

Aldo Conterno Barolo Gran Bussia Riserva 2005, Bruno Giacosa Barolo Le Rocche del Falletto Riserva 2007, Castello dei Rampolla Toscana d'Alceo 2008 and Valdicava Brunello di Montalcino Madonna del Piano Riserva 2006, all have 100 points, Casanova di Neri Brunello di Montalcino Cerretalto 2006 and Gaja Langhe Sori San Lorenzo 2007 have 99: these are the best wines of the "Top 100 Italian wines of 2012" ranking by James Suckling, former "Wine Spectator" critic (full ranking on winenews.it).

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First Page

There's lots of Italy in wine.com's "Top 100", but...

Chianti Riserva 2008 Nipozzano (by Frescobaldi, at number 17), Prosecco Veneto La Marca (22), Modus 2009 Ruffino (28), Brunello di Montalcino Riserva 2003 Il Poggione (36), Pinot Grigio 2011 Santa Margherita (46), Campaccio 2007 Terrabianca (50), Palazzo Della Torre 2008 Allegrini (57), Chianti Classico Riserva 2008 Castello di Monsanto (59), Villa Antinori Toscana 2008 (75), Pinot Grigio 2011 Placido (84), Nobile di Montepulciano 2007 Tenuta Trerose (87) and Merlot Umbria 2009 Falesco (99): these are the Italian labels in the "top 100" ranking by wine.com, twice those of 2011's ranking - that is, the bestselling wines for the American e-commerce website during the year which will soon end. The United States dominate the top of the 2012 ranking with 6 wines (4 from California and 2 from Washington), then Australia with 2, Spain and France, and a single dominating grape variety, Cabernet Sauvignon. Imported wines are 30% of all consumption in the U.S., but foreign wines are more than 50% of all sales for the e-commerce website. And even if e-commerce has always been something which comes easier to the younger generations, the good ol' "Boomers" (those born between 1945 and 1964) still represent 44% of all direct sales, with the "Gen X-ers" (35 to 46 years old) representing 30% and the "Over 65" representing 13.4%, according to the yearly forecast by Rob McMillan, founder of the Silicon Valley Bank's Premium Wine division. The "Millennials", then, are still on the sidelines of the American wine market, given that unemployment is still very high among them and their average income is simply too low for them to splurge on wines. The next segment to watch - the "New Boomers", so to speak - are going to be the Gen X-ers, McMillan says, since they will gradually replace the Boomers in the 45-65-age bracket. A clear message for Italian wine, which is still leading in volume and in value among imported wines, with 2.5 million hectolitres and a total value of 1.25 billion U.S. dollars: to stay ahead of the game, the 40-year olds and 50-year olds need to be courted incessantly...

Focus

A record auction with truffles & Gaja

An auction without precedent recently took place in Hong Kong: among magnificent white truffles from Alba and splendid wines by Gaja, the elites of the city-state congregated at the "court" of the king of truffles, the three Michelin stars restaurant "8½ Otto e Mezzo" of Italian chef Umberto Bombana, and contributed to a record result of 16.4 million British pounds that will fund the local charity Mother's Choice, which takes care of young mothers in Hong Kong. Aside from the main sponsor, the Piedmont producer Gaja, the distributing firm Edrington, the Banyan Tree Ungasan-Bali Hotel and the Baita 1697 resort all participated in a 7-course feast authored by the only "three starred" Italian chef outside of Italy - with truffles and the most prestigious vintages of Gaja's wines as the reigning champions - during which Hong Kong's high society raised and counter-raised each other. The top lot was made up of six white truffles, for a total weight of 1.596 grams, which went for 95.000 pounds, and the single highest priced truffle, weighing 358 grams, was bought by entrepreneur Mona Hsu for 25.700 pounds: a single two truffles lot, for a total weight of 575 grams, went for 22.500 pounds.



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Wine & Food

Italian "holiday feasts" between the crisis and celebrating

Italians are going to save (spending up to 50% less than 2011) for the Christmas "feast", but will spend a bit more for New Year's Eve, say Italian consumer associations Federconsumatori and Adusbef: they will spend 91 Euros for Christmas dinner, choosing "poorer" fish like trout, mackerel, and so on, and will trim the wine budget too. But part of these savings will be reinvested for the last dinner of the year, when each family will spend 187 Euros. As always, bargain hunting will be the paramount, but with a sharper eye towards "labels, expiration dates and counterfeit products".

For the record

"Public" support for wine

Every litre of Italian wine abroad has enjoyed 20 Euro cents support, and 10 came from the public sector - moreover, Italy spent a record 143 million Euros in promotion, 40% of

the EU total sum. This data comes from "Il Corriere Vinicolo", house organ of Italian Wine Union UIV: in 4 years, 3.8 billion Euros were spent on the wine sector.

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