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## News



### Chianti Classico Revolution

A new kind of Chianti Classico at the top of the quality pyramid, a further increase in value of the Riserva with new and "stricter" production rules, news for "on tap" and the symbol of the "Black Rooster" no longer on the neck label, but straight on the bottles: here are some of the changes that were proposed last May, and that the Assembly of the Denomination of Chianti Classico approved this week. The new structure of the denomination, a district that "moves" 500 million Euros a year - 360 from bottled wine alone - will be showcased next Feb. 18th-20th at the Chianti Classico Revolution, at the Leopolda Station in Florence ([www.chianticlassico.com](http://www.chianticlassico.com)).



### Wine doping?

Much has been said about the possible effects (both positive and negative) of wine on human health, but the doping effect is a new one. And, that might be what Lance Armstrong, the former world-class cyclist, now disqualified for illegal drug taking, has hinted at. As he himself admitted, during the Tour de France race - which criss-crosses French wine regions - he regularly consumed wines ranging from Bordeaux to Châteauneuf-du-Pape. Red wines which, as the Nutrition Journal reported, supposedly contain an enzyme (tagged UGT2B17) that could raise testosterone levels in the human organism by inhibiting its excretory mechanisms. Perhaps the legend that told about wine in the canteens of Bernald Hinault, a champion cyclist from the '70s and '80s, might be true after all...

## Report

### Wine & food, top of its class

With a grand total of 25 billion Euros in 2012 (+8% over 2011), and a similar growth being forecasted for 2013, hinting at a record 27 billion Euros, Italian wine & food has registered a historical growth in exports, becoming the first sector of "Made in Italy", according to Federalimentare. Its National Exports Plan 2013-2015, presented at the Institute of Foreign Commerce, stated as much, pointing out "the stability of wine & food on world markets has paid off even in a tough year".



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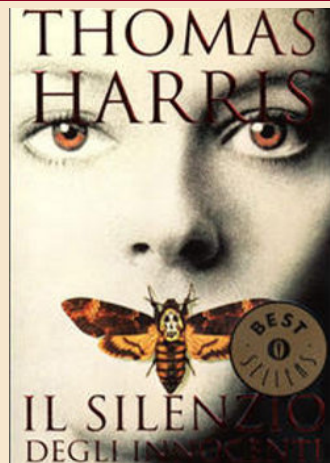
### Winemakers grow in 2012 thanks to exports

76% of the major Italian winemaking firms had a positive 2012 and forecasted higher turnovers hovering on average around +4% over 2011, mainly due to exports (+13% over 2011 on average, considering turnover growth). At least, that's what 30 of the most important names in Italy's winemaking business told WineNews, considering their history, image and turnover (and that generated a combined turnover of 2 billion Euros, more than 20% of the total turnover of the sector). The Italian winemaking sector is not evidently an oasis, but it still looks to be quite a ways away from the deep crisis other Italian productive sectors are feeling, at least among its biggest names. The big drop in domestic consumption (well below the "psychological" threshold of 40 litres per capita) has caused a few cracks in the wall, so to speak, but the solidity of the Italian wine world is definitely not under discussion. And exports are what make it so, because at the end of 2012 they should hover around 4.6-4.7 billion Euros - a record high - and volumes around 21-21.5 million hectolitres (estimates from data by the Italian Institute of Statistics ISTAT). "Made in Italy" wine, then, looks to be firmly tied to those goods, like fashion products, that still represent the best of Italian products in the world - those that have an appeal that knows no crisis, generally speaking. The most interesting performances, in 57% of cases, come from the United States, a historical and essential market. Canada is a very interesting country for 47% of firms, and 28% of them consider Russia to be a growing market, though having a reactive demand especially for luxury goods. Japan, China and Asia in general are doing just fine, and Germany is seen as fundamental for 19% of the sample. Just 5% of it saw their exports drop. On the home front, though, things are different: 42% of firms have sold, on average, 9% more in Italy during 2012, and 47% have seen their sales drop 7% on average. This is due to both the crisis and the new payment system regimen, which has recently put the catering business in a bit of a bind.

## Focus

### Amarone, a great wine for best sellers

Amarone della Valpolicella: one of the most successful Italian wines in the world. And also a wine that has been the special guest of many best sellers by the last century's greatest writers: from Ernest Hemingway's "A Farewell To Arms" (as he describes in his "Beyond The River And The Trees" - "dry, red and cordial like the house of a brother you get along with") to "The Silence Of The Lambs" by Thomas Harris, where Hannibal Lecter tells of how he paired "an important bottle of Amarone" with the liver of a census officer, all the way to "Freedom", the latest novel by Jonathan Franzen, who chooses Amarone for the tension-filled dinner that reunites the families of the protagonists, Walter and Patty, in a restaurant in SoHo. These are some of the most famous examples of the episodes that have contributed to the fame of the great Venetian red, which will present its 2009 vintage next Jan. 26th-27th in Verona, during "Anteprima Amarone" ([consorziovalpolicella.it](http://consorziovalpolicella.it)). And, Amarone is the star on world markets, but also in the homeland, with "Le Tavole della Valpolicella", an association of restaurants that, from Feb. 28th to Apr. 20th, will focus on the great dishes that go with it best.



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## Wine & Food

### Frescobaldi to "free" the wine of Gorgona Island?

According to the latest rumours, the Frescobaldi family that has been making wine since the 1700's on its estates in Tuscany, from Castelgiocondo to Nipozzano, might contribute to the growth of the grape varieties on Gorgona Island, home of a penitentiary whose inmates have been cultivating them for years. The request supposedly comes from the prison: last September, the harvest took place under the watchful eye of Frescobaldi experts who helped the winemaking inmates with their experience and know-how.

## For the record

### Fine wine auctions balanced in 2012

During the last quarter of 2012, the global market of fine wine auctions seems to have gained some of its former strength back. In the U.S., the lots of the last 15 auctions of this kind have had a total value of 40 million U.S. dollars, and in Hong Kong, the new "Mecca", the sum reached 58.5 million dollars, but at a much lower average price.

