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Italian Weekly Wine News.it

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Issue 6 - Nov. 14th-19th, 2011 - Expressly for wine lovers, professionals and opinion leaders the world over
Registration number 709, Courthouse of Siena, March 21st, 2011 - Editor-in-chief: Alessandro Regoli

News



Gabriele Del Carlo is the best Italian sommelier of 2011

He's 27, working at "Restaurant Le Cinq" in Paris (but had been cutting his teeth at "Enoteca Pinchiorri" and "Cracco") and was nominated best Italian sommelier 2011 on Nov. 14th. This is Gabriele Del Carlo, who was awarded the Sommelier - Franciacorta Prize in Milan, beating Andrea Balleri and Daniele Arcangeli in a final match that saw Italy's best sommeliers, the standard-bearers of good Italian wines in the world, challenge each other in a series of skills, from taste techniques to wine's organoleptic description and from food-wine pairing to diner reception.



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There's a Minister in Rome

There is a Minister for Agriculture in the new Monti government, and this is not only good news in itself, but also an acknowledgment of the value of the business. The new Minister is Mario Catania, whose expertise is beyond dispute, since he's been an executive in the Ministry since 1988 and has a first-class résumé, so he deserves credit and trust. And it's also a definite plus, at a delicate time for the Common Agricultural Policy and for Italy (which could lose 280 million Euros a year with the new reform), that Catania has been Head of the International and European Policy Department of the Ministry since 2009, and is also on good terms with Paolo De Castro, President of the Agricultural Commission of the European Parliament. Best wishes to him!

Report

Barolo & Brunello in top spots

The 2006 Brunello di Montalcino from Campogiovanni (owned by Azienda Agricola San Felice) at spot 4, and Domenico Clerico's 2006 Barolo Ciabot Mentin Ginestra at 8. These are the two best Italian wines according to the 2011 "Top 100" by the influential magazine Wine Spectator. Also on the podium are the French Vouvray Clos du Bourg Première Trie 2009, the American Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Kathryn Hall 2008 and Kosta Browne's Pinot Noir Sonoma 2009 as "wine of the year".



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First Page

Italian wine's "aces up the sleeve" according to Antonio Galloni, Mr. "Wine Advocate" in Europe

The diversity of territories and grape varieties unparalleled in any other country, the simplicity of pairing wines with food and the historic allure of some areas: these are the four aces of Italian wine on the global market, as Antonio Galloni, Robert Parker's European right-hand man explained to Winenews. This vision is endorsed also by the American market, the most important one for Italy, where "it's true," Galloni explains, "that in the last few years there's been a growing demand for wines made from particular varieties and territories, because today it's possible to find good wine anywhere in the world, so customers look for excellence, which is often found in wines that combine grapes and territories that cannot be duplicated anywhere else". A combination that Italy has in spades, to the point that, Galloni adds, "you could taste Italian wines for your whole life without ever getting bored. And there's also the ability of food pairing and a pleasantness at the dining table that no other country can offer, which is an incomparable characteristic". Furthermore, there's a history of wine that no-one, except France in some cases, can boast: "from the charm of the castle on the hill in Chianti Classico, or the walled city of Montalcino, or Piedmont for the Barolos, which definitely takes a hold on the public". But, Galloni points out, the attitude in the territories has to change because often it's not clear that the big wineries that sell a lot and have opened new market avenues are really a support for the artisans focused on excellence, and vice versa: "the biggest challenge for Italy is fighting the tendency to squabble, and to show it in public worldwide. If you visit a producer in Bordeaux, for instance, and ask about his neighbour, you will never hear a bad word about him. And it's not like the same discussions don't take place there, but they don't let it show on the outside, so their image stays intact. Because some problems are best discussed in private, to not needlessly damage value".

Focus

Export makes Italian wineries' turnover soar

93% of Italy's most important wine companies will look back on 2011 as a positive year, with an average increment in sales of 8% over 2010. And the coming Christmas holidays will mean a 27% increase in sales for 32% of those companies. 53% think they have a rosy future ahead of them, even in 2012. Such is the opinion of 25 of the most important Italian wine companies that invoiced 1.8 billion euros, according to a Winenews survey - not a scientific sample, but an authoritative panel encompassing the most consolidated part of the industry, with brands that are operating firmly on foreign markets, both old and new, thus feeding export that is without a doubt the main development route for Italian labels. Most of the companies are focusing on the U.S. (81%), Asia (75%), Europe (56%), South America (25%) and Canada, which means both a renewed interest in well-tread markets and a focus on emerging ones. 2010's commercial liveliness seems to have survived in 2011, giving these companies the possibility to react efficiently to the ongoing global crisis - which also explains the optimism shown in our survey, with 53% expecting a somewhat positive future and 37% expecting a strongly positive one.



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Wine & Food

Signature wineries? Not unless they're tied to the territories

Signature wineries? No, thank you. Or rather, yes, but only if their style is tied to the territory, to the landscape and to the wine culture that have been shaping them deeply and since the dawn of time. An idea that, to tell the truth, doesn't seem to be the guiding light of the many wineries created by great architects all over Italy, where the style of the author trumps (or cancels altogether) the bond with the territory. Such is the opinion of Giovanni Fraziano, Dean of Architecture at Trieste University, who regards this phenomenon as a sort of publicity stunt that might become obsolete in a few years' time...

For the record

Breathing new life into ancient varieties

Vines can be renovated, too. A small miracle that many - like Feudi di San Gregorio, with its "Patriarchs" - understood well, performed with patient pruning, a regeneration

process and a method pioneered by the Vine Preparators Marco Simonit and Pier Paolo Sirch, which is the cornerstone of the only Italian Permanent School of Vine Pruning.

