

News



The first bunches have been cut

In southern Italy, as we previously reported, some winemakers have already started their 2016 harvest, like the Sicilian Settesoli cooperative, and others, like Planeta, have started cutting bunches of Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc grapes as well (as they have illustrated on Facebook, using the hashtag #VedereVendemmia2016), or Donnafugata, with its traditional and hypnotic "night harvest" that took place three days ago. And now, northern Italy is also in play, because in Franciacorta, the heart of the Italian "Metodo Classico" sparklings, Castello Bonomi (Paladin Group) has started harvesting in Coccaglio, namely its Pinot Noir vineyards.

First Page

2016 harvest: Italian vineyards "healthy" so far

Except for a few bunches of early varieties and of those used for sparkling wines, from Sicily to Franciacorta, the 2016 harvest is yet to come, and evidently any forecast on quantities and quality is premature. All the same, there is something to be said about the state of health of "Vineyard Italy". From the north of Italy to the south there have been some issues, but they've been tackled early and well; therefore, the general health of vineyards looks good indeed, and everything seems to be going according to plan. This, in layman's terms, is the verdict of some of the top winemakers in Italy, according to the WineNews poll. The group includes both young professionals and venerable masters, such as the President of Assoenologi, Roberto Cotarella, Carlo Ferrini, Donato Lanati, Lorenzo Landi, Attilio Pagli, Leonardo Valenti, Roberto Cipresso, Emiliano Falsini, Valentino Ciarla, Vincenzo Mercurio and Nicola Biasi, Head Coordinator of the "Wine Research Team" scientific committee. These oenologists work in all corners of Italy, and therefore, they are the ones that can definitely grant a sort of "bird's eye view" on the state of things in Italian vineyards. There has been abundant rain during the spring that has created some issues during the flowering phase, but the productive potential was not at risk. Still, the rain has favoured mildew, which has struck significantly both in the north (especially in Lombardy, Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia) and in the south (Apulia and Basilicata, first and foremost), but it should not lower yields, compared to last year. The upcoming harvest, the oenologists explain, has required quick interventions in the vineyards, and even those that follow the rules for organic wines have not sustained significant damage, while in all probability those that follow the tenets of biodynamic might have had a few more problems. Vines have never suffered from water shock. Some of the most optimistic experts have drawn an analogy with the seasonal progression that has given birth to the 2010 vintage, but the identity of the upcoming harvest is still shrouded, though so far it looks like a regular one.

Focus

Denmark, Tuscany, design & wine

Tuscany has traditionally been a "safe haven" of sorts for retiring, or just vacationing Brits and Americans, among others, and it has become the catalyst for many important investments coming from abroad in recent times, especially when it comes to the wine world. Here, between Montalcino, Siena and Firenze, a Danish couple, Clause and Jeanette Thottrup, fell in love with a run-down farm named Borgo San Pietro near Chiusdino, a stone's throw from the famous San Galgano Abbey. Fate apparently had a hand in that, since the two are at the helm of a firm that specializes in renovating and designing buildings called PN Homes. The result, after long, hard work, is called "Meo Modo" ("My Way" in Latin), a high-level Relais & Chateaux with 15 rooms, a Michelin one-star restaurant, a spa, a cooking school and - for now - 3 hectares of vineyards (becoming 8 by 2018, when the Relais will also have a winery). And, the Relais is also where FI pilot Kimi Raikkonen and model Minttu Virtanen recently got married. The story of "Meo Modo" is the real life fairy tale of a resource for the territory, aiming for 10 million Euros in turnover in the next 3 years and creating 115 jobs.



Piedmont & Nebbiolo (Doc)

According to wine writer Kerin O' Keefe, one of the leading writers on the U.S. magazine "Wine Enthusiast", creating an appellation for Piedmont Nebbiolo Doc - in other words, allowing the use of Nebbiolo in the Piedmont DOC name - is "one of the worst proposals I've ever heard of", and she wrote as much in her latest column. O' Keefe, who is definitely an expert on Piedmont, went on to explain that creating such an appellation would allow anyone to grow "one of Italy's noblest varieties" all over Piedmont. This proposal also risks generating confusion in consumers the world over, of flooding markets with potentially poor quality products, and therefore negative effects on all the Nebbiolo-based Piedmont wines, first and foremost Barolo and Barbaresco...



Report

A medal for Bottura

At the Rio Olympic Games, Italy has one more medal to add to its total, namely the metaphorical one that Massimo Bottura deserves for inaugurating this week, together with chef David Herts, journalist Ale Forbes and the Gastromotiva foundation, his "Refettorio Gastromotiva", the canteen for the needy in Rio de Janeiro, where chefs from all over the world, from Davide Oldani to Alain Ducasse, will transform leftovers from the Olympic Village into new meals, fighting food waste and doing good.

Wine & Food

Organic wine's numbers skyrocket in Italy

According to Wine Monitor, the specialized branch of research and consultancy firm Nomisma, in 2015 the numbers of Italian consumers that have tried organic and/or biodynamic wine reached 10.6 million people (21% of Italians over 18). These figures are remarkable, especially if one considers that in 2013 the percentage was 2% and in 2014 it was 11%. Sales, moreover, have reached 68 million Euros in value, with an additional 137 coming from exports (up 38% over 2014). Italy is the second largest EU grower of organic grapes with 66.578 hectares, behind Spain.

For the record

Italian wine still leading in the United States

Italian wine imports in the States have gone up 0.6% (to 128 million hectolitres) and 3.9% in value (to 666 million dollars) in the first half of 2016, says data from the Italian Wine

& Food Institute, led by Lucio Caputo. Good news, especially considering that total wine imports there have gone down 2.6% in volume and up 2.2% in value.

