

News



Attilio Scienza on wine's future

According to Attilio Scienza, Professor of Viticulture at the University of Milan and one of the world's luminaries on the subject, the future of Italian viticulture will be characterized by five main themes. First, "the increasing consolidation and concentration of wineries", then "the polarization of Italian winemaking, as Tuscany, Piedmont and Veneto might crush the rest of the national output". Furthermore, "vineyards are growing older, and the solution will cost a lot", not to mention "climate change, which is not a critical issue, per se". Then, the final change, ongoing and more and more evident is "consumers' taste is changing day by day".



China's goals

There is no global economic sector, from soccer to wine, immune to the interest of wealthy Chinese investors. Hong-Kong based Segonzac International Group Co. Ltd., for instance, is an investment firm dedicated to wine that, after investing in China, France and Australia, is now looking towards the United States of America to grow more, both commercially and in scope, with an ad-hoc fund. On the one hand, the objective of CEO Kelvin Li is to open a trade channel on the U.S. market, to sell the wines its firms produce, and on the other hand, he aims to find partners and commercial joint ventures in order to pursue its strategy of mergers and acquisitions. This year, it should focus on Italian as well as American wineries.

Report

Coldiretti: wine in 2016

Italy has become the world's leading country in wine production, at 50 million hectolitres, and 42% of that is made up of the 332 denomination wines (DOC) and the 73 DOCG wines. The value of exports has gone up 3%, reaching a new and historic record: 5.5 billion Euros. The data comes from a study by farmers association Coldiretti, and the document also states that wine is now the single most important item in Italian food exports when it comes to its economic weight.



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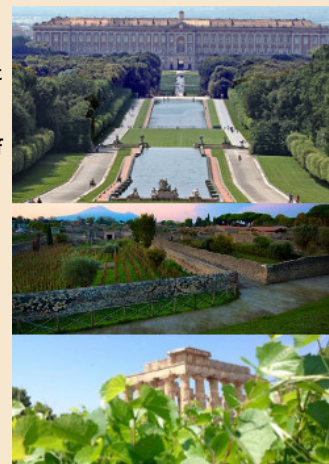
ISMEA: good prices for PDO, exports, mass retail

According to the latest report authored by the Italian state agency ISMEA, there is more than a glimpse of hope for Italian wine in 2017, with a solid base to grow more, even though some negative signals linger from 2016. The report was freshly published at the end of December, and the first thing it points out is the contrasted landscape on the issue of prices. Table wines are doing badly, with whites at 3.1 Euros (down 1.5% over 2015), and reds and rosées have plummeted 9.5%, to 3.4 Euros. GPI wines have also performed quite badly, with the ISMEA index on prices dropping 9% at production for the first 11 months of the year. For years now, DOC and DOCG wines, on the other hand, have done very well for themselves, going up 6%, and whites are leading the growth, at an 11% uptake, while reds have gone up only 1%. The subject of prices is fundamental, since, as ISMEA points out, Italy has almost two full vintages in the cellar of its winemakers, if one considers almost 50 million hectolitres of the 2016 vintage and 42.7 million in stocks registered last July. Regarding exports, the 5.5 billion Euros watermark should definitely have been broken in 2016, if one considers the 4 billion registered between January and September 2016 (3.3% growth year-over-year), and 14.7% million hectolitres going beyond national borders (up 1.4%), mainly thanks to sparkling wines. Wine imports, meanwhile, have gone down sharply, 42% less in volume (1.2 million hectolitres) and 7.1% less in value, to 204 million Euros, and over half of that is due to France, as its exports to Italy have gone up a remarkable 14% in value. Italian mass retail has done well: volumes have been stable between January and November (up 0.4%), but value has gone up 2.2%. And here as well, it is all due to sparkling wines, with volumes going up 13.3% and value up 14.7%. Still denomination wines have done well for themselves too, volumes have gone up 2.4% and value up 4.7%, but GPI and table wines have gone down. Horeca has also done well, and it should close its books on 2016 at 7% growth in volume and value going up 7.5%.

Focus

The Bourbon vine in the Caserta Palace

Grapevines and wine have been a part of our civilization since ancient Rome, and also in the 18th century, when Naples was one of the most important Mediterranean cities and the capital of the Neapolitan Kingdom led by the Bourbon Dynasty. In 1752, Charles of Bourbon ordered the construction of the Palace in Caserta, to rival Versailles. To this day the mansion is the largest royal palace in the world, and one of the crown jewels of the Italian historical heritage. It is also going to be the place where the ancient Bourbon grapevine will live once more in the San Silvestro Forest and to do so, the administration of the Palace, together with the Ministry of Culture, will give away the management of two hectares of the forest, stating that it is already open to public proposals on the matter. Wine, then, will once more be an integral part of the Palace, just like in the last few years has come about in two of the most beautiful Italian archaeological sites. One is Pompeii and the "Villa of Mysteries", the wine made by Mastroberardino in the domus of the ancient Roman city, and the other is the Temple of Selinunte, Europe's largest archaeological park, thanks to Cantine Settesoli.



Wine & Food

2017 to be a waiting game for retail giant Coop

Wishful thinking aside, 2017 is in all probability not going to be much different from 2016, but according to the latest "Coop Report", by Italy's biggest retail chain cooperative Coop, there is a positive note to be found. 13% of Italians, according to the report's usual survey, are going to spend more on food in their everyday spending, and only 8% will spend less than they did last year, and mass retail in Italy will basically close the year with a stable turnover. Purchasing power, on the other hand, will rise a mere 0.7%.

For the record

Michelin follows Groupon's example

The Michelin guide is now offering discounts and special deals on restaurants and hotels, with a sort of internal "Groupon" formula - even though it is probably more similar to

the Tripadvisor one. The promotions will hopefully get the public closer to the world of fine dining and cuisine, but it might be seen as a conflict of interests.

