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News



Campania and "the Sicilies"

"In Campania", said Antonio Capaldo, President of Feudi di San Gregorio, "quantity is down 40%, and the harvest has been good, but not excellent, for whites. For Aglianico, on the other hand, it could be a remarkable vintage". Great expectations can be felt for the harvest on Mount Etna: for Planeta's Alessio Planeta "it's the best since we've set foot on the volcano" and "things are going smoothly" for Alberto Tasca (Tasca d'Almerita), with "good preconditions for quality" (Donnafugata's Antonio Rallo). Quantity is down for international grape varieties in Menfi and in the south-east, while Nero d'Avola, Zibibbo in Pantelleria and in the Vittoria area have fared better.



SMS

Nebbiolo & sparklings

In Piedmont, things have changed thanks to an "ideal September, even if water was still scarce. Quantity is down 10-15% for Nebbiolo, and we've harvested those grapes moderately early. If someone had told me this back in July, I would've asked where to sign", said Stefano Gagliardo of Poderi Gianni Gagliardo. In Lombardy, particularly in Franciacorta, Mattia Vezzola, winemaking consultant for Bellavista, summed things up: "nothing remarkable or catastrophic. Our reserves, coming from more abundant vintages, will make up for the drop in quantity, like in Champagne". Trentino's situation is good, says Ferrari's Marcello Lunelli: "after frosts, hailstorms and intense heat, quantity is down 20%, but quality is good, thanks to irrigation, and base wines are very interesting".

Report

Smiles for Apulia, Sardinia

"Reds are good, sometimes great. There are some acidity issues for whites and rosés, but they have great aromas and are very pleasureable. Quantities are down though, especially in Salento, around 25-30%", said Angelo Maci of Cantina Due Palme. From Sardinia, Argiolas' Mariano Murrù said that "quantity is down 30%, but thanks to irrigation and older vineyards quality is better than expected for whites, like Vermentino and Nasco, and for reds like Cannonau and Carignano".



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First Page

Quality better than expected for the 2017 harvest

"Better than expected": this is the single most common remark that WineNews collected from some of Italy's most important winemakers regarding the 2017 harvest, which is almost entirely done at this point in time. The economic damage, though, is undisputed: quantity is down 30%, on average, compared to last year's harvest, and the average ratio between grapes and wine made has similarly suffered, thus sparking a general reflection on the future of Italian winemaking. From northern Italy to its southern regions, all territories and wineries have had to face troubles, given the freakish behavior of the weather, with hailstorms and frosts followed by scorching temperatures. Now, anyways, one can look at the harvest, quality-wise, with a bit more certainties, but in order to understand what the 2017 wines will truly be like, one will have to wait for their natural evolution. The 2017 harvest has been, given its extreme events, a true trial-by-fire of the wineries' economic sustainability, but it has also given the opportunity to test possible solutions in order to change each firm's productive paradigm. Most of the issues that this vintage has shown can be tackled, by and large, with technological solutions, both in the vineyards and in the cellars, but in all probability choices regarding the future will have to take more radical issues into consideration as well, such as water supply and, more importantly, an informed and robust productive philosophy that can go beyond the "usual" long-term point of view. This vintage, furthermore, has showcased the superiority of those territories that are highly favorable to grape growing, a fact that has sometimes been overlooked in the race to planting in areas that are not exactly that, even in some denominations. Meanwhile, one can say that the 2017 vintage will be a hot and sometimes scorching one, which does not mean that good wines won't be made from grapes that are, generally speaking, extremely healthy, but rather that, according to the producers themselves, one can't be expecting historical wines to come out of it, with the hope of some - possible, but very rare indeed - exceptions to this generalization.

Focus

From the North-East to the South

Things have not gone so bad for Veneto, both for Amarone, "with very healthy grapes and moderate drops, thanks to irrigation", said authoritative figures such as Sabrina Tedeschi and Franco Allegrini, and for Prosecco "with normal acidity and sugar", said Elvira Bortolomiol. In both cases, quantity is down 10%, the same of Friuli, in Collio, said Venica & Venica's Gianni Venica: "we're satisfied, hill vineyards made a difference". Tuscany's situation is complex: quantity is down 30%, particularly in Chianti Classico, said Rocca delle Macie's Sergio Zingarelli, but here as well grape quality is high, thanks to irrigation. Renzo Cotarella, CEO of Antinori, concurs, and pointed out that indigenous varieties, Sangiovese first of all, have yielded "great results". Castello Banfi's Rudy Buratti shared his opinion: things "are better than expected, the wine's quality will be great". In Umbria, quantity is down 35%, said Marco Caprai, at the helm of Montefalco's Arnaldo Caprai: "in the cellar things are good or very good, but we'll have to work". For Michele Bernetti of Umani Ronchi, between Verdicchio's and Rosso Conero's Marche and Abruzzi, "it's been the vintage of favourable areas and older vineyards".



ARNALDO CAPRAI

Viticoltore in Montefalco

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Wine & Food

One firm, multiple areas: Bertani Domains, Zonin I821 speak up

"For whites and reds from early varieties", Stefano Ferrante, Director of Zonin I821 told WineNews, "it won't be an unforgettable vintage. It'll be much better for Barbera, Nero d'Avola and Sangiovese. Apulia is where we got the best results, the most performing area". "The vintage in Valpolicella has been good, and we're satisfied by Friuli as well, thanks to an early harvest", said Andrea Lonardi of Bertani Domains: "Tuscany's more of an issue, with quantity down 50% in some cases, we'll have "big" wines, not long-lived ones. Marche is down 25%, and quality's good, but we will not make crus".

For the record

Quantity down, quality up for Italian olive oil

The weather has been felt among olive growers as well, and in 2017, says Michele Bungaro, Director of trade association FOOI, "320.000 tons of extra-virgin olive oil will be

made, up 175% over 2016 (a terrible year), but down 68% over 2015's 474.000 tons". Umbria and Tuscany are down 30%, and Apulia by 50%, but quality should be excellent.

