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News



Valpolicella & education

Valpolicella is celebrating its 50th birthday as DOC protected denomination with healthy figures. Production of Amarone and Recioto has grown to 15.5 million bottles in 2017, almost double 2007's 8.3 million, and the celebrations for the birthday will be front and centre at the Consortium of Valpolicella's main event, the Amarone Preview (Verona, February 3rd-5th). Additionally, in order to grow even more, the Consortium has created the Valpolicella Education Program, a high-level course on its territory, its varieties and its wines, a few days before the preview (Jan. 30th-Feb. 1st) including 21 experts from countries such as the UK, the USA, Russia and China.



SMS **CMO funds and the "Big 3"**
EU CMO funds are vital for European winemaking as a whole, but how does Italy spend them, and what do its competitors prioritize? According to data published by UIV - Corriere Vinicolo, in 2016 Italy had the lion's share of funds (337 million Euros out of 1.1 billion), and spent a total of 321: 85.4 for promotion, 155.6 for the reconversion and renovation of vineyards, 1.3 for "green harvests", 20 for harvest insurance, 43.4 for business investments and 16.5 for the distillation of by-products. France has spent all of its 280 million, 100 for business investments and 105 for vineyards reconversion and renovation, while Spain added 2 million to the EU funds, for a total of 212, and spent 142.7 million Euros for the unified payment system, and 49.6 million Euros for promotion.

Report

De Agostini invests in Botter
DeA Capital Alternative Funds Sgr, one of Italy's main independent asset management firms, belonging to the De Agostini publishing group, has acquired - through the IdeA Taste of Italy fund - a 22.5% stake in Casa Vinicola Botter SpA, the Venetian winery founded in 1928 and headquartered in Fossalta di Piave that is one of Italy's most important names, turnover-wise. The Botter family is still firmly the main owner, and an IPO might not be that far ahead for the business.



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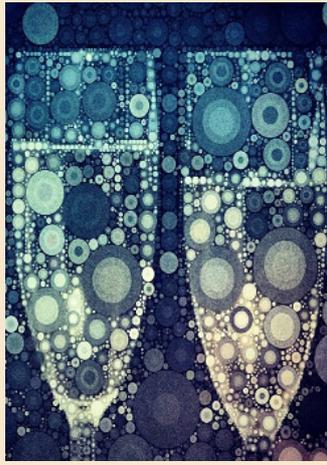
Few certainties, many unknowns for Italy in 2018

The combination of a strong Euro, increasing competition in the U.S. and the UK and the scarcity of the 2017 harvest, means that 2018 is going to be a year of caution and consolidation for Italian wine, according to the managers of some of the most important winemaking firms and groups of the country for prestige, volumes and turnover, like Roberta Corrà (GIV - Gruppo Italiano Vini), Renzo Cotarella (CEO, Marchesi Antinori), Ettore Nicoletto (CEO, Gruppo Santa Margherita), Enrico Viglierchio (General Director, Castello Banfi) and Matteo Lunelli (President and CEO, Cantine Ferrari). Corrà described 2018 as "a tough year, one without certainties, to watch closely" - due to the strength of the Euro on the Dollar, the strongest it's been for the last three years - and Nicoletto said that "competition is growing: Italy has grown and has maintained a good position in the States, but France is growing stronger, and the 2017 harvest has put enormous pressure on the starting prices of grapes and wine. This, of course, will bring repercussions on margins" that in turn might make Italy less competitive in the States, which, for Viglierchio, "is, as ever, a vital market, but where one needs to invest more than in the past". And even though 2017 has been another splendid year for sparkling wines, the future of the UK has Matteo Lunelli thinking "it is more important than ever to reposition one's products and try to bring prices up", and "the exchange rate will become a fundamental variable". Given the above, China seems to become a secondary objective, even though firms must still keep a long-term presence there. The domestic market keeps on growing, and, according to Cotarella, "has an unexpressed potential, because other firms have bet overseas", even though, said Nicoletto, "selling wine in Italy is not as profitable as selling it abroad". Corrà says the strategic key will be "education, since that is what allows us to position our products in the markets and face any kind of year", while both Cotarella and Viglierchio pointed out the positive role of tourism, since it has contributed to "a growth in quality as well, with a strong upswing of the entire on-trade sector".

Focus

Sparklings in Italy for Wine Intelligence

According to a Wine Intelligence report for sparkling wines on the Italian market, when it comes to perceived quality, Italian put Champagne on top, followed by Franciacorta and Prosecco, then Trentodoc, Alta Langa, Asti, Pignoletto and Lambrusco. If one considers the price/quality ratio, though, Prosecco is in the lead, and then come Lambrusco, Asti, Alta Langa, Trentodoc and Franciacorta, and Champagne is dead last. Additionally, Ferrari, Martini, Gancia and Maschio are among the most well known brands among consumers (more than 80%), but the best performances belong to Ferrari (Trentodoc) and Berlucchi (Franciacorta), at a conversion rate towards buyers of over 44%. Trentodoc counts on the leading effect of Ferrari, and so does Franciacorta with Berlucchi (which is leader in retail), Cà del Bosco, Contadi Castaldi and Bellavista. According to the report, in 2017 no less than 31.6 million Italians (64% of the adult population) have consumed sparklings at least once, and most buy them at mass retail stores (with the exception of Champagne and Franciacorta, bought in wine shops) at an average price between 7 and 15 Euros per bottle.



Wine & Food

Soave fights soil consumption with "No-Rolling-Stones" project
Sustainable viticulture also means tackling the issue of soil consumption. This is why the Consortium of Soave, through the "No-Rolling-Stones" project, has decided to try and find a balance between the needs of modern, profitable winemaking and soil preservation, in order to safeguard its steep vineyards and dry stone walls, which are the identifying features of a territory that has been recognized as the first of the historical rural landscapes of Italy by the Ministry of Agriculture, and that might become part of FAO's Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System.

For the record

VPE buys 50% of Bellavita Expo Fair

VPE, the new.co created by Veronafiere and Parma Fair, has bought a 50% stake in Bellavita Expo, the British firm specialized in Italian wine & food fairs active in markets like the UK, the USA, Canada, Thailand and Mexico. "This", VPE's CEO Giovanni Mantovani stated, "will allow us to offer an international format to our clients".

