

...INTERNATIONAL...



Year 1 no.8 March 2012

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## GALA TRE BICCHIERI TASTING AT VINITALY

On the occasion of the 46th edition of Vinitaly, the international wine and spirits fair that takes place in Verona, March 25-28, 2012, Gambero Rosso, has organized a gala tasting event. This special tasting will feature all the Tre Bicchieri wines selected by the Vini d'Italia 2012 guide. It is the first event of its kind to be presented inside Vinitaly, which last year attracted a record-breaking 150,000 visitors.

The event will take place on Sunday, March 25, 2012, from 10.30 to 16.30 at Vinitaly in the "Sala Argento" on the lower ground floor of Palaexpo. Producers, importers, distributors, restaurateurs, opinion leaders, international guests and the foreign press will attend. Participation is by invitation only. Besides the tasting tables, Gambero Rosso will organize seminars for some international delegations to be led by the wine guide's editors, during which they will present and discuss their favorite labels. On-going cooperation between Gambero Rosso and Fiera Verona will create

a key opportunity for trade professionals to meet and network. The international media will have an opportunity to deepen their understanding of Italy's premium labels within the framework of a rich program that we will describe in our next edition.



# Organic Wine: a first Yes from Europe

## After 20 years, a European Union label



Since February 2012, European organic wine officially exists. In Brussels, the Standing Committee on Organic Farming (SCOF), representing 27 member states, approved the new rules as proposed by EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Dacian Ciolos. Under the new regulations, which will apply from the 2012 harvest, organic wine growers will be allowed to use the term "organic wine" on their labels, as opposed to "wine from organic grapes", and show the "Euro-leaf" logo, the green stamp designed in 2010 by a German student, Dusan Milenkovic. The possibility of labeling wines from earlier vintage years as organic also exists, as long as the producer can show its conformity to European rules to the satisfaction of the certifying agencies. Until today, the essential disagreement was about the use of sulphites. The new limits, which are the same for all countries, are reduced from 150mg per liter to 100mg for red wines and from 200mg per liter to 150mg for whites. In other words, a reduction of 50 milligrams per liter compared to the previous limits. (For sweet wines, this reduction is 30 where residual sugar is over 2 grams per liter.) Some exceptions are made for the countries of Northern Europe, including, oddly enough, France. In particular cases, they are allowed 120 milligrams

per liter for reds and 170 for whites. Dacian Ciolos stated, "I am delighted that we have finally reached agreement on this dossier, as it was important to establish harmonized rules guaranteeing a clear offer to consumers who are more and more interested in organic products. I am pleased that we emerge with rules which make a clear difference between conventional and organic wine". Italy greeted the new regulations positively. "We can't be anything but in favor of the new regulations," says Cristina Micheloni, coordinator of the scientific committee AIAB, *Associazione italiana per l'agricoltura biologica*. "Brussels took a big step ahead for the entire organic wine sector." However, she continued, "There are still many things that need changing. Like every political compromise, the result doesn't make anyone happy, but leaves everyone a little less unhappy." She went on, "It would be pointless to destroy the entire agreement because of a few details after it took so much work to reach a sensible proposal. Today we can speak about organic wine. Tomorrow we can work on the regulations to bring in the necessary modifications." Among these is the option of adding some substances that Italy doesn't want to give up but that were among the reasons why Spain and Austria voted against the proposal.

(SOURCE Tre Bicchieri)



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## WINE BUY OF THE MONTH

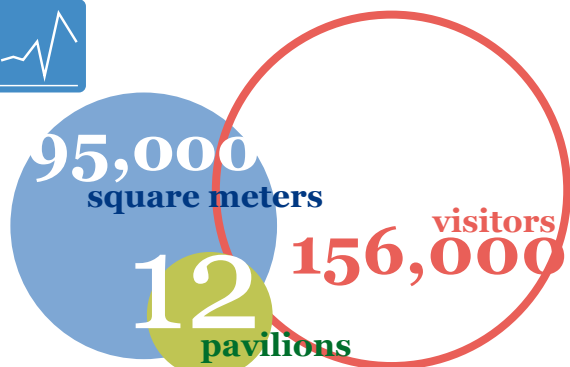


**Langhe Bianco Herzù 2009** | 11,000 bottles  
16 euros

The white wine of the month is from Piedmont, but it isn't a red. Sergio Germano has achieved admirable production design during his approximately 25 years of activity and contributed to spotlighting the area and promoting knowledge about the Langa zone both in Italy and abroad. Throughout the range of his wines, he shows respect for each individual variety. L'Herzu '09 – with only 11,000 bottles produced – is an unusually delicate, elegant monovarietal Rhenish riesling that displays perfect, symphonic harmony. Notes of white flowers and hydrocarbons on the nose are followed by a fairly soft palate majestically contrasted by lively acidity. Great personality, drinkability, stylistic precision, endless finish.



### Vinitaly in numbers



**AREA** 95,000 square meters, 12 pavilions, besides the second floor of Palaexpo.

**EXHIBITORS** more than 4,000, from North and South America, Europe, Africa and the Pacific countries.

**CONTACTS PER EXHIBITOR** 33 as compared to 11-15 at other competing fairs.

**VISITORS 2011** 156,000, of which over 50,000 were foreigners (47,000 in 2010) coming from over 110 countries.

**MEDIA 2011** 2,625 accredited journalists from about 50 countries



## Where to eat in Verona

It's not easy to find a place like this, where the old and the new blend so well, are so intimately interwoven, that it's impossible to see where one begins and the other ends. The result? Come and see for yourself. In a warm and welcoming atmosphere, a storied and yet modern osteria, you'll find the habitués drinking a good glass of red and commenting on their newspapers as well as the younger generation opting for the house aperitivo, Champagne and fried meatballs. There's more solid food, too – rustic dishes such as pasta and fagioli, horse meat stew, and beans with sausage. The wine list, as you can imagine, provides some serious fun.

➤ Sottoriva | via Sottoriva, 9 | Verona | tel. 045 801 4323

## Vinitaly presents wines from organic and biodynamic agriculture



This year, for the first time, Vinitaly is dedicating a hall entirely to natural wines from organic and biodynamic agriculture. The event will be set up on the 1st floor of Palaexpo, entrance A2. Producers from France, Austria and Slovenia as

well as Italy will be on the scene – 121 of them.

Vinitaly has asked the companies involved in VIVIT to sign a very strict self-certification document concerning the production methods applied in vineyard and in wine cellar, in line with the regulations from the European Union that have recently been published. "Those of us who are participating in VIVIT," says Elena

Pantaleoni from the organic winery La Stoppa, "are winegrowers who have producing wines that reflect our territory as our primary objective. We make, as the French say, vins de terroir. We often practice organic or biodynamic agriculture, but we don't always have certificates. We work in our cellars in ways that do not alter the territory's characteristics, nor that of the vintage year or the grape variety. We try to express with our wines the uniqueness and the personality of each wine zone." Producing wine with biodynamic methods is not in itself a guarantee of quality, Nicolas Joly explains. He is the founder of La Renaissance des Appellations, an association of grapegrowers founded in 2001. Its members include 200 producers in 14 countries, 34 of whom are in Italy. "The results depend on the place where the grapes grow and the variety chosen. But when you taste one of these wines, you understand the difference. You return to truthful taste." Let's be sure to visit this hall.



**Mastroberardino**  
1878





Fort Mason Center  
San Francisco

# Tre Bicchieri in the USA

by Lorenzo Ruggeri



It often happens that we have to go far from home to appreciate the value of what we have right next door. In the United States, the Tre Bicchieri Tour 2012 attracted over 5,000 visitors to its stops in San Francisco, New York and Chicago. But it's not just the numbers that impressed us, although those are startling for events that were invitation-only. What struck us even more was the enthusiasm, the passion and the depth of knowledge about Italian wine that the American public brought with them. Both curious and competent, they were interested in lesser-known zones, in indigenous varieties of grapes, in the great classics such as Barolo di Serralunga and in niche productions like Passito fior d'Arancio dei Colli Euganei. We didn't just host three events: they felt like three parties, three celebrations of the quality of Italian wine. The trip was also an opportunity to explore again the wine areas near the event sites. We went to Napa Valley and Sonoma. We visited the vineyards near the Hamptons in Long Island. Soon we'll come out with a video to show you visually what we experienced. During the tastings we interviewed many of you: we wanted feedback, we needed to verify how our work of selecting wines was

perceived by North American experts. The result was extraordinary. To see up close the importance given to our top award – Tre Bicchieri – even in the United States charged us with incredible energy to continue the job. (Tastings around Italy begin again soon enough!) Many of you told our microphones how Italian wine has such a wealth of history, of native grapes, a heritage of diversity unequalled in the world. Thanks to the labors of over 180 winemaking firms, we were able to bring you all this diversity, using selective criteria that have no equal anywhere in Italy's panorama of wine critics and writers. Italian wineries are enjoying a period of great expansion abroad, compensating for a long-term drop in wine consumption at home. Every year the American Gambero Rosso tour grows, and not only in terms of numbers. Tastings of Italian wines are springing up everywhere in the United States, something that we find satisfying. We will continue to offer you the results of our selection process. Only one thing matters to us: the quality of the wine in the glass. We are proud that this patient research – we taste 40,000 Italian wines every year – arouses so much interest. We thank you all from the bottom of our hearts.

## Gourmet Airport: Hong Kong



From a transit facility to a gourmet mall – this is the transformation that many international airports are undertaking. Bistros and haute restaurants are springing up to lure the traveling foodie, and waiting has never been so much fun. This month we launch our new feature dedicated to airport food and wine experiences. Hong Kong is a city-state that doesn't grow outwards but upwards. The skyline from the promontory of Victoria Peak is unique and thrilling, as exciting as the local dim sum ritual. In Hong Kong's impressive airport, built on an artificial island and on reclaimed sea bed thanks to the largest investment of its type in the world, is a shopping paradise. All transactions are tax-free, but the kaleidoscope of merchandise on show is overshadowed by the food available. Pak Loh Chiu Chow, a key name since 1967, brings the traditions of Guangdong region to its tables in Terminal 1. Among the dishes on the menu is shark fin soup, a Chinese festival dish. Its gelatinous consistency is similar to jelly-fish, also featured on the menu, along with many crustaceans. For more familiar fare in Terminal 1, opt for roast duck at Maxim's: eat it there, take it on the plane, or have it packaged elegantly to bring to a lucky friend.

### PAIRINGS / Turkey & Vernaccia di San Gimignano Fiore



Vernaccia di San Gimignano is a versatile product. A delightful companion for fish and crustaceans, it also sets off mushrooms and light meats - chicken and veal, for example. We selected Vernaccia di San Gimignano Fiore '09, with its insistent mineral and stony quality, like a rushing stream enlivened by a bouquet of aromatic herbs and delicate flowers. On the palate, sensations are saline and citrusy, their impact touching and ancestral. Try the wine with roast stuffed turkey, that Thanksgiving classic. The minerality and acidity of Vernaccia is perfect with the opulence of the turkey, and the complex range of flavors in the stuffing pairs beautifully with the aromatic herb notes in the wine. A slightly bitter note on the finish counterbalances the tendency to sweetness in the turkey stuffing.



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## The second spring of Argentinian wine



Argentina is exporting wine at a remarkable pace, even more remarkable when you consider that until four years ago, Argentina was considered a "wine blank space". Today, however, Argentina's producers can drink a toast to success. Exports have reached a billion American dollars, with an increase of 22.4% over 2010. The excellent performance, however, is mostly in terms of bulk wine. In fact, the exportation of bottles underwent a 3% fall in volume while bulk wine doubled. Leading the growth in Argentinian wine is, as usual, the United States, with imports up 10% compared to the year before. But the real news is from China. Putting Bordeaux to one side, it has discovered the bargain of South American wines. In one year, China's imports of Argentina's wines increased by 68% (+47% in volume), for a total of 16.3 million dollars. Thanks to these numbers, China is now Argentina's sixth largest market.

(SOURCE Tre Bicchieri)

## Chianti Classico: 2011 sales up 4%

Chianti Classico is a favorite with foreigners. Despite the economic crisis, sales increased 4% in 2011, thanks mostly to exports, which absorbed 78% of the wine's production (from a total of 280,000 hectoliters bringing in 360 million euros). This result was achieved even after noteworthy acceleration in 2010, which closed with 24% higher sales than in 2009. The major importer of Chianti Classico is the United States, accounting for 28% of the wine's consumption, more than Italy itself, at 22%. Then comes Germany (13%) and Canada (8%).

(SOURCE Tre Bicchieri)

## Anteprima Vernaccia di San Gimignano 2012



Vernaccia di San Gimignano is the white side of Tuscany's soul. It is a wine that expresses its own territory, in this case, a medieval comune, one of the best preserved in the world. We are in the shadow of San Gimignano's fourteen towers, in the province of Siena. Beloved through the centuries by popes and princes, even today the landscapes in the appellation zone take our breath away. It is terrain that has always been ideal for grapes. Their quality inspired excellent wines. Vernaccia di San Gimignano was the first white to obtain a DOC rating, in 1966. The wine comes principally from the grape variety of the same name, which, in the vinification phase, must make up at least 90% of the whole. The degree of alcohol present must be at least 11 (11.5 for the riserva). Yield per hectare must not exceed 90 quintals (a quintal equals 100 kilos). We participated in the Anteprima Vernaccia di San Gimignano 2012, where we could enjoy a preview of the 2011 vintage. In terms of the weather, it was a particularly warm year, especially in September, but the tastings did not seem to suffer. Instead, we found wonderfully harmonious wines with perfectly ripe fruit resting on marvelous mineral foundations, making for an extraordinary drink. Full flavor is the key, the distinctive timbre of this variety. In the last years its quality has grown exponentially, thanks to the work of many small growers. Another characteristic of this white is its long life. We tasted Riserva bottles from 2008, 2009 and 2010, wines that with time gain complexity and depth.



## Château Margaux goes organic and opts for screw caps



Encouraged perhaps by the new European legislation that permitted official recognition of organic wine, one of the icons of French enology, Château Margaux (290,000 bottles from 88 hectares of vineyard), has decided to convert to organic agriculture. The courageous choice comes in a particularly favorable moment for the maison. (In 2003, Corinne Mentzelopoulos bought the majority stake from the Agnelli family, becoming the sole shareholder of Château Margaux.) Over the last twenty years, the price of a bottle has grown 1800% and is now near 900 euros. "We are getting closer and closer to organic production," enologist Paul Pontallier explained, "and within the next few years, we will complete the entire conversion." But that's not all. Pontallier also announced that the chateau is switching to screw caps. The experiment began with the so-called second vin, Pavillon Rouge (150,000 bottles). "Screw caps worked very well on Pavillon Rouge, better than cork," Pontallier declared.

(SOURCE Tre Bicchieri)

## OIL/Orsini

The Orsini family has been producing excellent extravergine olive oil since 1870, using its own organically grown Itrana cultivar olives. On the estate grounds, a certified organic continuous-cycle olive mill can process the olives within a few hours of their harvesting, thus guaranteeing freshness and quality. DOP Colline Pontine is an Itrana monocultivar characterized by a sensory profile admirable for its cleanliness, precision and terroir typicity. It is extremely fresh on the nose where it develops good notes of tomato leaves, typical of this cultivar, followed by hints of mint and light green apple on the finish. It is amazing in the mouth for its perfect balance of bitterness and pepper, but also for the return of mint and green apple sensations. It goes well with tomato and caper panzanella (bread salad) and with gazpacho, especially because of the oil's characteristic tomato aroma.

ORSINI | Priverno (Lt), Latium | [www.olioorsini.it](http://www.olioorsini.it) | 16 euros per liter



All the word of Gambero Rosso on iPhone e iPad





# vinid'Italia

## italianwines

**An important milestone for Gambero Rosso Vini d'Italia: 2012 is its 25<sup>th</sup> edition.**

**Over 1,000 pages devoted to the quality of Italian wine review 2,350 wineries and evaluate about 20,000 labels.**

This useful volume, prized by all those who enjoy drinking well, is the result of an extraordinary group effort. More than 70 skilled and enthusiastic tasters traveled around Italy for months in search of the best bottles. Rigorously blind tastings took place in consortiums, chambers of commerce and other institutional settings. The wines were evaluated according to the time-tested Tre Bicchieri scale. This year our experts decided on **375 Tre Bicchieri**, the highest level of recognition. Among these, 52 can be found in Italian wine shops for less than 15 euros.

Ninety-five are **Tre Bicchieri Verdi**, or 'green', that is products from wineries that are particularly sensitive to environmental issues. The wine world is increasingly aware of such matters. The regions with the greatest number of Tre Bicchieri wines are Piedmont with 72, followed by Tuscany with 62. Then comes the Veneto with 34, Friuli with 26, Alto Adige 25, Marche and Lombardy with 18, Campania 17, Sicily 16, Emilia Romagna 15, Sardinia 13, Abruzzo 11, Puglia 10, Umbria and the Trentino 9, Liguria and Valle d'Aosta 5. The list ends with Lazio at 4, Basilicata at 3, Calabria 2 and Molise with one Tre Bicchieri wine.

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