



Special Educational Presentations @ VINO-Italian Wine Week

Natasha Lardera (February 09, 2016)



The 5th edition of VINO-Italian Wine Week, the leading Italian wine event to take place in the United States, has officially kicked off and with a bang! Over the course of a week about 200 producers from well known viti-cultural areas are going to present over 1000 wines, spirits and craft beers. VINO also consists of two full days of Grand Tastings, Meet & Greet appointments for producers seeking representation, a series of master classes, guided tastings, workshops and demonstrations.

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“The state of two wine industries: Italy and the USA, the year in review,” was one of these special presentations. Moderated by Maurizio Forte, Italian Trade Commissioner & Executive Director for the



USA, the panel featured Giuseppe Martelli, Director of Assoenologi - Associazione Enologi Enotecnici Italiani and John August Fredrickson, President of Gomberg, Fredrickson Associates. "In 2015, Italy became once again, the world's leading wine producer. It was a very good year for the Italian wine industry overall and in America, the world's largest wine market, Italian wines remained the leading import by country of origin in 2015, by quite a large margin. 2015 has been a very "sparkling" moment for Italian wine," Maurizio Forte commented in his opening remarks. The word "sparkling" not only meant a scintillating/fortunate stage but it also referred to the growing success of bubbly wines on the American market, mostly that of Prosecco.

"The success of Prosecco," Fredrickson later explained, "is due to several different factors. First it is not consumed at celebratory times only, as it often is the case with sparkling wines, but it has become more common especially thanks to millennials. Also the price point definitely helps; the euro has fallen which is good for the dollar."

"2015 was a magical year not only for Prosecco," Martelli revealed "production was facilitated by favorable weather conditions during the entire vegetative cycle of the vine (2014 was scarce). 2014 ended with an increase in sales by 1.4% compared to 2013, while data for the first nine months of 2015 show there was an increase of 5.46% in revenue compared to 2014. The volume of exports are great and that's mostly thanks to sparkling wines. More than 50% of Italian wines produced is sold abroad."

In the presentation "Extraordinary wine values from Southern Italy," the focus was on the rising number of reds, whites and roses, such as Primitivo di Manduria, Falanghina, Salice Salentino, Ciro Rosso, coming from the South. "Given the area's diverse microclimates, terrain, traditions and indigenous varieties, this ascendancy is likely to continue," Charles Scicolone, the panel's moderator explained.

With him, Gary Grunner, VP Marketing and Sales of Grapes on the Go, Marco Melzi of Wine Emporium and Gianfranco Sorrentino, owner of Il Gattopardo, painted a clear picture of the wide variety of grape varietal, regions like Campania, Puglia and Sicily have to offer.

As of today Falanghina is one of the most cherished white wines, both in Italy and the US, while Salice Salentino was very popular years ago and now it is not that trendy anymore. Efforts are being made to make it BIG again.

The challenges are many, and Grunner raised one of the most interesting points: the consequences of global warming. Indeed because of temperature changes the seasons have shifted a little and production can either be delayed or anticipated and the producers have to adapt to that... which is not easy.

"This type of educational seminars are extremely important because education is key in understanding wine, in this case, and its position on the market," Forte explained. The Italian Trade Commission is indeed leader in promoting the importance of education in getting to know what seem to be food or wine products but they are not just that... they mostly are cultural phenomena.

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