

THE LATEST NEWS FROM ITALY'S WINERIES AND WINE GROUPS

4th May, 2020 by Phoebe French

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We spoke to a selection of Italian wineries and wine groups to find out their latest news and how they are coping during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Consorzio delle Venezie DOC Pinot Grigio



The Consorzio delle Venezie has revealed that in the first quarter of the year, the number of certifications and wines bottled under the DOC label has grown by 6.9% compared with 2019, and does not yet reflect the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak. The consorzio describes the coming months as the “great unknown”, and while it is concerned, it is trying

to remain positive. President Albino Armani welcomed measures from the Italian government that guaranteed “the necessary liquidity for businesses” to overcome the effects of the virus. Following the cancellation of ProWein and Vinitaly, the consorzio has turned its attention online. It will be hosting digital tastings of new vintages on its website – dellevenezie.it – which will be published on social media, along with webinars targeting buyers in the UK and US, and companies interested in its work.

Bosco Viticultori



Paolo Lasagni, managing director of Bosco Viticultori, says the company has been fortunate in the sense that 80% of its turnover is generated from the off-trade. The company, therefore, has not been affected in the same way that others that rely more heavily on restaurant sales have been. Lasagni foresees that there could be problems for the 2020 vintage because tanks at some wineries “are still quite full”. He says the Italian government is considering a voluntary alcohol distillation sale for those who are unable to sell their 2019 wines and older bulk stock. Bosco Viticultori is already working on its Christmas projects, and is also promoting its new organic line that had been scheduled to launch at ProWein. The range, called Bosco dei Cirmioli Organic, comprises a Prosecco, a Pinot Grigio and a Merlot.

Zonin



Zonin's Sicilian wine estate Principi di Butera is launching its prestige range in refreshed packaging this spring. These include its Nero d'Avola (Amira); Syrah (Butirah), Grillo (Diamanti) and Inzolia. All of the wines are now packaged in Burgundy bottles and feature labels in contrasting colours. Zonin's Asti-based producer, Castello del Poggio, is set to unveil a vermouth later this year called Ambrosia Vermouth di Torino Rosso Superiore. The aromatised, fortified wine is flavoured with botanicals including marjoram, citrus fruit, thyme, gentian, rhubarb, coriander, nutmeg, cloves, cinnamon, clary sage, vanilla, grapefruit and almond. The producer recommends serving the Italian tippie neat with ice and a slice of orange peel or as a base for cocktails including the Manhattan or Negroni.

Mazzei



Mazzei, which owns Chianti estate Castello di Fonterutoli, Belguardo in Maremma and Zisola in Sicily, continues to operate during the crisis, but at a “reduced rate”. Vice-president and CEO, Francesco Mazzei, said that sales have been affected by the downturn of the hotel, restaurant and café sector in Italy and around the world. However, sales were “improving” in the off-trade, especially online. Mazzei is in the process of preparing modified goals and strategies for 2020 factoring in the influence of Covid-19. Francesco Mazzei said that it was obvious that this year will be “pretty difficult”, with reduced sales and margins, but he said that it would be “useful to rethink our business model and improve it”. The wine group is also planning to launch a new project in the summer, which is says will drive more attention to its Fonterutoli brand.

Tenute Piccini



Chianti estate Tenute Piccini launched a major television advertising campaign over the Easter weekend. The 32-second video has been transmitted on all Mediaset television and digital channels. The advert includes images of empty cities and rows of vines conveying the message that the winery is waiting patiently for normality to return. Piccini has actively supported the local community during Covid-19, donating 30,000 masks to authorities in Tuscany, Lombardy and Liguria and taking part in online retailer Tannico's charitable project, and has donated €1 from every bottle sold to the Sacco Hospital in Milan. Piccini has been able to keep all production sites open and has not needed to make use of the country's redundancy fund. Operational staff have been divided into two teams, which are isolated from one another to reduce the risk of spreading disease. CEO Mario Piccini said: "Together we will succeed in overcoming this difficult time, and at Piccini we want to give a sign of hope to the whole of Italy. Together we will start again."

Enoitalia



Enoitalia has announced that its Alberto Nani organic Prosecco has been certified vegan. Made from grapes grown in the Prosecco DOC area without pesticides, insecticides or herbicides, the wine is sold in Asda in the UK. The largest privately owned winery in Italy will also launch its Pendium Pinot Grigio delle Venezie DOC in Asda this year. The Pendium line also includes a Prosecco, sparkling rosé and Moscato. Packaged in a diamond-cut bottle, the Pinot Grigio is vinified in stainless steel and is described as “fresh and crisp with flavours of white stone fruit and balanced acidity”.

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