



Quality wines from the heart of Europe



European Quality Standards Save the Day in a Difficult 2021 Harvest

Learn about the 2021 Italian Harvest through Taste the Difference: Quality Wines from the Heart of Europe program

New York, December 23, 2021 – 2021 presented a series of inclement weather episodes that kept grape growers on their toes in Italy. All reports indicate that it will be one of lesser production, but thanks to measures put in place by attentive viticulturists, one quality. Italian producers have had to deal with unpredictable patterns of hail and frost, drought and flooding. But Italians however have learned to adapt and the art of “l’arrangiarsi” or being flexible could be said to be a national trait.

With EU Quality Schemes such as PDO and PGI governing the production of quality wines, and controlling for authorized grape varieties in a given region, maximum yields, minimum potential alcohol levels, growers kept looking at the skies and anticipating measures that, even at the expense of quantity, would allow them to harvest grapes capable of transforming into wines worthy of EU quality endorsements.

However, despite challenges, the lower yields allow the vines to devote energy to fully ripen the bunches that remain hanging. The overwhelming consensus is that there is something special about the quality and style of the wines that will result from the 2021 harvest.

Harvest traditions run deep in a country in which winemaking is closely linked to the economy but also ingrained in gastronomic culture. The harvest often facilitates communal events bringing families together in a genuine way - it’s a time to celebrate - and that despite adverse weather conditions, Italy’s hardy vines have completed their annual cycle and rewarded patient and observant growers with the fruits of their labor.

A geographically extensive country, Italy’s regions endured their own challenges. Central and Southern Italy saw months of heat without any rainfall throughout 2021. Rain in September however, saved the day and allowed wineries to bring in healthy grapes albeit a lesser quantity. We know the old adage that the vineyard is made in September and this was no less true this year.

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Piedmont, one of Italy's distinct regions, prospered during this harvest despite the sweeping rain they experienced. In fact, some believe the rain even served a helpful purpose giving vines excess nutrition and energy. The expectations for the 2021 vintage are high.

One thing that can be said throughout the country is that the harvest was much longer than in past years. In some areas it still started in August and in others it was protracted until November.

Producers throughout the country acknowledge the impact of climate change on their vineyards, in both the weather patterns and the severity of weather incidents. They also understand that adherence to European quality schemes has contributed to maintaining standards this harvest.

Growers will continue to refer to PDO & PGI as a framework that aims to maintain quality standards even when the impact of climate change is more palpable. All told, 2021 will be considered a good vintage albeit a difficult one.



ABOUT TASTE THE DIFFERENCE PROGRAM

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The program: *European quality wines: taste the difference* is a project financed by the European Union and managed by Unione Italiana Vini and PRODECA for the promotion of PDO and PGI European wines abroad in China and US. In order to achieve this objective, the TTD.EU program will organize wine seminars, workshops and b2b meetings both in these countries and in Spain and Italy, inviting wine professionals to join study trips to Europe. The program, realized in the span of three years (2021-2023) aims at creating awareness about European quality wines, in particular Italian and Spanish, which share a long tradition and a high standard of quality.

The beneficiaries: Unione Italiana Vini is the oldest and most commissioned Association of the Italian wine market. It represents cooperative, private and agricultural wine-companies, bottlers, consortia, associations and wine-making machines or wine cellars / laboratory manufacturers, located throughout the Italian territory. Promotora de Exportaciones Catalanas (PRODECA) is a public company established in 1986 and part of the “Ministry of Climate Action, Food and Rural Agenda of the Government of Catalonia”. It supports the agri-food sector and its companies with the knowledge, tools and experience to increase their products in Catalunya and worldwide.

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