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# WINE WORLD MAGAZINE

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**A STILL "YOUNG" FRONTIER OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST SPARKLING WINES. A FOCUS ON FRANCE, ITALY AND SPAIN**



## Noble Bubbles' CHALLENGING TIME

The future of sparkling wines, the noble ones, lies increasingly in the past, in history, in the time they spend ageing and refining in cellars before being released on the market. The share of sparkling wines - Champagne, Cava and many other territorial bubbles - that are "aged" is, in fact, growing. There is an increasing demand for products that are more complex and capable of winning the challenge of long maturation from consumers who are more and more passionate and able to spend significant sums for a different experience. There is no shortage of prestigious examples in the three major producing countries, with a large and substantial difference between those who prefer sur lie ageing and those who, perhaps in combination, also aim for long periods of post-dégorgement ageing. The secrets in the vineyard and cellar of "agée" bubbles, not for all budgets as well as not for all terroirs

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AN ICONIC WINE, INCOMPARABLE TO OTHERS

# The Long Journey of CHAMPAGNE

By CHRISTOPHE ANDRIEU



*All the secrets of ageing such a prestigious sparkling wine, before and after the tirage, with winemakers, experts and importers of the most prestigious French producers. It is a long journey that can take many years, and involves many different containers, from bottles to amphoras, through small and large barrels*

**T**he deep Baltic sea seems to have a lot of visitors. It was already the case 12 years ago, but of course, more for searching and historical reasons than the actual troubles related to gas pipelines. When underwater searchers found a new shipwreck 50 metres under the surface, not far from Finnish coast, they couldn't believe the treasure they had found. It wasn't gold coins or bricks but wine boxes. To be more accurate, 168 bottles. And 145 of them were from Champagne: Juglar (now part of Jacquesson), Piper-Heidsieck and a lot of Veuve Clicquot Champagne. The funniest thing is that it's quite impossible to determine the name

of the ship among so many others in what may be called a ship cemetery. That's why it's also really difficult to know exactly when the ship sank. But we can figure out the date, specifically because of the years found on some Champagne bottles: 1,839 vintage. Approximately 170 years after this tragic journey, an enologist and biological team opened some of this unbelievable treasure from the deep sea. Technical conclusions were really instructive about how these wines looked. Firstly - but it was not a huge surprise - dosage was reaching 300 g/l! At that time, it was very often more than 150 g/l in Champagne and the Russian market was typically well-known for its very sweet

taste. We have also to consider that, during the 19th century, Champagne titrated only 9,5° of alcohol. Biologists also found some ellagitannins typical from oak fermentation and it was another logical result because at that time no fermentations were made in steel tanks. Yet the most remarkable thing was the tasting session. Incredible! The lucky ones who sampled the wines were astonished. These Champagnes were remaining still fresh, complex with a lot of aromas, specifically with great empyreumatic notes like tobacco or leather. Not only did the long and forced residence under the sea not destroy the wines, but it seems that this unusual and natural cellar with a constant 4C° temperature has pre-

served the bottles in a perfect way of protection. And the first lesson given by this baltic story is the ability of the wine from Champagne to make a long journey. In this case, a very long journey. And it confirms what was already guessed about these wonderful sparkling wines: ageing is very often the best key to understand how Champagnes are made in this famous northern region of France.

#### Surprised Customers

Naturally, when we think about Champagne, top of the mind words may be celebration, happiness and let's go to the party! Bubbles and freshness are part of the picture. Champagne is like a famous brand always copied, never equalled and we

A STILL "YOUNG" FRONTIER OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST SPARKLING WINES.  
A FOCUS ON FRANCE, ITALY AND SPAIN

## Noble Bubbles' Challenging Time

**A** growing market capable of towing, if still needed, the value and prestige of a category - that of sparkling wines - that does not seem to know any crisis. We are talking about aging, divided between refinement on the lees and post-dégorgement, the last frontier for wines that have always been considered products from which to get immediate, fresh, perhaps even pungent sensations depending on the effervescence and dosage. In other words, to be drunk young, or in any case as soon as placed on the market. Without waiting for further maturation in the cellars of the operators or individual enthusiasts. A history of consumption and consumers that today is at a turning point because a demand for "mature," refined, aged bubbles is growing and consolidating on many markets around the world, and the very image of sparkling wine, in its many national and territorial declinations, is changing. This is not only an ephemeral fashion but, as has been happening for a long time for various other types of wine, whites and rosés for example, a structural change of image ready to challenge a new segment where the time of maturation leads to a new product, different in structure, price and consumer target. We arrived at this new trend after having passed, as Christophe Andrieu told us in his piece on Champagne, through a continuous reduction of residual sugars, up to the current low dosages, or "non-dosages," which seem to be now the most popular categories. From sweet to dry, just to make it clear, while now the mo-

ment for sparkling wines to break down even the last barrier that many placed in front of them seems to have come: that of challenge of time. While there is a widespread opinion among the great enthusiasts that a great classic method should rest after dégorgeement for an equal, or similar period to that spent sur lie, in contact with the yeasts, for the vast majority of consumers the rule is however that sparkling wines - in order not to lose their freshness and effervescence - should be drunk within a year or at the most two after commercialization. The difference is not insignificant or simply a matter of personal taste: those who choose the faster option want to drink a fresh, lively wine with complex aromas but aiming for immediacy. Those who, on the other hand, prefer to wait for a sparkling wine, even for years after it has been re-corked, are wine lovers who prefer more nuanced sensations, with obviously the almost certain loss of some of the internal pressure, but at the same time austere and refined, almost for meditation, which perhaps bring these labels - if well preserved of course - closer to a "great wine", intended as a general definition. It might seem a stretch or a provocation, and in part it is, but these rare and expensive bottles of sparkling wines aged perhaps eight or ten years on the lees and kept in the cellars of top restaurants for an equally long period, are perhaps conceptually less "sparkling" and more "wines." As always, in terms of history and prestige, Champagne leads the way with the release from the great maisons, rather than by the small vigneron who in this

case seem to be able to ensure less value to the bottle, of very old vintages, with periods of maturation "sur lattes" that can be counted five years at a time. The latest news in this regard, which is also significant of the openness that these types embody from the point of view of fine wines, comes from the Maison Perrier-Jouët, which has put on the market a limited edition of its "Belle Epoque" in Jeroboam format of the 2007 vintage but as a NFT (non-fungible token) in collaboration with BlockBar and Hong Kong Digital Art Fair. The value of the ten bottles put on the market is 10,000 Us dollars each, but what is certainly more striking is the presentation of the operation done by the media, which did not spend a word on the quality of the wine, evidently taking it for granted, explaining instead in detail how the financial operation works. This opens a window on the ability to attract, both economically and in terms of sales, that the "fine wines" category can also have. For great whites and reds around the world, we know that auctions, where unbelievable prices are fetched, are based on lots of old vintages. In short, longevity is an unavoidable benchmark for the value of a wine and, by extension, of a territory. Either it is capable of aging or it cannot be a great wine, this is the axiom that works when it comes to value. Sparkling wines have now also solidly landed in this specific market and are ready to stay there. At a closer look, only rosé wines are missing, but even there something is moving... The risk, however, is that the trend will take a wrong turn, as is underlined also by Alberto Lupetti from Italy, who warns

against making the aging of sparkling wines a new fashion, with an end in itself. From the stories of producers in fact, whether French or Italian or Spanish, it is clear that only certain sparkling wines have the capacity for aging and, going back to the similarities with the great non-sparkling wines, this depends essentially on terroir factors and on the attention that man pays to the production phases. In other words, to be clear, we can continue to call sparkling wines "method wines", and therefore give much more importance to the method of production than to the rest, but we must not forget that if we want to have something more from them, we will have to think about them and treat them, even in terms of conservation, much more carefully and similarly to other wines. And much more than we have ever done in the past.



often forget to remind ourselves how long and accurate can the processes be, how important are the different ways of ageing these wines, step by step, from the still wines to the bottle. Before explaining more about the methods and philosophy, we can try to understand a little bit more the customer's vision about this ageing side with the expertise of **Jean-François Rovire**, enologist, ex-buyer for GDO and actual owner of a great wine retail shop, "La Cave Saveurs et Gourmandises," in Brittany.

"To be clear, only one quarter of our customers knows precisely how a Champagne is made," he said. "Usually, these clients know exactly what they want, the brand, the dosage, the blend, etc. For the others, we have to explain this wine if it's not only a matter of price. Mostly, they are ready to listen when I talk about terroir, like a Champagne from Côte-des-Blancs for a "blanc de blancs" (white Champagne from white grapes) for example. But I can also talk a little bit more about technical processes. Of course, it's never an enological lesson. And yes, perhaps you will be surprised, but the first thing I try to explain about a Champagne is its way of being aged. Sometimes, customers can be amazed by the fact that Champagnes with more ageing are often produced with fewer expedition liquor. But I like to explain this, to tell them that an aged Champagne is able to add complexity. So, it's definitely not a problem for these kinds of wines to be brut, extra-brut or even without any dosage. They have the ability to be full and well rounded."

It's not a surprise, on the shelves of this impressive wine shop, we can find very demanding labels like Pierre Moncuit, quite famous producer from Mesnil-sur-Oger for the aficionados of the emblematic Côte des Blancs. We also find some bottles from the "other" part of the Champagne, the Côte des Bars, southern part of the region, near Troyes, very dynamic but sometimes not so easy to sell to poorly informed customers because of a reputation not as famous as the other cities of Reims or Epervay. "I really do like to explain why this part of Champagne is very interesting too," said Jean-François Rovire. "There, we can taste very good aged wines from Drappier wine estate for example. Ageing doesn't make all for sure, but it makes a lot. That's why Michel Drappier has very soon begun to add less and less liquors. His brut nature is perfectly vinous. Aromatic notes are very complex. I can explain the same with the Champagnes from maison Rigaud which is producing a solera cuvée totally fulfilled, with a lot of toasted bread notes and very different from the traditional one."

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**International Knowledge About Champagne**

When it's time to talk about Champagnes, **Nicolas Mahé de Berdouaré**, French importer in Norway, has his word to say as the monopolistic market is clearly a very good barometer. The Vinmonopolet system is controlling wines imported with a regular tender process during a year.

"It's very interesting because these people are very well informed about the products and the trends," he said. "For Cham-

pagne, their goals are very accurate. It's a matter of wine production, varieties or even soils or village Aoc. And ageing is a very important question for Champagnes. And when we are talking about ageing, we are not only talking about ageing in the cellar but also ageing of the base wines before the second fermentation and also the ability to give time to champagnes after disgorging."

As an international specialist of wine markets, Mr. Mahé de Berdouaré, knows perfectly the problematic of champagnes:

"It's a very specific market," he said. "It cannot be compared to other wines or even sparkling wines. Of course, when we talk about Champagne, it's a question of luxury. But it's not only a matter of money. Probably, some wealthy people don't have all the knowledge but are able to buy some expensive bottles, that's true. Usually, people who buy champagne everywhere in the world know precisely what kind of product it is. Knowledge base is very high. When I organise tastings in Norway, you cannot guess the level of the questions I have to answer. People want to know how the tirage liquor is made, when the wine has been disgorged. The ageing notion is quite well understood."

Even if it could be surprising to hear such a level of know-how in foreign markets, the importer recognizes it's also a matter of time.

"Things are changing all the time," he said. "Some years ago, I had to explain much more about vintage Champagne. Now, the customers understood that vintages are always very good wines, able to be laid down wines. It's a simple matter of education, we always have to explain how Champagnes are made and aged. That's probably why Champagne Drappier is still referenced in Norway 25 years after the first call for tender, because this wine estate has always produced aged Champagnes with new techniques, like ovoid barrels. Even better, this producer was among the first to mention the date of disgorgement on the label. It's very important to know how much time did the Champagne rest after the step of the expedition liquor."

**No Rules For Base Wines**

So, if we trust the market actors, ageing seems to be a pretty word in Champagne, but it doesn't explain all the process just by saying it. Indeed, ageing can be made at different steps for this specific sparkling wine. "First, we have to recall the official rules about ageing," **Pierre-Yves Bournerias**, a famous enologist. "In Champagne, you have to age your non-vintage

Champagne 15 month after bottling (but disgorging is allowed after 12 months), for a vintage one, it's much more, three years minimum after bottling."

After bottling means that the legal ageing is considered only when bottles are stocked on racks, on "lattes" how do they say in Champagne. But, if we remember the process of the traditional Champagne sparkling method, before the second fermentation, there is a very important step, the making of the base wines.

"And there are many different and more flexible rules about the way to age base wines in Champagne," he said.

Yet, it seems that ageing the base wines is truly a very important topic nowadays in Champagne.

"We have to remember a major decision taken by the Champagne board some decades ago," Mr. Bournerias added. "Champagne has legally allowed all the wineries to keep age base wines on top of the harvest allocation. In simple words, in almost each Champagne winery you might have twice the amount of base wines available in regard to one harvest. This regulation measure taken collectively is, of course, run individually by each wine estate. This means that the reserve wine can be kept in many ways, regarding vessels first (stainless steel tanks, wood barrels, of different sizes, amphoras, WineGlobe...) but also origin, by grape variety, by vineyard, by vintage (single vintage or "solera" like system, more likely called perpetual reserve)."

Suddenly, the ageing topic becomes even larger. Ageing is not only a matter of time, but of vessel. Having a reserve wine is not only the addition of wines harvested after harvest, but it's also a matter of philosophy: do we keep these wines together, separately, by vintage, by variety or even by plot? And all of these decisions have a great impact on what may be called the style of the Maison.

"The driving force here is always, beyond the analytical control of ageing, the input of reserve wine in the style of the house wines," he said. "Even if you like to keep big volumes of reserve wine, hoping to age these as nicely as possible, you have to be able to. Firstly, even if the harvest decision taken every year allows a big quantity of grapes to be picked up, you can't control nature and the vineyard can be less generous - we have a very recent example with the year 2021 and its low crop. As a result, some wineries used a big part of their reserve wines to be able to bottle a "normal" volume in 2022.



Jean-François Rovire



Nicolas Mahé de Berdouaré



Pierre-Yves Bournerias



Marie Charlemagne



Charles Philipponnat

That's why the decision of ageing is complicated in Champagne. You must have a global vision, I mean from the vines to the bottle, and it also means about base or reserve wines."

**Ageing. A Question of Vessels**

As we understood, time is not the only key factor, containers are very important too. For a long time, still wines have been aged in concrete tanks, but it's less and less today, as well for the enamelled tanks. Of course, stainless steels with temperature controls are the most used in Champagne. But, nowadays, there is another huge trend. "We actually see more and more oak barrels and casks of various sizes," Pierre-Yves Bournerias said. "Bigger casks can sometimes be better than smaller barrels, as the angel's share will be limited but also because the ratio volume of wine/contact surface of wood will allow a better taste balance over the time".

Now it's not rare to also see some eggs shaped containers (concrete or wood) and more and more terracotta amphoras. Producers from Champagne are "still investigating here, because the way these amphoras are produced (more or less sheat during the production process) can impact the ageing a lot and for the very last years, we have seen a very new container," he said.

A very curious one. Called the WineGlobe, it's a kind of pyrex globe which can contain 220, 115 or even 400 litres next year. "I am tempted to call this vessel an 'anti-barrel' as it is completely neutral tastewise," he said. "But also absolutely hermetic. As you know, an oak barrel has a great influence on the wine because of the origin of wood, the level of toasting, etc... and we have already talked about the angels' share. Base wines are keeping their primary aromas and they seem to keep more freshness and energy."

**Ageing. A Matter of Time**

If containers are important, time is naturally a very important factor to produce a Champagne wine. And Mr. Bournerias confirms that "time scale is very different in Champagne than elsewhere in the world. Your mind is never only focused on the year or even the following year. We have to look for the next 3, 5 or even more years. When you decide to create a new cuvée, for example, you might choose some specific vineyard block(s), but the decision you take today will be in your glass many years later". And here comes the concept of reserve wine.

"You have mainly two options," he said. "You can keep your still wines in reserve by single vintage, sometimes even by varieties and vineyards. Or, you can age your wines in what we call a perpetual reserve."

The principle starts on year 1 with a single vintage variety/vineyard, or with the remaining volume of a non-vintage blend. The following year, when building the new cuvées, producers will use a part of this tank and the volume used will be replaced by the new blend. The process will continue, year after year. During this time, it's easy to understand that vintages are piled up in the same vessel and that they are refreshed each year with the new wine. This technique is increasing the

complexity of the reserve wine year after year. The destination of the perpetual reserve is the blend of champagne houses.

"I could call it the DNA for the non-vintage blends," Mr. Bournerias added.

And, nowadays, some producers are bottling as single cuvée their own reserve wine. We can name Champagne Goutorbe Bouillot in Damery with their cuvées "Rétrospective 80-14" a name that reminds us that the first vintage in the reserve wine is from 1980 and the last one is from 2014.

"It's like 34 vintages stacked in the same bottle!". As the enologist is proud to mention: "Did someone say patience?"

Many famous producers in Champagne made strategic choices with the way of ageing their base wines. If Roederer is quite famous for his reserve wines in casks by year, Bollinger is another one. This house is also keeping some reserve wines in magnums.

**Private Cellars of Veuve Clicquot**

As soon as we talk about a famous brand, Veuve Clicquot is running very fast in our minds. Indeed, this very old and imaginative maison, part of the LVMH mastodonte luxury group, is seated on an inestimable treasure of 462 roman's crayères (typical chalk galleries in Reims), 24 kilometres of galleries able to age and rest a lot of the famous brand with the deposited yellow label. Amongst the particularities of this brand, there is the wonderful collection of base wines (between 400 and 500 different wines).

"It's an incredible collection," said **Marie Charlemagne**, one of the ten enologists of Veuve Clicquot-Ponsardin. "We keep our wines from 1988 until today as reserve wines, separately. To be sure that their ageing is on the optimum side all the enologists are testing many samples everyday. Our teams are built with junior and senior enologists. Like this, the older can teach the younger ones the style of our house."

Very well organised, this collection is made on a kind of classification. The young wines (less than 3 years-old), the more mature (4 to 10 years) and the "spicy" collection (more than 10 years).

"I really do like our spicy reserve wines," she said. "But we use them with great parsimony. They are so rich, so intense, they are quite aromatic bombs! In our "Carte Jaune" (the famous yellow label), we use less than 1% of these oldest reserve wines."

Except for some very rare cuvées aged in oak casks (less than 10% of the vintage range), Veuve Clicquot chose to keep the stainless tanks to preserve the reserve wines.

"It's better for the purity we want to keep," she said. "In the same way, we have no intervention on our reserve wines. There is no stirring of the lees for example."

In this house, priority is given to the yellow label but, in the very good years, a vintage's Champagne can be done. The very good ones, the "Grand Dame" is going outside, into the world with her charming aromas after 6 or sometimes 10 years of ageing "sur lattes." But now, from 2017 a new wine has appeared in this wonderful collection, the Extra Brut Extra Old made only with reserve wines and aged in



Wine bottles ageing in a cellar in the Champagne region

bottles too. The brand goal is to sell this super aged cuvée (more than 30 years as reserve wines) every two years. For the more special customers, there's also the possibility to drink some tailor-made very old cuvee with quite unbelievable vintages.

#### Perpetual Reserve

In a different way of thinking, Champagne Philipponnat is also very renowned for its solera cuvee. The producer from Mareuil-sur-Aÿ, on the south slopes of Montagne de Reims, **Charles Philipponnat** is naturally very proud of his solera method.

"Our tradition is to blend one third of our reserve wines each year with two thirds of the wine from the current year," he said. "This is what we call our solera method. Two thirds of this non-vintage blend are bottled, and the other third becomes the reserve wine to be blended with the wine of the following harvest, and so on each year. Of course, the process of blending wines from several years only concerns non-vintage cuvées." For those who have tasted Champagnes from Philipponnat, it's quite easy to see this kind of signature.

"Blending the new wine with more mature reserve wines brings complexity while keeping freshness," he said. "For us, this is preferable to the more conventional practice of blending separate batches from previous years. We've been doing this since 1946."

If this house was a pioneer in using this kind of solera method, the producer added a huge change with the new millennial. "When I joined the house

23 years ago, there were only enamelled steel and vitrified concrete vats, and a few stainless steel vats without effective temperature control," he said. "I reintroduced fermentation in 228 litre burgundy wooden barrels, which are also used after bottling to age our reserve wines. This may seem a little counter-intuitive, but reserve wines are best kept in wood. This is because tannins act as an antioxidant, and also bring more aromatic complexity." After having increased their maturing capacity (600 litres casks, 1500 and 2500 l. tuns), Philipponnat created another reserve wine eight years ago. "We have created a second reserve," Mr. Philipponnat said. "It is stored in 45 hectolitres tuns which we call our 'Réserve Perpétuelle.' This one is managed the same way as the solera, but in reverse proportions, by blending 2/3 reserve wine and 1/3 new wine every year. The perpetual reserve forms one third of the reserve wine used in their non-vintage cuvée which has been called 'Royale Réserve.' Our solera and perpetual reserves together continue to make up a third of the total. We are entirely satisfied with this balance."

The 500 years-old house will also bottle in magnum a new cuvée, simply named "Réserve Perpétuelle." For this very creative producer, ageing concerns also the next step, after maturation of the base wines.

"Our non-vintage wines are generally released after an average of 36 months on slats (before disgorgement) plus 6 months after disgorgement," he said. "Making a total of 42 months of

bottle ageing, and sometimes more, which is even better. After disgorgement and dosage, we recommend that customers who wish to do so allow our non-vintage wines to rest for a further year or two. They have been partly aged in wood, contributing to their ageing potential while keeping them very pure and fresh."

To the sake of completeness, Champagne Philipponnat is making is dosage liqueur with his own reserve wines, "It is much better this way, slightly woody but not heavy," Mr. Philipponnat explained.

A good way to add complexity without heaviness and accompany the high potential to age this star sparkling wine.

#### Autolysis and Crown Caps

As previously seen, ageing is not only a matter of base wine maturation. It's also important to talk about the legal form of the 15 months for a non-vintage and 36 months for a vintage Champagne. Minimum dates which are very often longer, specifically for the best houses and the best cuvées. But it's quite hard to understand why this ageing in the bottle on "lattes" is so important. "The second fermentation in a bottle is usually finished after 6 to 8 weeks," said Pierre-Yves Bournerias again, the enologist from Epernay. "Then comes the enzymatic degradation of the yeasts forming the lees. This natural phenomenon, called autolysis, will contribute to the final wine profile, bringing aromas often described as 'bread crust, brioche, toast.' Autolysis happens during the first year, but after 12 months, exchanges and contributions of the lees are

Tasting of Veuve-Clicquot Champagne bottles aged under water



"It's easy to understand that a "simple" non-vintage versus a prestige or perpetual reserve cuvée with wines that have been used to go through the years, will have different ageing potential in a private cellar" Mr. Bournerias said.

#### Ageing At Sea. New and Old.

Enologic opinion sounds so wise. Is that true? Probably, the reality of this potential ageing is even underestimated, if we go back to the north and the baltic sea.

"The bottles from the Baltic have opened our eyes on the high potential of an ageing in the sea," Marie Charlemagne, from Champagne Veuve Clicquot-Ponsardin, acknowledged.

"That's why we are experimenting with a new way of ageing our bottles," she said. "It seems that the wine storage under the sea is quite better than under the atmosphere. Pressure conditions and lack of light might be very good for ageing in a good way. But, actually, it's only a new experimentation. During the next 40 years we will compare the bottles in the sea with the same produced bottles in our cellars." Let's see in the future which one will be considered as the best one. Of course, the "cellar in the sea" sounds like a futuristic project but it's not a surprise for a house which has always been a pioneer in Champagne. Shaking tables or blend rosés Champagnes have been created by the "Grande Dame, widow Mrs Clicquot. A dramatic and quite anonymous shipwreck in the mid 19th century has - perhaps - changed our mind about Champagne's ageing. Is the future of the cellars in the sea? We shall see.

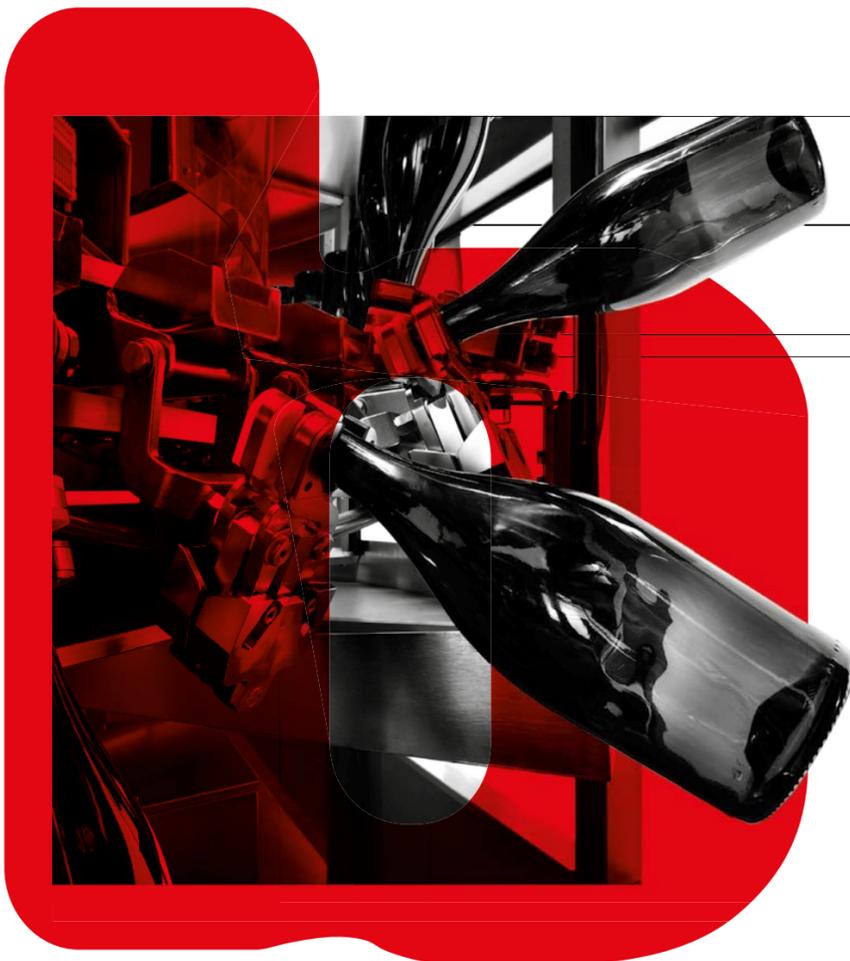
less important. The other phenomenon, more recently studied (over the last 25/30 years, a short period considering the Champagne time scale) is the oxidation/ageing happening because of the oxygen/CO2 exchange rate through the crown cap closing the bottle during its 'sur lattes' ageing".

Of course, it would be too long to explain this parameter in detail but oxygen has a strong influence on the evolution bottle and crown caps are not all the same. That's why, every year, crown caps producers are classified by Champagne institutions. Each producer can choose the caps they want including their goal of ageing their Champagne "sur lattes." Sometimes, producers want to stop naturally this exchange made through the crown caps. It's a busy job but very efficient. You just have to reverse the bottles, put them on the neck. Like this, lees will make a deposit close to the

caps and no more oxidation process will be able to interact with the wine. After ageing the wine base and the bottled one, it's still possible to age a little bit more than Champagne. After disgorgement and addition of the expedition liqueur, most of the wineries leave the bottles resting for a minimum of three months - up to one year for some prestige cuvées.

"This period of time allows a better recovery of the wine after the shock of disgorgement," he said. "Yes, it's a shock, when you open a bottle under 6 bar pressure after 15 months to several years of ageing! It also helps the sugar added to the desired level (extra brut, brut...) to integrate the wine perfectly."

And after these three steps of different ages, there might be another one in the customer's cellar. "With perfect conditions, it can be interesting to have an extra ageing" confirmed the enologist. With differences:



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# Italy Loves Prestigious (and Aged) Champagne

A “TRAIT D’UNION”  
BETWEEN TWO  
MAJOR COUNTRIES OF  
PRODUCTION



*Italy is one of the markets where the average price of Champagne is higher, the fifth highest in the world in terms of total value, a confirmation of how the aged sparkling wine phenomenon could explode in a country famous for “young” sparkling wines. Not yet an established trend, but the potential is there*

By **FRANCESCA CIANCIO**

Is there an expiry date for a sparkling wine? The question could apply to any type of wine and the issue of bottle labelling is often a hot topic on the tables of EU regulations. We are not talking about ingredients, of course, but about the life of a sparkling wine, its longevity and, consequently, the enjoyment thereof after a certain period. But also of its value, which obviously changes. First of all, a distinction must be made between two basic concepts in the world of “bubbles”: refinement and ageing, terms often used as synonyms but which, in truth, have quite different meanings. In the first case, it is correct to speak of the wine resting on the fine lees until disgorgement. From that moment on, after the addition of the liqueur and re-corking, we can speak of ageing or, to say it better, maturation. In this case, the curve of time can be more “merciless” because, after a period of positive evolution, the wine will inexorably move towards the “end”. And back to the initial question. How much time should be allowed for a sparkling wine? From a production and technical point of view, you will find interesting answers to this question in the in-depth studies on France and Italy that precede and follow this reflection, which is focused on the commercial side, with a surprising connecting line between the two countries. The first question we asked ourselves is: who and where are these fine sparkling wines consumed? But we also tried to understand better who take the “risk” of working on sparkling wines with several years of refinement and/or maturation on their shoulders.

**The “Value” of a Passion**

Now, when talking about aged sparkling wines, one can only but start with Champagne. Limited and prestigious cuvées, regularly produced by the great maisons, which are widely diffused in Italy, connect the two countries in a concrete way. That is why the focus starts with this intense link, which may surprise some, but not the experts. In order to make this phenomenon more real, we shall start with the data provided by **Lorenzo Righi**, director of Società Excellence, the group of national distributors and importers of excellent wines and spirits.

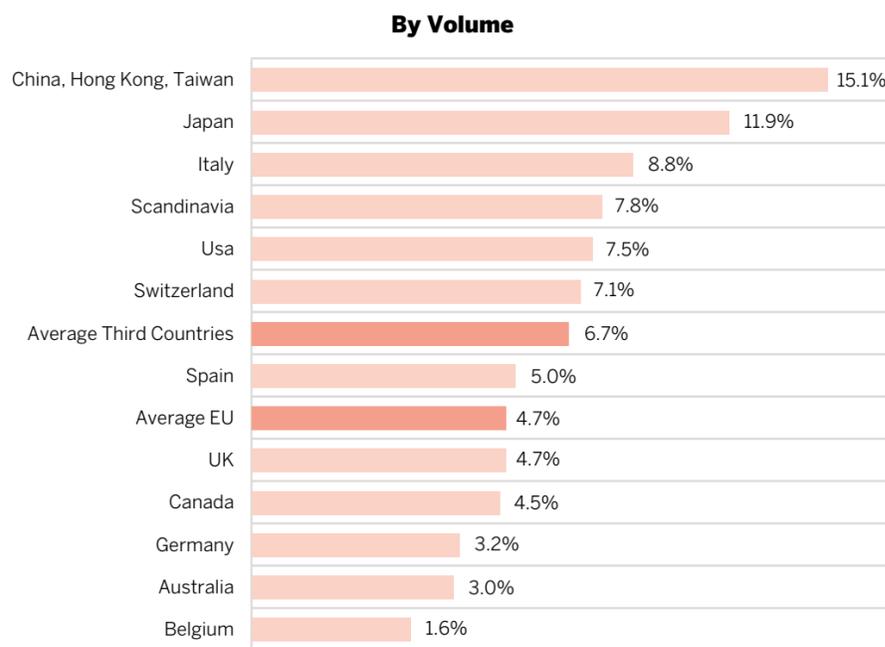
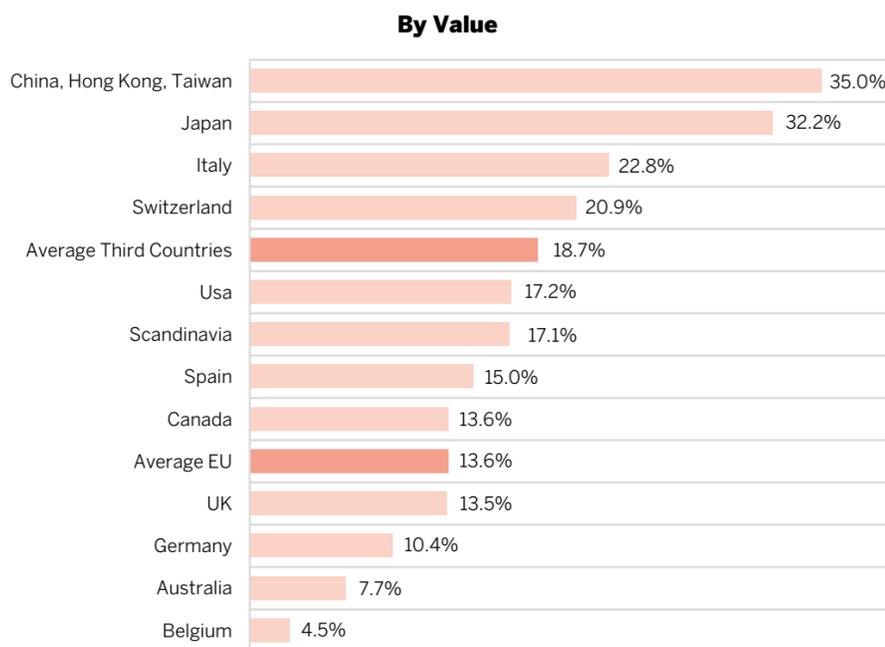
“I think it is necessary to start with an assumption, that Italy is among the first markets in the world for average price of Champagne and is fifth in value,” Mr. Righi said. “So, we drink expensive bottles, much more than in France. We choose the cuvée prestige and the vintage wines, which account for 20-25 per cent of the total of Champagnes, which are aged on the lees for five to ten years. In

other European countries, the share is no more than 10 per cent. Thus, we are quite familiar with the concept of the evolution of sparkling wines, rather like the Brits. What is the ageing potential of these bottles? It depends on the producer and the product: first of all, there is the selection of the raw material, if only steel or also wood were used, and so on until the wine is put on the market. Then that same bottle can start another life.”

“In 2014, I took part in a special tasting at the Pol Roger maison,” he recalled. “There were six bottles from 1914 disgorged in 1918. After 96 years, the wine was still intact. Stored all together for almost a century, thirty meters deep and with 95 per cent humidity. Outside Roger’s cellar it would most probably not have been the same. In fact, it is no coincidence that more and more producers, and not only of sparkling wine, are attaching temperature-sensitive labels to their shipments, known as thermos-chromatic labels because they change colour according to temperature, so that they can check the state of preservation of the bottles.”

Mr. Righi also emphasized how important the consumption context of certain types is.

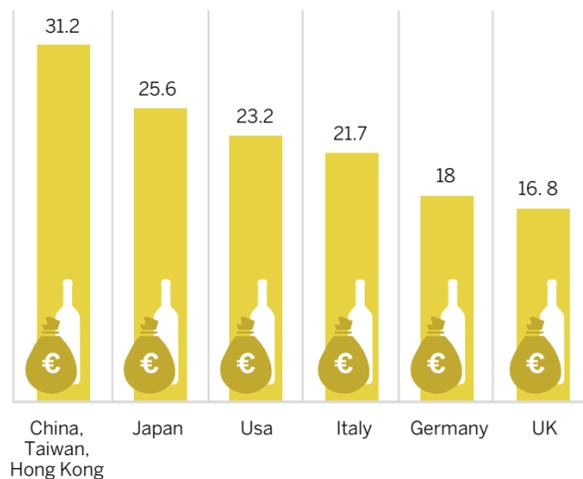
**CHAMPAGNE EXPORTS - TYPES CUVÉES DE PRESTIGE + MILLÉSIMÉS (as a percentage of total exports by country) - Year 2021\***



\* Elaboration Wine World Magazine on data from Comité Champagne

CHAMPAGNE

Average price per bottle (in Euro)



Elaboration Wine World Magazine on data from Comité Champagne

"The complexity of the wines must accompany that of the dishes," he said. "It makes no sense to drink old vintages for aperitifs or only on special occasions. This has been understood by the restaurant industry long ago."

In short, a phenomenon that, if not yet an all-round widespread trend, nevertheless demonstrates that it already has a solid basis in terms of products and positioning, characteristics that make it a segment with excellent growth potential.

A "Risk" Worth Taking

Those who believe in quality bubbles, French and others, are therefore used to and consider it worth taking the "risk" of waiting many years for a sparkling wine. Acting as "guarantee" is the prestige of the maison or sparkling wine company, backed by decades, if not centuries, of experience accumulated in the field. In his dual role as president of Excellence (which organizes the "Champagne Experience" event every year in Modena in October) and founder of the import and distribution company Cuzziol Vini, **Luca Cuzziol** also has very clear ideas on the subject.

"More and more customers make choices related to the disgorging date of a sparkling wine, and also the number of companies that disgorge later is increasing," Mr. Cuzziol said. "I would add that there is also a growing number of wine merchants and restaurateurs who keep prestigious labels aside. In order to be able to assess drinking it many years later. You always start from a fixed point and that point is the disgorgement date, after which you leave it to curiosity and time, because undoubtedly the game is very intriguing, like tasting sparkling wines from the same lot but from different disgorgement times. That's how you really understand sparkling wines."

For Mr. Cuzziol, from an economic point of view, bubbles mean a lot: out of two million bottles sold, 700 thousand are sparkling wine. "It is precisely we Italians who are inclined to more evolved and complex labels," he said. "And I could say that we are the best drinkers. We go in search of definition, of detail, and this also applies to Italian sparkling wines. Of course, an older disgorgement must be put in context, but our public, today more than yesterday, knows this. Bruno Paillard has always said that disgorging and re-corking Champagne is like performing open-heart surgery, it takes time to bring the wine back into balance. What I also find

interesting is that there is less attention to things like extract, Ph, the use or non-use of barrels. Fortunately, what I call cultural stereotypes are giving way to more interesting information."

In short, if there is a low "risk factor" in sparkling wines that remain even several lusters on the fine lees, this increases if disgorgement is very far from the time of consumption. The same number of years in either case will result in totally different wines. Indeed, in some cases they are true revelations. This is at least the opinion of **Pietro Pellegrini**, President of Pellegrini Spa, who admits that prolonged ageing of sparkling wines after disgorging can be dangerous, but that they are also capable of revealing "an unparalleled richness and aromaticity".

"Said in the French way *dégorgement tardif*," Mr. Pellegrini explained. "Wines are that age (a term I don't like at all, to be honest) slowly and their delayed evolution allows freshness to be maintained, at least until disgorgement. Starting from post disgorgement I prefer to speak of evolution, but they tend to be wines suitable for consumption. Then there is a growing niche market, still small and for which it is impossible to give a figure, which is looking for advanced evolutionary stages. It prefers rather elaborated tastes. If I think of our catalogue, the most important bottles are those that can be stored for



Lorenzo Righi



Luca Cuzziol



Pietro Pellegrini



Valentina Bertini



Matteo Cossu

a long time, and longevity becomes a price factor. There are also lovers of the oxidative style, who are happy to buy sparkling wines that have been aged for many years. Everything hinges on the harmony of three factors: longevity, balance and elegance, but from a certain point onwards, when the maturation curve starts to drop, it is difficult to guarantee this harmony. That is why all the classic methods we have in our catalogue have the indication of draught, disgorgement and dosage on the label. We always ask producers who rely on us for this data. It is a matter of fairness to our customers. However, there are still many companies, including Champagne houses, that do not provide this information. And the reason is easily said: products on the market can remain on the shelf for a long time and an unwary buyer may take them away. Different is the handling of bottles by the Horeca channel, which, in terms of storage locations, equipment and expertise, can handle the labels that are older in the best way, just as it is important to know how to discard them in certain cases. Discarding bubbles? If you like a certain type of sparkling wine, you know that little or no effervescence is the price to pay after so many years. When and how to serve it? I would say within a sequence of sparkling wines, putting it at the end."

Catering and Wine Bars, Services for Big Fans

Confirming the claims of specialized distribution regarding the Italian "preference" for important Champagnes, is the position of **Valentina Bertini**, Wine Corporate Manager of the Langosteria Group, who signs one of the finest contemporary Italian restaurant lists. A very rich list, with absolute excellences such as some deep verticals of prestigious labels like the Krug Collection from 1985. The sommelier is passionate but also pragmatic.

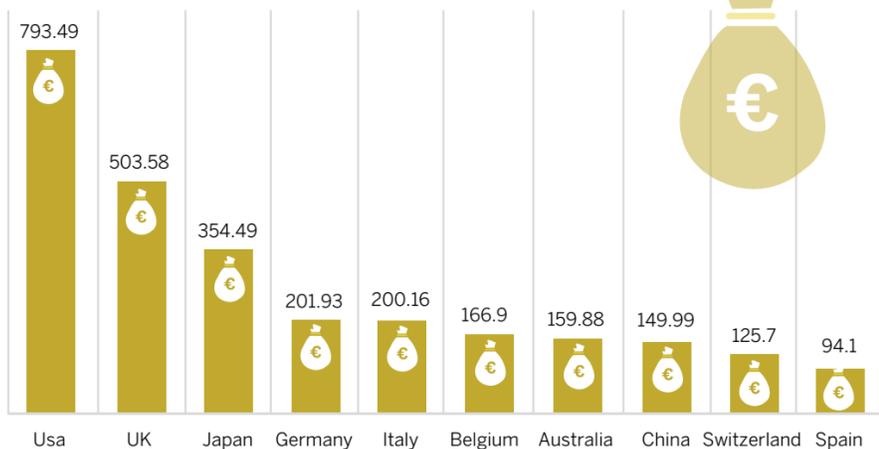
"Part of our customers, explains Mrs. Bertini, asks us for this type of bottle," Ms. Bertini said. "But I also tend to recommend more recent degorgements. Otherwise, there is a danger that the wine will be tired and flat, and above all there will be the absence of carbonic acid, which in a sparkling wine, of course, you expect. Then there are very lucky bottles, even with old disgorgement, and these are usually the ones that come from the winery cellars. Having had a very rich Champagne list from the beginning, there are first-time customers who enjoy tasting the same label but with different disgorgements. I believe that haute cuisine should offer services like this."

**Matteo Cossu** is a bit more anxious. Co-owner and manager of the "Top Missori" wine bar & bistrot in Milan, he knows that if you aim, as he does, at small names in the sparkling wine world, you have to deal with possible unpleasant surprises.

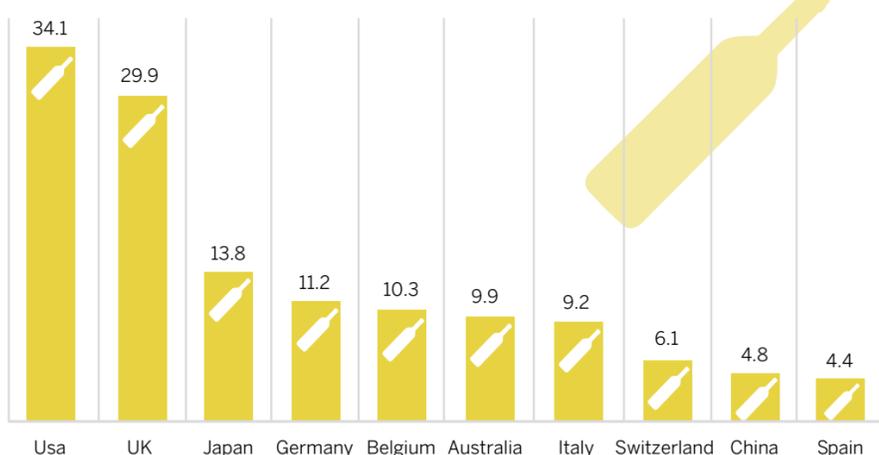
"It happens more and more rarely," Mr. Cossu said. "But that's the price one pays for working with many wine craftsmen. I'm not saying that they are inaccurate, I'm just saying that they don't have the broad shoulders of the big maisons. I serve several bubbles that are up to three years old after disgorging, because I think the newly disgorged wine is overly sharp, but I know that the average is between six months and a year. The fact that we believe in complex and evolved sparkling wines has also changed the formula of the restaurant, directing our efforts towards excellence in catering as well. The customer who understands wine is increasingly a discerning gourmand and so we had to adapt to this trend, aiming for high-level pairing."

CHAMPAGNE - EXPORTS 2021

Value (in millions of Euros)



Volume (in millions of bottles)



Data from Comité Champagne

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EXECUTIVE EDITOR  
PAOLO CASTELLETTI

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
GIULIO SOMMA g.somma@uiv.it

MANAGING EDITOR  
CARLO FLAMINI c.flamini@uiv.it

NEWSROOM  
ANNA VOLONTERIO a.volonterio@uiv.it

COLLABORATORS  
Fabio Ciarla (IT), Christophe Andrieu (FR),  
Francesca Ciancio (IT),  
Isabella Perugini (IT),  
Robert M. Tobiasen (US).

Asa Johansson (Scandinavia),  
Gabriel Riel-Salvatore (CA),  
Xavier Beghin (BE)

GRAPHICS  
ALESSANDRA BACIGALUPI  
ALESSANDRA FARINA  
DANIELE RIZZI waikikidesign@gmail.com

NEWSROOM CLERKS  
t. +39 02 7222 281  
corrierevinicolo@uiv.it

PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT  
LAURA LONGONI (desk)  
t. +39 02 72 22 28 41 - l.longoni@uiv.it  
ADVERTISING grafica.editoria01@uiv.it

GIORGIO GORIA  
t. +39 346 7867907 - g.goria@uiv.it  
GIORDANO CHIESA  
t. +39 335 1817327 - g.chiesa@uiv.it

SUBSCRIPTIONS  
VALERIA VALENTINI t. +39 02 72222848  
abbonamenti@corrierevinicolo.com



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**CLASSIC METHOD AND CHARMAT.  
INTERNATIONAL AND NATIVE VINES,  
A HISTORY YET TO BE WRITTEN**



Great wines “are made in the vineyard,” even in the case of ageing sparkling wines. Producers from the great territories of classic Italian methods - Franciacorta (Bellavista), Trento (Ferrari and Maso Martis), Alta Langa (Cocchi and Fontanafredda) -, are unanimous on this point, while there are different nuances on pre - and post - dégorgement ageing. To better understand, we talked to those who make important autochthonous grape varieties, D’Araprì in Apulia and Soldati in Piedmont, without forgetting the Prosecco phenomenon (Ruggeri), to oenologist Mattia Vezzola, and to expert taster and market connoisseur Alberto Lupetti

# Italian “Vintage” Bubbles. A Growing Phenomenon

By ISABELLA PERUGINI



**W**e are used to drink sparkling wines looking for freshness and immediacy in the glass, yet there is a growing awareness among the public and even more among producers, some deep rooted for decades, of the possibility of enjoying “vintage” bubbles. Classic method sparkling wines capable of telling how time

goes by in the glass, becoming true jewels, capable of encapsulating the past and present in the bottle, looking to the future with optimism. This is a growing segment that we wish to understand in terms of its techniques and market potential, not least because it is a candidate for attacking the investor market. Fine wines are, in fact, increasingly considered a refuge asset, and according to Knight Frank’s annual report

describing the annual performance of luxury collectibles, fine wines have recorded the highest performance among luxury investments, with +16 per cent in 2021 and plus 137 per cent over the last ten years. According to the “2022 Global Fine Wine Report”, which collects the opinions of almost a thousand players in the Italian wine market, the second region to focus on for 2023 after France is Italy, with a particular



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Marcello Lunelli



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Giulio Bava

focus on Piedmont and Tuscany. The interesting fact as regards this analysis, however, relates to the figures recorded for fine Champagnes, which represent a solid promise for next year's investments. A picture in which Italy can also play an interesting role with its best "ageing" sparkling wines. We studied the state of the art of this type of production by taking a trip through the main sparkling wine areas of the country - Trento doc, Alta Langa and Franciacorta - which focus their work on the traditional grape varieties of the classic method, Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. But we also asked the opinion of those who have chosen to use the indigenous grape variety, such as Cortese and the grape varieties of Southern Italy, and those who "challenge" time with Prosecco, therefore with the Charmat method. Finally, we have asked the point of view of an expert of Italian sparkling wine such as the oenologist Mattia Vezzola and the analysis of one of the greatest connoisseurs of Champagne and Italian bubbles such as Alberto Lupetti.

**Great Attention at the Field, Old Vines and Perfect Grapes**

The project for a classic method able of telling the story of the years certainly starts in the vineyard, and the opinion of the producers interviewed is unanimous. According to **Marcello Lunelli** of the Ferrari winery, the vineyard plays a fundamental role, which is why "We chose to join the protocol for organic winegrowing, especially for its positive impact on environmental biodiversity, defense of soil fertility, improvement of air

quality, as well as on the quality of the grapes coming into the cellar. Organic winegrowing needs attention and timeliness in working in the vineyard, in order to harvest grapes that are perfectly healthy. This leads to having grapes that have an ideal balance of acidity and Ph, the right sugar level, the aromatic complexity, the harmony and elegance that make this bubble unique, to then become Trento Doc. These premises, obviously, need to also apply to the must and the base wine, with the proper vinification process. These are the foundations for an important and delicate work that allows to have sparkling wines able to age long and well."

For **Andrea Farinetti**, a producer in Alta Langa with Fontanafredda, it is necessary to "seek the right correlation between vine-soil-altitude-exposure, avoiding soils that are too deep and exposures that are too sunny, especially below 350/400 meters, and the choice of clones and rootstocks is also very important."

**Giulio Bava** of the Cocchi winery emphasized that vineyard exposure and agronomic attentions must consider the fact that the must obtained must be intact as much as possible with extraordinarily healthy berries and a different acid and aromatic balance, and how finally "the strength to improve over time is fundamentally given by the terroir".

Introducing a further element of reflection is **Alessandro Massano**, Bellavista's brand director, who stated that "The measures concern above all the longevity of the vines, since the old vines have much deeper roots that resist water



Alessandro Massano



Alessandra Stelzer



**THE WORD OF AN EXPERT**

**ALBERTO LUPETTI: BEWARE OF MAKING AGEING A CHIMERA. ONLY FEW PRODUCTS CAN AGE FOR MANY YEARS**

**A**s a Champagne expert, and a keen observer of the world of classic methods, can you give us an insight into the subject of ageing and Italian classic methods? Is it beginning to catch on? Which companies were the first to experiment and where are we today?

The market seems to be going crazy. Everyone suddenly wants old bottles and this is leading to a rise in prices that I would describe as senseless. Also, because the perfect preservation of the bottle is, incredibly, an aspect that many, too many, forget. What I have said concerns champagne, while Italian metodo classico wines are only recently beginning of feeling the pull of this phenomenon.

**Long maturation sur lie or in the bottle after dégorgement, two ageing techniques that give us two completely different sparkling wines?**

Absolutely. The first is a sort of time machine, because it puts us in front of an incredibly fresh wine, as it was when first released. That's why I speak of a time machine. The second, on the other hand, matures serenely and is accompanied by time in the development of increasingly complex aromas. Over the last thirty years, we have all become somewhat hypnotized by the first method, often forgetting that for the wine to rebalance itself, following 10, 15 or 20 years on the lees, an adequate period of rest after dégorgement is needed. Then, for some years now, the second ageing method, which undoubtedly has more appeal, is finally being rediscovered. But few wines are able to go far in this case. To conclude, I believe that ageing on yeasts, but done "sur pointe" and not "sur lattes", is useful for the producer to preserve his historical memory and any tastings should be experienced among experts or in the winery rather than marketing phenomena. On the contrary, the fascination of post dégorgement ageing offers wonderful experiences that even the individual wine lover can indulge in independently, provided he has a cellar worthy of the name. He can buy six bottles, for example, of his favorite label and then enjoy uncorking one every two or three years.

**Maturation sur lie and rest period after dégorgement, what is the rule?**

In the light of what the Champenois say and my personal experience after more than 20 years of tasting, I would say these periods are sufficient: up to three years on the lees we need eight to twelve-months of rest; for seven, eight years on the lees rest should be 18-20 months; over ten years on the lees we need at least two years of rest before consumption.

**From a sensory and taste point of view, what are the elements that stand out after long ageing?**

Obviously we are talking about post dégorgement... Over the years, the aromas evolve on the tertiary side. The fruit moves towards jammy, the citrus becomes candied, memories of brioche and dried fruit toast emerge. With further time, here comes roasting, undergrowth, pain d'épices, toffee.

**Up to what age can a classic method evolve and refine?**

It depends on the area of production, the vintage, the type of vinification. There are so many elements that there is no absolute rule. It is not the classic method that makes the capacity for ageing, but the nature of the underlying wine. Do not believe that a mediocre wine left thirty years on the lees will then become good! Absolutely not. The same concept applies to ageing after dégorgement. Conveying such messages is madness. Remember that it is the perfect ripeness of the grapes that gives the possibility of ageing, far more than acidity and overpressure (an aspect, the latter, that everyone forgets). Generally speaking, long ageing is a prerogative reserved for only a few labels, which is why I would say that care must be taken not to make ageing a fashion. Let's not forget that, until the early 1990s, even Champagne people were against long ageing. When it was realized that certain labels could age, then the way of approaching these wines changed. With classic methods in general, I don't think the same thing can happen, because, I repeat, only a few can defy time. Better then to enjoy them in their brilliant freshness.

**Is the public that pays attention to these types of sparkling wines growing?**

Yes, but as I said before, there will only be real growth if this public is passionate, and has a certain basic preparation. Otherwise, there is a risk of chasing ageing as a kind of chimera and witnessing real distortions. Of the kind "it's old, therefore it's good". Which is what happened years ago with so-called "natural wines", alas.

stress, roots that dig into the rockiest layers of the soil and give the grapes the necessary acidity and minerality and propaedeutic for the creation of cuvées with great ageing capacity."

**Alessandra Stelzer** of Maso Martis is of the same opinion. "It is important to have vines that are at least ten years old, to prune correctly, to work the soil and to anticipate phytosanitary defense," she said.

**Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Territorial Choices for the Two Absolute Protagonists**

As regards the three denominations, the playing field is that of the traditional grape varieties, Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, two varieties that deal differently with the years.

"Historically, Chardonnay is our chosen variety, in line with the inspiration of our founder who brought it from France to our province," Mr. Lunelli said. "But especially because we believe that, in our land, Chardonnay can give the best results when aged. Pinot Noir is a difficult variety, it needs unique territories to produce its best quality, and therefore it is right for specific products like our roses, or white sparkling wines like our Perlé nero. In general, in our style, the mountain bubbles Ferrari Trento Doc give their best with the Chardonnay."

According to Mr. Massano, the grape varieties used for Franciacorta all behave very well, but Pinot Noir, thanks to its structure and verticality, certainly succeeds in bringing freshness and acidity to the wine, allowing it to age over time. Mr. Andrea Farinetti is of the same opinion.

"Pinot Noir is the most suitable grape variety for sparkling wines that will face long periods of ageing," he said. "Thanks to an ideal relationship between acidity and structure, the variety main-

AN OENOLOGIST'S POINT OF VIEW

**MATTIA VEZZOLA: A GOOD CLASSIC METHOD CAN "LIVE" EVEN MORE THAN 40 YEARS**

“The Italian sparkling wine industry has been in expansion for some years now. Certainly, this result is linked to a significant improvement in quality and an identity linked to a vocational territory and the constant commitment of the producer that the consumer recognizes. Among the elements that favour the ageing of a classic method sparkling wine are certainly issues related to genetics, epigenetics, vineyard management, exposure, altitude and the entire production chain aimed at enhancing its vocation. The terroir, in Italian origin, has an enormous influence on the wine’s capacity for ageing, especially when conditions at fruit maturity contribute to the enhancement of endogenous freshness. There are no expedients to change the vocational capacity of a vineyard, but there can be expedients aimed at minimizing the dispersion of the acid potential linked to longevity, such as: manual harvesting; not just soft but slow crushing; must fractioning; low-temperature fermentation; yeasts with low demalcing power. The evolution of wine on the lees and the degorged wine itself then have two different evolutions: the taste-olfactory evolution on the lees is essentially very slow and much less expressive, whereas the degorged wine itself has a more expressive sensory profile in character and pleasantness. If perfect conservation is added to the above considerations, a classic method can comfortably live even beyond 40 years.”



taining a freshness, fragrance and verticality on the palate that allows it to evolve in an ideal way for a long time. Chardonnay is also not to be underestimated, however, but with very different characteristics, thanks to its creaminess and amplitude on the palate, which, as it ages, offer pastry-like sensations.”

Moving once again to Trento Doc, Mr. Stelzer confirmed that Chardonnay “is among the most suitable because it confers freshness, longevity with an important aromatic charge of fresh fruit and white flowers in its processing in steel, and able to give spicy notes and aromatic herbs when ageing in wood. Pinot Noir, gives body, structure and elegance. After ageing, mineral, tropical and toasted almond notes can be detected.”

**In the Cellar, Lots of Respect, Light Oenology and a Rigorous Selection**

From the vineyard we move on to the cellar, a

place where the approach is aimed at creating, first a must and then a wine that can face the adversities of the years with its maturity consolidated. To do this, according to Mr. Alessandro Massano of Bellavista.

“What we call ‘light oenology’ is necessary,” he said. “A soft pressing, a succession of almost artisan operations that express great respect for the raw material; waiting for the right processing times: from inoculation to cold decantation.”

For Mr. Marcello Lunelli, “pressing, fermentation management, whole-grape processing, long maturation on the fine lees. These are all steps that from the vineyard to the tirage phase that led to bottles that you can easily forget about for 20 years in the cellar.”

Mr. Bava emphasizes that the yield in must has been limited and the separation of the flower must from the other fractions has to be very strict: “What we extract in excess from the

grapes can no longer be removed and will condition the capacity over the time and the early evolution of the future sparkling wine”, he added. With a similar opinion, Mr. Farinetti, for whom the biggest attention must be paid to temperature, in addition to an optimal calibration of the three must selections: flower, first press and second press. Very important, for the Fontanafredda producer, is also to allow the bases to mature well before re-fermentation, in order to provide the ideal starting point for a more structured sparkling wine that can cope with ageing. The last critical point is the inoculation before re-fermentation because that is what will decide the finesse of the bubble.

“Every little process in the production of a bubble is a little nuance,” Mr. Farinetti commented. “That lost or gained can make a sparkling wine a great wine or just a good wine.”

**Refinement, Evolution, Ageing**

But perhaps the most important topic remains the role of sur lie and ageing after disgorgement. Producers agree that the differences between the two phases are substantial. “Sur lie emphasizes a perfect, extraordinary base wine that is enriched in a reductive environment, therefore in the absence of oxygen,” Mr. Lunelli said. “Then there is the ageing that takes place after disgorgement. In this case, the bottle was added some liquor di expedition, so more lack of oxygen. The environment added a wine with dosage and a small dose of oxygen, which changes the evolution of the wine maturation, creating some tertiary notes that make the final product sterner. Playing on these two totally different environments means that a sparkling wine ten years after disgorging expresses evolved aromas comparable to the beauty and the extraordinary quality of a vintage car that need to be explained to the final consumer to be totally appreciated and enjoyed.”

For Bellavista’s Mr. Massano, “proper” ageing on the lees (from two to eight years depending on the different types of wine) is a sine-qua-non condition for classic sparkling wines of excel-

lence, but it is after dégorgement that the wine begins its true capacity for evolution with the liqueur. From that moment on, time slows down further, and a gradual and harmonious path begins that will bring amazing maturation and complexity in the glass.”

Mr. Bava also highlights the difference: “Bottles that are aged after dégorgement take on a broader dimension in terms of fragrance and colour and are more enveloping to the palate. Those that remain on the lees remain more intact and with more freshness, the evolution of their character is continuous but slower, developing aromas that we would not otherwise have in bottles that were disgorged earlier. When we open them, they will also have an evolution, which will change their profile like the others, but starting from different characters and therefore with a different result.”

According to Mr. Farinetti: “If the base allows it, it is undoubtedly better to degorge later, in fact, since if the wine remains sur lie it is enriched with substances that the yeasts gradually release, which help and protect it during ageing. At the time of dégorgement however this process ends, and the wine very slowly begins a process of refinement-ageing that will take it to the apex of its quality curve and then begin its downward parabola.”

For the Trentino winery Maso Martis: “In most cases, a long maturation on the lees is preferred, in the last stages with the product already at the top, for a less pushed maturation and then a more or less long period after disgorgement before sale.”

**How Long of a Wait After Disgorgement?**

In the world of wine, in terms of consumption and not of production, there are no single rules that are valid for everyone. The same applies to sparkling wines and even more so if they come from long ageing on the lees. The waiting time, of further evolution for some and of inexorable

Continued on Page 11

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◆ Continued from Page 9

depletion for others, is not uniquely established. For some, so many years on the lees should be followed by an equally long period after disgorging. "In an ideal world and for certain types of wine, this is definitely the case," Mr. Massano of Belavista commented. "And as far as we are concerned, we have a niche market that explicitly asks us for references that can be defined as rarities."

According to the brand director from the Franciacorta region, wines that particularly clever customers have kept for years can still tell the company's story with elegance and pleasantness.

"It is exciting to uncork reserves from 1995 and find them in perfect shape," Mr. Massano added. "With scents and aromas that we would not have recognized years earlier, in which we encounter the terroir, the style and an amazing complexity that really moves us. Clearly there is a market, which is also growing, that instead buys to consume more quickly, that does not want to wait, but wants to drink well and with wines that are still sophisticated and elegant, but more understandable. It is up to the wineries to have the strength to hypothesize different disgorgements, keep the wines in the cellar and challenge time, and dispel the rumour that sparkling wines cannot age."

"It also depends partly on the preferences of the enthusiasts," Mr. Lunelli added. "But also on the type of base wine. Not all base wines that tell the story of a vineyard, and a territory, have the same ability to age positively after disgorging. Generally speaking, some non-vintage wines have a shorter life post-dégorgement, between five and ten years, while for vintage wines and the great riserva, exactly for the great quality of their base wines, and of their vineyard, this long aging after dégorgement can last over 15 years. We always need to be careful in educating the final consumer about these peculiar sparkling wines that suggest new tastes and occasions to drink them, different from the other bubbles."

Important distinctions also for Mr. Bava of the Cocchi company: "If we want to reach the extremes of maturation on the lees, an equally long subsequent period could generate excessive fragility and a percentage risk of imperfect bottles. As Cocchi, we always look for important refinements for our Alta Langa wines, considering the period of thirty months, foreseen by the regulations, a formal indication that must be largely exceeded in order to have that recognition of the importance that the territory transmits to its wines. After dégorgement we let the wine spend a season in the cellar before marketing it." Mr. Stelzer of Maso Martis introduces an important technical aspect, namely the sur lie permanence but "on point."

"In our Trentodoc line, composed of six different labels, we have a flagship product 'Madame Martis,'" he said. "There, a long ageing of nine years sur lie is made. Disgorgement is then carried out with the addition of liqueur and a waiting period of six months before being released on the market. We have also experimented with a longer sur lie at the tip, disgorgement without the addition of dosage and then waiting one year before sale."

Mr. Andrea Farinetti, on the other hand, is concerned about the message given to consumers: "Disgorgement of a sparkling wine must be carried out now when, through tasting, it is established that the product has reached the ideal point of maturation, so after a few months (three-four) the product is ready to be consumed. It is implausible, after having put the product on the commercial circuit, to tell the consumer that the wine is not yet ready because it has not yet finished its ideal refinement. Long ageing after disgorgement produces bubbles that go beyond the sphere of integrity and pleasantness, and appeal to a public that seeks something more special, almost meditation. But let's not forget that exceptions make the rule."

**But How Long Can a Great Classic Method "Last"?**

Producers have been unanimous in not giving an unequivocal answer on the maximum age to fully enjoy a classic method. There is not and cannot be a pre-set period, there is the importance of the vintage, with vintages capable of



**FOCUS ON TWO SPECIFIC REALITIES IN THE NORTH AND SOUTH OF THE COUNTRY**

**EXPERIENCES FROM AUTOCHTHONOUS GRAPE VARIETIES**

From grape varieties universally recognized as valid and important for the production of sparkling wine, and the Italian territories that have always interpreted them, we move on to analyze two cases, La Scolca in Piedmont and the D'Arapi company in Apulia. Here from indigenous grape varieties, cultivated in areas not completely dedicated to the production of bubbles, sparkling wines which can age in the cellar several years before being released on the market are produced.



**A PROPER STORAGE IS ESSENTIAL**

Let's start in the south of Italy, with a project in Puglia thanks to the work of **Girolamo D'Amico**, of the D'Arapi company.

"It is undeniable that for some time now a new consumer has been emerging," Mr. D'Amico emphasized. "Who appreciates old vintages that are preserved and kept in the right way. However, it must always be remembered that all quality products in the field of oenology cannot be separated from the true act of birth, which is in the vineyard. Therefore, all attention and knowledge must converge in this direction. In our experience, in this sense the best autochthonous grape variety is Bombino Bianco di San Severo, suitable for long aging due to its acidity and it is precisely after long periods that its original organoleptic personality emerges. Montepulciano vinified in white, on the other hand, expresses a characteristic note of aniseed, defying and overcoming a long stay on the yeast, while Nero di Troia, an indigenous pure-bred grape variety, thanks to well-processed tannins can achieve an evolution from long aging capable of expressing finesse and elegance."

How to transfer this attention from the vineyard to the cellar, in order to obtain sparkling wines of great longevity, Mr. D'Amico specifies that at D'Arapi they prefer a late dégorgement, "with a sur lie maturation during which the tertiary aromas due to the refinement on the lees give life to what the French cousins call Plenitude. A result that is only partially attenuated by the oxidative elements that are revealed after a long stay with the liqueur and the final cork. It is essential for us, after disgorging and before labelling, to let our long-aged sparkling wines rest for at least six months in our cellar before marketing them.

A place which has ideal conditions regarding temperature and humidity. A requirement that we also try to pass on to our customers through the sales force, in order to help them with correct storage. It will then be up to the taste of the individual consumer whether to decide on a longer or shorter storage period. D'Arapi's experience, subject to the conditions of aging and conservation, leads us to say that even after twenty-five years sur lie there is still an evolutionary life to the wine." "In this regard", Mr. D'Amico concludes. "Our winery is proposing vertical tastings in which we will get to taste the 1993 vintage."

**THE PROJECT STARTS IN THE VINEYARD, THEN UP TO 120 MONTHS OF AGEING**

The historical winery of Gavi, La Scolca brings all the experience - in sparkling wine making and more - of the Soldati family. Chiara, the latest generation working in the Piedmontese winery (and recently appointed Cavaliere del Lavoro), specifies that "the aging of our D'Antan is one of the main elements of the success of our sparkling wines. What we taste in the glass is a project that starts in the vineyard, and today more than ever, the challenges we face such as climate change put the agronomic choices we make in the spotlight. Attention to the vineyard has always been our starting point. The moments of harvest and vinification are certainly the two most delicate phases of the transformation process. All our sparkling wines have an important aging process, our Cortese expresses its potential after several months of élevage, and in the case of the D'Antan and D'Antan rosé selections we even go as far as 120 months".

The leading actor of the Gavi area is the Cortese grape variety, which, as **Chiara Soldati** explains, "knows how to give birth to wines that are amazing when it comes to aging. Its olfactory freshness does not fade, but in fact, is transformed from characteristic fruity notes into an explosive floral bouquet, while on the palate, mineral sensations grow, enriching and making the overall balance more interesting." Returning then to the main theme, Mrs. Soldati confirms that La Scolca's sparkling wines "all age sur lie, and for us the concept of evolution means this. Liqueur can certainly be used to enhance certain notes that are sometimes natural, but in our sparkling wines it never replaces élevage sur lie. The classic method, after several months resting on the lees, certainly also needs a period of rest after disgorging. This is why we divide the dégorgement phase from the packaging phase. Between the former and the latter, the wine rests again in metal gabions that are returned to the ageing rooms. We do not believe there is a written limit for the aging of our sparkling wines sur lie. Rather, we consider that the concept of quality which we want to convey to our consumers is found in the bottle after about 120 months of aging. And the greatest satisfaction," Mrs. Chiara Soldati concludes, "is seeing how much this is recognized, not only by our most loyal customers but also by the many experts and critics in the sector."



**FROM THE ENCLAVE OF CONEGLIANO-VALDOBBIADENE, CRADLE OF THE FAMOUS ITALIAN SPARKLING WINE.**

**EVEN THE CHARMAT METHOD CAN AND MUST AGE. PROSECCO'S WORD**

"We do not pursue the goal of true aging, but rather have the ambition to achieve full qualitative expression in the adulthood of our wine. Prosecco from the best hills of Valdobbiadene, properly treated and cared for, gives its best more or less five or six years after the harvest," said **Paolo Bisol**, son of the founder of Ruggeri di Valdobbiadene, Giustino Bisol, and second generation of the winemaking family, begins his speech on the subject of aging of sparkling wine. "The first step is to start with grapes from the historic vineyards of Santo Stefano, San Pietro di Barbozza and Saccol," Mr. Bisol explained. "Which have always been considered the qualitative apex of the denomination, privileged for their terrain and exposure and ennobled by the presence of numerous centuries-old vines. Continuous monitoring of ripening and a slightly early harvest are fundamental to obtain good acidity, with the right amount of malic acid. Then we proceed as usual: soft pressing, decanting, first slow fermentation at 16/18 degrees, racking and storage on fine lees at around 10 degrees. At this point, the wine can rest until spring in the dark and cold, with of course a regular suspension of yeast suspension, done through batonnage. I would say that the key point, the fundamental premise in order to make a Prosecco harmoniously and virtuously evolve towards adulthood is precisely this: the wine always remains dirty, never stripped of its yeasts, with all the well-known consequent qualitative advantages due to the presence of amino acids and mannoproteins, with consequent positive evolutions on softness and fineness of perlage. In the past we could not afford this", Mr. Bisol points out, "because we had nothing, neither steel nor refrigerators nor adequate laboratories, and malolactic fermentation would have been inevitable."



Technical aspects of considerable importance, such as when Mr. Paolo Bisol clarifies a perhaps little-known aspect of the Italian wine that is now the most popular in the world. "I would like to take this opportunity to point out that no clarification is carried out on hillside Prosecco," he said. "Good quality Prosecco is perhaps the only wine that is naturally suited to becoming sparkling: it is born elegant and streamlined and does not need any intervention." Returning to the production phases, the representative of the Ruggeri wine cellar explains further: "In spring, the oenologists, trying and trying again, compose the blend in order to achieve the perfect harmony of the base wine, which will finally be welcomed into the protective womb of the autoclave. Here at 12 degrees, and therefore very slowly, the second fermentation, the presa di spuma, will take place, followed by another resting period on the yeasts of three to four, months or even more. With the 2014 harvest, Ruggeri produced a sparkling wine that remained on the lees for a total of five years. Refinement in the bottle is also of great importance and must take place, as for all wines, in a cool, dark place with specific attention to the closure; the use of a technical cork that reduces the passage of oxygen favours in more than a little measure a slower, correct and virtuous evolution of the sparkling wine. Prosecco, particularly from the hillsides, evolves very well under these conditions, becoming velvety and complex, making the fundamental qualities of the grape variety of origin, the Glera able to mature." "I can safely say", Mr. Bisol concludes, "that a good hillside Prosecco gives its best four to six years after the harvest. Right now our Giustino B. 2017, for example, is experiencing a superlative moment from every point of view."

thrilling 50 years later and others that instead cannot exceed two lusters, without demonstrating fatigue or in any case entering a downward parabola. According to our interlocutors, creating a culture of the classic aged and mature method passes foremost through a production process that is able to take advantage of the careful management of the most suitable vineyards, taking care of the grapes in the cellar with expedients aimed at enhancing the characters with similar soundings to time, then preserving the wine in the correct way and, last but not least, providing the right information to the consumer on the particular type of sparkling wine put on the market, its basic characteristics and its ageing capacity.

DIVERSITY AMONG PRODUCERS HAS NOT LACKED IN RECENT YEARS



*Until the early 2000s, Cava bubbles rhymed with freshness and simplicity. In Penedès, however, productions with years and years of ageing on the lees have been existing for several decades, and there is now a market capable of appreciating them. In the meantime, the historic companies have broken with the D.O., launching their own collective brand, the Corpinnat, which has under his umbrella the highest quality sparkling wines of the area*

By C.M.



Pere Llopart i Llopart

**T**he classic method that has made Catalan bubbles famous in the world is in the middle of a change that has revolutionized its quality pyramid over the last six years. In 2016, at the height of the confrontation between the large wine groups and the historical families of Cava del Penedès, always pursuing high quality, the Cava de Paraje Calificado was born, a category, within the denomination, designed to valorize the most prestigious productions. Only 13 wineries were allowed to produce Cava de Paraje Calificado, all of them with vineyards older than ten years, in a well-defined sub-zone of Penedès, with precise production restrictions that include yields of less than 80 quintals of grapes per hectare and a minimum ageing on the lees of 36 months. This is the top of the Cava production pyramid, the one that closely concerns our report. But it was not enough to stop a break-up. In 2017, six of Penedès' historical producers left the denomination, and united in the Associació de Viticultor i Elaboradors Corpinnat. Today, the number has risen to 11, practically all the historical producers of Cava. This includes Llopart, one of the two Cava labels involved by "Wine World Magazine" in our focus on bubbles produced with long ageing, which have for many years aroused the interest of discerning consumers. The other is Cavas Mestres, not even four kilometres in beeline from Llopart, ideally separated by the Autopista della Mediterrània, with the "Monument al Cava", which welcomes wine tourists to the small Sant Sadurn d'Anoia, just halfway along. They have in common their heritage (the Mestres family has been involved in wine production since 1312) and their propensity for quality, following parallel paths that lead, in the end, to the same result: great classic methods that, after years and years on the lees, end up on the lists of the great restaurants and in the cellars of "bubble lovers" all over the world.

#### Cava, Types and Market

To get an accurate and complete picture, however, it is better to take a step back and enlarge the analysis of the entire denomination and its most recent numbers, provided by the Consejo de la D.O. Cava. First of all, the size of production of the denomination, which counts on 38,133 hectares of vineyards and the work of 205 producers, and which in 2021 reached an all-time record of 252.9

million bottles, 17.33 percent more than in 2020. Of these, not less than 209 million bottles are of Cava de Guarda, the base of the pyramid (minimum nine months of ageing on the lees), which represents 87.75 percent of the entire production, a further 25.9 million bottles (10.61 percent) are of Cava de Guarda Superior Reserva (minimum 18 months of ageing on the lees), 3.86 million bottles (1.62 percent) are of Cava de Guarda Superior Gran Reserva (minimum 30 months of ageing on the lees) and just 10,000 bottles (0.004 percent of the total produced) are of Cava de Guarda Superior Paraje Calificado (minimum 36 months ageing on the lees).

It is for no coincidence that Paraje Calificado is the only category to suffer a production withdrawal, almost completely replaced by the Corpinnat collective brand. Of the 10,000 bottles produced, however, less than one in three ends up in foreign markets, with Japan, China and the United States at the top the list of importing countries. Exports are, actually, mainly related to Cava de Guarda, 75 percent of which (over 156 million bottles) is drunk outside Spain: Germany (28.6 million bottles), the USA (21.7 million bottles), Belgium (20 million bottles) and Great Britain (19 million bottles) account for more than half of the category's exports.

It is interesting to note that, as quality increases, the export share falls, a clear sign of how Cava is still perceived outside Spain as a product whose strength lies in its quality/price relation, positioning itself halfway between Prosecco and Champagne. This is confirmed by the Gran Res-

erva, which is still experiencing strong growth in production (+25 percent), with 27.3 percent of bottles crossing national borders, a percentage that rises to 46 percent in the case of the Reserva. These two types not only recorded the best production performance in 2021, but are also the leaders of Cava's sustainable turnaround. Of the 22 million "organic" bottles of Cava (9.1 percent of total production), 42 percent are Reserva and Gran Reserva, but the goal is to reach 100 percent of organic production in 2025 for Cava's top quality. In the case of Corpinnat, on the other hand, the ecological aspect is one of the very reasons for distinction, along with the manual harvesting of the grapes (exclusively of indigenous varieties) and the vinification that takes place entirely in the cellar, underlining the importance of the figure of the récoltant-manipulant.

#### The Importance of Indigenous Grape Varieties

When talking about Cava - and Corpinnat - one must first consider that, although it is a classic method (or champenoise), it is mostly produced with indigenous varieties: above all Macabeu, Xarel-lo and Parellada, which account for more than three quarters of the 38,133 hectares of the denomination.

"These are three varieties characterized by a medium-long ripening cycle," **Jaume Vial**, commercial director of Cava Mestres, explained. "Xarel-lo is a rustic variety, which resists hot and dry climates, and therefore drought, and is cultivated mainly below 400 meters. It produces



A Cava vineyard



Jaume Vial, center, David (left) and Joan (right) Aura, Mestres' owners

## THE CORPINNAT

**C**orpinnat is an EU collective brand born in 2017 with the desire to distinguish the great sparkling wines produced in the heart of Penedès, from grapes of indigenous varieties produced in an ecologically certified manner, harvested by hand and vinified entirely by the estate, to enhance the work of the producer and guarantee the style and quality of the product throughout the entire supply chain.

The name is the crasis of "Cor" (heart) and Pinnat, which comes from the etymological root Pinnae and refers to the origin of the toponym Penedès, documented from the 10th century as Penetense.

Corpinnats must always be aged for a period of more than 18 months, and a proof of the commitment of the collective brand's wineries can also be seen in the production of a sparkling wine that goes beyond 30 months and one that goes beyond 60 months of ageing.

The commitment to sustainable winegrowing and the preservation of the landscape and the dignity of the winegrower includes the use of grapes from their own harvest or from long-term alliances with other winegrowers, at a guaranteed minimum price.

The territory including the Corpinnat, where the historic wineries that began producing Spain's first sparkling wines as long as 130 years ago are located, is 997 square kilometres, comprehending the territories of Alt Penedès, Alt Camp, Baix Penedès, Tarragonès, Garraf, Baix Llobregat and Anoia, for a vineyard area of 22,966 hectares.

full-bodied musts with good acidity and alcohol content, bringing structure but also aromatic richness to the wines. The Macabeu, on the other hand, is more delicate, resistant to spring frosts and summer droughts, has an excellent balance between acidity and sugars, and withstands oxidation well. Finally, Parellada, the most elegant and fragile of the three varieties, gives the wine delicate and floral aromas, bringing finesse, acidity and liveliness to the wine.

It is from these varieties that "larga crianza" sparkling wines are born, from long aging in the bottle, which in the case of Mestres date back to 1948, when "We launched our first Cava pas dosé on the market. At that point, it was clear that consumption was changing: if until then bubbles were destined to accompany desserts, or for celebration, from then onwards it was also legitimized as an aperitif or to accompany a meal. And it was precisely from this concept, that of accompanying meals, that the production of sparkling wines of the highest quality, capable of accompanying any dish, began. Long oxidative ageing, in this sense, guarantees us the possibility of pairing with powerful preparations and flavors, but also an enormous enjoyment after a meal. Our latest line is a limited edition of Cava with 20 years of aging on the lees."

#### The Evolution of Cava in the Voice of the Producers

But how do sparkling wines evolve after so many months of aging?

"The difference is linked to the process of autolysis (the biological process by which a cell destroys itself, ed.): a bubble that remains for 36 months on the yeasts will still be aggressive," Mr. Vial specified. "And will retain a marked acidity, depending on the type of product. After 108 months, for example, autolysis will be at a much more advanced stage, the bubble will be finer, the acidity more balanced. For us, however, it is also important to talk about cork, because it has an influence on the wine aging process: at Mestres,

all our products are aged in bottles sealed with cork. And, above all, we do not market Cava aged on yeasts for less than 48 months: we currently market the 2017, 2015, 2013, 2007 and 2005 vintages of our labels, which only leave our cellars after a short rest period following disgorgement, until we consider them ready to drink."

Once they have left the cellar, Cava wines produced for long aging meet "A market that, as far as sparkling wines are concerned, has grown a lot in recent years, especially if you look at the higher quality productions. Those who choose this type of product are wine-loving consumers, who are used to seeking out and discovering quality wines, and who are usually passionate about Champagne".

Playing a key role in the process of storing and selling quality Cava are "restaurateurs and shopkeepers, real intermediaries between us and the customer, with whom we work together to decide when the best time is to sell or serve a particular product."

Macabeu, Xarel-lo and Parellada are also fundamental varieties in Llopart's vineyard, where, however, we cultivate "vines of Monastrell, with which we produce our rosés, of Sumoll or Xarel-lo Vermell, that are historical varieties of

Penedès, very peculiar and now rare," said **Pere Llopart i Llopart**, oenologist and member of the 26th generation of Llopart winemakers.

"We believe deeply in the indigenous varieties of our territory, with which we are able to produce wines that faithfully reflect the landscape in which they are born," he said. "We produce sparkling wines from long aging on the lees, in order to give them complexity and personality. They range from a minimum of 20 to a maximum of more than 156 months, with the Llegat Familiar line, surpassed by a super limited production, Enotecas Familiares. Now, we market 550,000 bottles per year, half of which are Brut Nature Reserva (30 months of aging on average), while labels that exceed 36 months of aging represent 40 percent of our production. Before going to market, we let our sparkling wines age for a few more weeks in the cellar after disgorging. The longer the aging on the lees, the longer lasts the resting period in the cellar, for the product to find its stability: the Llegat Familiar (156 months on the lees) is the one that rests the longest, six months."

Also according to Mr. Pere Llopart i Llopart, the market is undergoing an important evolution, "With a growing interest in bubbles produced

by long bottle ageing. Until two decades ago, the paradigm of our territory was the younger, fresh and fruity sparkling wines. We believed in the ageing potential of our production from the very beginning, so much that already in the early 1970s we started selling Cava aged 48 months, our first Gran Reserva. Today we see that it is not only us producers who believe in this kind of product, but also consumers are increasingly appreciative and want to know. We are obviously talking about a consumer who is first of all a great connoisseur of wine, and a lover of gastronomy, because it is above all in restaurants that one opens this type of bottle." This is why the function of restaurateurs and wine merchants is even "a primary function, they are the link between the winery and the final consumer, they must know the product well, know how to handle it and, ultimately, know how to transfer their enormous knowledge. For us it is important that they personally know our wines and that they are in a certain way participants in our production philosophy. This is why we maintain very close contact with them, welcoming them to the winery and letting them immerse themselves in our territory, discovering the peculiarities of our vineyards and our bottles."

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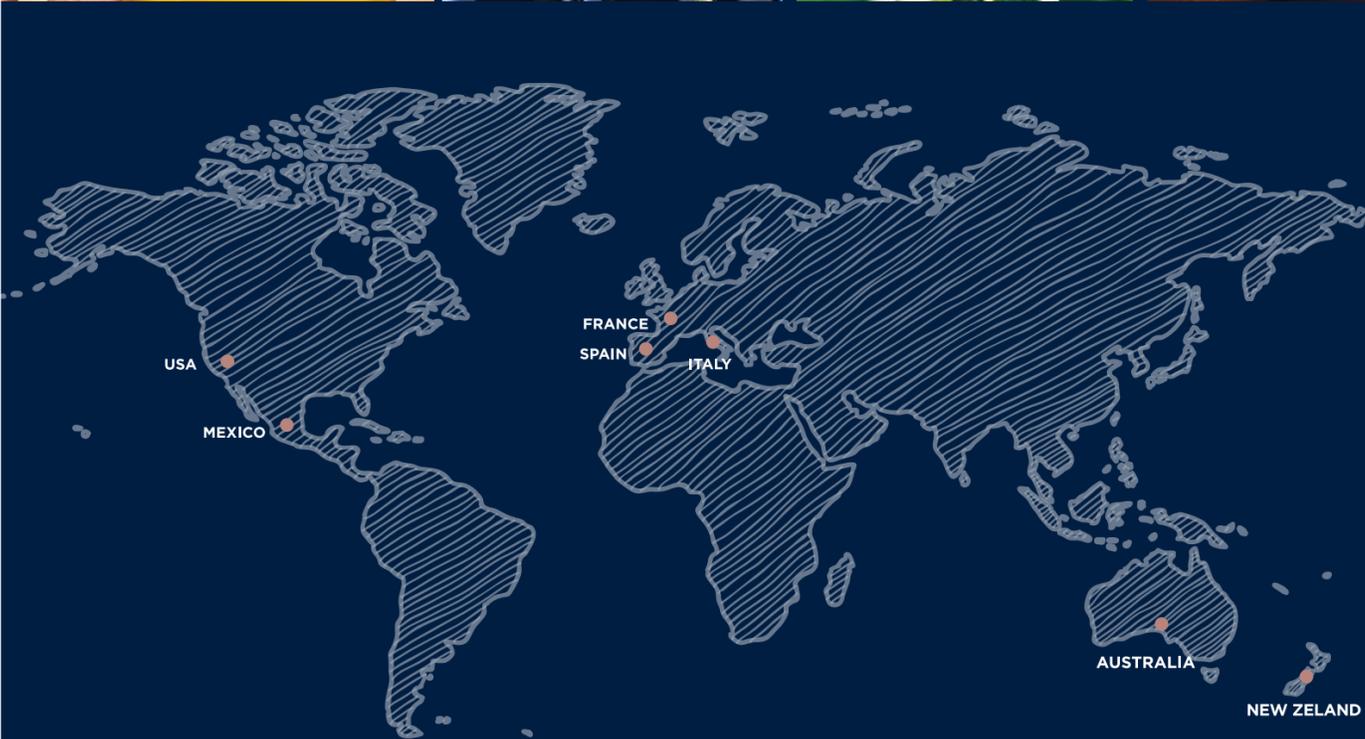
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AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH MIREIA TORRES, INNOVATION AND KNOWLEDGE DIRECTOR OF THE FAMILIA TORRES WINERY IN SPAIN

# A Sustainable Brand Today Is Not “A Nice to have,” But Actually “A Must Have”

The historic Spanish wine group has invested 15 million euro over the last decade in sustainability. The goal of the “Torres & Earth” programme is working towards zero emissions by 2040. The main points of the packet of measures to be implemented are renewable energies, biomass, electric cars, energy efficiency, vineyard adaptation, reforestation and research, and even viticultural archaeology. And, at the centre, regenerative viticulture, the latest frontier of the sustainable vineyard, of which the Torres family has become a world ambassador



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Desde 1870

by GIULIO SOMMA and MAURIZIO TAGLIONI

**A** winemaking company with an average annual income of 200 million euros, the Familia Torres dedicated 15 million euros over a decade to sustainable investments, an even more notable figure because the beginning of the group's reorganisation in a green key dates back to 2006. We are talking of 16 years ago, when the word “sustainable” was missing from the media horizon, environmentalism was a niche thought and the worldwide wine industry was grappling with problems far from the analysis of the environmental impact of its choices.

Mireia Torres, Innovation and knowledge di-

VINEYARDS IN SANT MIQUEL IN CATALUNA (photo credits Jordi Elias)



rector of the Familia Torres winery, with headquarters in Vilafranca del Penedès (Spain) and vineyards located in different areas of Spain, Chile and California, told us in this interview that the “family” realised doing more for the environment was an imperative. The spark struck after watching Al Gore's film “An Inconvenient Truth,” which opened the Torres' eyes to the risks of global warming and the consequences it would have, in the long term, on the vineyards. It was necessary to move immediately to a process of overall rethinking of the production activity and company organisation that led the “Torres & Earth” programme, to an organic package of interventions thanks to which, today, the group has very high sustainability standards with the ambitious goal of ‘zero net emissions’ by 2040. This is ten years ahead of the same target set by the European Green Deal, a set of policy initiatives proposed by the European Commission that envisages a 55% reduction (compared to 1990 levels) in carbon emissions by 2030, with the “zero” target by mid-century.

Reducing the carbon footprint by following the path of energy transition and restoring the balance between the consumption of natural resources compared to the Earth's capacity to “regenerate” them, are measures that require a change in approach, the contribution of research and innovation, the support of new technologies and policies aimed at achieving the set targets. If the reduction of the carbon footprint, which can be achieved through a series of interventions that lead the company to contain its emissions, foresee that many companies will be operating in the different product sectors engaged, the idea of regenerative agriculture, of which Torres has become an ambassador is on the other hand less widespread today, although it has recently been rediscovered in the agricultural sector. Unlike

intensive agriculture, which tends to maximise production even at the expense of soil fertility, regenerative agriculture is “a holistic land management practice that harnesses the power of photosynthesis in plants to close the carbon cycle and build up soil health, crop resilience and nutrient density” (Source: regenerationinternational.org). It combines traditional knowledge with modern scientific knowledge, imitating natural processes and reactivating them where they were interrupted, facilitating the processes of transforming the soil into a vital humus, rich in minerals and microbiology, with the aim of protecting and enriching, rather than depleting, natural resources. In regenerative agriculture, not only the plant is the focus of the farmer's attention, but rather it is considered as an integral part of the environment that surrounds it, in a single ecosystem.

But now let us listen to what Mireia Torres has to say on regenerative agriculture and all the actions taken to reduce the carbon footprint and sustainable development.

**Mireia, can you start with a brief history, telling us when your commitment to sustainable development began and what pushed you to embark on this virtuous path?**

Ecology has actually always been part of our winery's philosophy. We live from the earth and we are also a family-owned company, so this combination always led us - and still does - to care for our land and resources not just for this generation, but also for future generations. At Torres we have seen an increase of approximately 1 degree centigrade in the average temperature in our region over the past 40 years and the beginning of our harvest is now an average 10 days earlier than two years ago. Also, the pluviometry has diminished in a progressive way the last 25

years. This new situation is affecting the quality and production of grapes. But there was a point in time with Al Gore's movie "An Inconvenient Truth," when the family realised that we had to do more. My father organised a family board meeting and decided to focus even more and to invest 10 million EUR for a period of 10 years in our climate protection program "Torres & Earth." In the end, we actually invested more than 15 million euros in projects like renewable energy, biomass, electric cars, energy efficiency, adaptation of our vineyards, reforestation and research and reduced our carbon footprint by 34% per bottle between 2008 and 2020, exceeding the 30% target initially set. For 2030, our goal is now to achieve a minimum of 60% reduction with the intention of reaching even 70%, becoming a winery with zero net emissions before 2040.

**These are much higher values than the European Green Deal. Can you tell us, in detail, the strategies and methodologies adopted to achieve these results?**

When we set-up our Torres & Earth program, we built it along 3 approaches/3 strategies: adapting to climate change, mitigating our carbon footprint, but also trying to convince others to do the same. A good example of the latter is the IWCA (International Wineries for Climate Action) initiative that we co-founded together with Jackson Family Wines.

For the adapting part we looked at the following options, basically looking for possible solutions of how to delay maturation, one of the key problems of climate change in the vineyards. And we saw that to achieve delaying maturation, you basically have the following three options as a vinegrower. In the first place to implement viticulture practices that help delaying the ripening of the grapes; through experimenting we saw that the following practices gave positive results: avoiding de-leafing, adjusting the canopy height, using drip-irrigation, but also delaying pruning, which delays the complete growing cycle of a vine. And on a more general vineyard planning approach, our practices also include the use of different rootstocks, the change of density and orientation of the vines, the change of vine training height and the re-introduction of Gobelet training. Of course, in this part we should now also mention and add the concept of regenerative viticulture, which we started in 2020, converting more than 500 hectares of organic vineyards to regenerative vineyards and which is really a paradigm shift in vineyard management.

The second option is to plant vineyards in cooler areas, for example at a higher altitude, as every 100 metres you go up, the temperature will go down by almost 1 C. We have already planted more than 100 hectares in the Pre-Pyrenees at almost 1,000 metres and the results are excellent. We have another 100 hectares at 1,200 metres, but it is still too cold there to grow vine.

And the third option is to replant towards grape varieties that are so-called 'late-ripening' varieties, which is a big advantage as they carry the 'delayed maturation' standard in their DNA. In this sense worth mentioning is our research project about ancestral grape varieties that my father started 30 years ago. The project was initially set-up to bring back forgotten (pre-phylloxera) grape varieties out of a sort of cultural heritage responsibility; almost an exercise in viticultural archaeology. But later we also found that some of these forgotten grape varieties are late-ripening varieties and some of them are also very resistant to drought and heat; all of course very positive characteristics to cope with climate change, especially the fact that the late ripening goes hand in hand with relatively high acidity. Now after more than 30 years we have managed to find and revive more than 50 unknown Catalan varieties, but only 6 are really interesting from a top winemaking perspective. Next to Garró and Querol - that form part of the Grans Murals blend - the other varieties are Gouafaus, Pirene, Moneu and Forcada. Of the last one - Forcada - we released a very limited edition during the course of 2019/2020, Moneu was released as a blend with Tempranillo and Garnacha as "Clos Ancestral 2019" in May 2021 and just this week we released Pirene 2020 as a mono varietal. Just to show you, that we approach Adaptation in a very wide sense, let me add here, that

SOLAR PANELS IN THE CELLAR IN PACS DEL PENEDÈS



**About the Familia Torres**

Familia Torres founded its winery in Vilafranca del Penedès in 1870, 150 years ago, but its roots in the winegrowing traditions of Penedès date back to the 16th century. Every generation has passed on its passion for wine culture from parents to children, a passion built on a deep respect for the Earth and tradition, as well as a belief in innovation. Today the focus of the fifth generation is on making wines from exceptional vineyards and historical estates, as well as on recovering ancestral varieties as a way of adapting to climate change. Since 2008, Familia Torres has taken active steps to combat the climate emergency, implementing adaptation and mitigation measures to reduce its carbon emissions. Familia Torres has a historical connection to Penedès, Conca de Barberà, Priorat, and Costers del Segre, but now its presence covers 1,900 hectares of vineyards with cellars in preeminent Spanish wine regions - Rioja, Ribera del Duero, Rueda, and Rías Baixas for 1500 ha - in Chile (300 ha) and California (30 ha). With an annual turnover of more than € 256 million (2021 figures), the winery produces 44 million bottles per year, with an export share of 75% in more than 100 countries worldwide. Familia Torres is one of the leading premium wineries in Spain with a production of premium, super premium and icon wines of more than 6 million bottles; 6.6 million bottles for Miguel Torres Chile, while Marimar Estate Vineyards & Winery amounts to about 250 thousand. Familia Torres is a member of Primum Familiae Vini, an association representing 12 of the oldest and most prestigious wine families in the world, and they are the co-founders of International Wineries for Climate Action, which promotes the decarbonization of the wine sector. For more information: [www.torres.es](http://www.torres.es)



DETAILS IN THE SYSTEM THAT "CAPTURES" AND RE-USES CO<sub>2</sub> PRODUCED DURING THE FERMENTATION PROCESS

we also build several rainwater collection basins (total capacity 38 million litres); and in our main winery 100% of the water consumed is treated and 25% is reused. Moreover, we increased our drip irrigation installations from 177hec in 2013 to 400 in 2020 and the forecast is to go up to 600hec in 2025.

**Regarding regenerative viticulture, which you mentioned in the first point, can you explain what it consists of and what you have done to implement it in your vineyards?**

Our main objective is to bring back life to agricultural soils and regenerate them. To do so we are reducing or avoiding ploughing, we work with spontaneous or planted ground covers for the whole year through, we set the conditions for the formation of humus, and promote microbial life, just to mention some. But also, on the general layout of a vineyard new planting concepts will be considered, such as Keyline vineyard design that optimises the use of water resources. And in our vineyards, we continue with the implementation of the already mentioned regenerative viticulture. Regenerative Viticulture is based on a simple yet complex objective: to mimic nature. In the natural world we see how in general soils are covered with grass, trees and with time biodiversity develops. Our main objective is to bring back to life agricultural soils and regenerate them. Its main pillars are increasing soil organic matter naturally; not ploughing by turning the earth to avoid damaging the surface and prevent the release of the carbon stored in the soil; using ground cover to maximise the assimilation of atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> and increase biodiversity. Any soil can capture carbon through the natural ground covers (plants) and animal management, so it can help us to sequester the CO<sub>2</sub> that is already in our atmosphere, improve water retention, delay the ripening and avoid erosion. This is not an immediate process, and it takes between 4 to 10 years in a Mediterranean climate to consolidate results.

**Has regenerative viticulture been accompanied by other actions in order to limit the company's carbon footprint?**

Next to our Adaptation projects, we also started a wide range of projects to Mitigate, to lower our carbon footprint. From 2008 until 2020, as anticipated, we reduced our carbon footprint by 34% per bottle, calculating the emissions as per Scope 1, 2 and 3 (emissions respectively from internal operations, electricity and suppliers, EdN) exceeding the 30% target initially set. Now for the next planning cycle our goal for 2030 is to achieve a minimum of 60% reduction with the intention of reaching even 70%. The main drivers of our CO<sub>2</sub> reduction we achieved, came through bottle weight reduction, the use of a biomass boiler and solar photovoltaics panels. And illustrating this with numbers, you get the following picture: for example, during the first Torres & Earth planning period from 2008-2020, we reduced the weight of our standard bottle for still wine - a 75cl Bordeaux style bottle - by 30% from 550g to 390g. After many years of testing and experimenting, we concluded that with a

weight of 390g, the bottle complied with all our criteria such as functional (filling, storage and transport with a minimal breaking risk) and carbon footprint. For our flagship wine Mas La Plana we lowered the weight by 38% in comparison with 2008 to the current weight of 563 gr. Our biomass boiler reduced our electricity consumption by 10% and our gas consumption by 95%. And through Solar power, through PV's we now provide 32% of our electric consumption.

**Can you tell us something about your current projects and those planned for the future?**

At the winery level our plan is to increase the use of renewable energy from 32% to 50%. Furthermore, we continue with several CCR (Carbon Capture and Reuse) projects we started several years ago, experimenting with capturing and/or reusing CO<sub>2</sub>: for example, in our winery we looked into how to capture & reuse the 2.600tons of CO<sub>2</sub> we produce each year during fermentation at our winery. And last harvest we put a real circular-economy-project in place, which consists of adapting the fermentation tanks so that the CO<sub>2</sub> released during the wine fermentation process can be conveyed to large balloons positioned above these tanks. As the wine ferments and releases CO<sub>2</sub>, the gas is captured inside these balloons, which inflate. Then, using an air compressor, the gas is compressed to a pressure that allows it to be transferred to another tank where it is stored, to be reused later as an inert gas for filling the tanks with wine in order to avoid oxidation. As you know, the use of CO<sub>2</sub> or a combination of CO<sub>2</sub> and nitrogen to fill the headspace in wine containers is one of the most common techniques winemakers use for protecting the wine, or 'blanketing' as we call it. We are sharing this very innovative system, which is the result of several years of research and testing, with other wineries - among them IWCA wineries - so that together, we will be able to contribute to reducing the use of fossil-origin CO<sub>2</sub>.

On the packaging level, we think the following 2 projects can be interesting for the future: one is the sending of entry level wines in bulk and bottle them at destination. We are doing an experiment with the monopoly in Quebec, and it will be very interesting to see the results of that for possible replication in our markets. Furthermore, we are focusing on a project of Reuse of bottles, which should be organised on a European level, as a European standard for entry-level wine bottles would be essential. For your information, a standard glass 75cl wine bottle of 390gr has a carbon footprint of 199gr CO<sub>2</sub> and a 3L-Bag-In-Box has a footprint of 74gr (equivalent 75cl); but if you would reuse a standard 75cl wine bottle 6 times, its carbon footprint would lower to 43,9gr CO<sub>2</sub>. But to organise this more complex topic of recycling and/or reuse of wine bottles, the whole sector should meet - as mentioned before - on a European level to make more progress on this issue.

Another interesting Carbon Capture project is our 6.000 ha estate in Patagonia (Chile), where we continue to plant trees to capture CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere.

WALTRAUD'S CELLAR  
(photo credits Jordi Elias)

**Do you combine operations within the company with a commitment to research, in collaboration with external organisations or academia?**

Torres and Jean Leon are involved in several projects of research on the Regenerative Viticulture working with CREAM (carbon retained according to type of ground cover), University of Lleida (recommendation of species in ground cover based on goals), IRTA (metagenomic and other analysis related to biodiversity and irrigation management) and University of Vigo (biodiversity).

**Do you think that the innovations made within the cultivation and transformation processes have affected the profile or style of your wines? Have you and/or your customers experienced organoleptic changes?**

I don't think there is a direct link between our Torres & Earth program and a possible change of profile or style of our wines. Probably the only sub-project, where we could see a direct link would be the implementation of practices in the vineyard to delay maturation, as we here were able to keep or even improve the quality, especially keeping the acidity. But what has really opened some new windows of taste/style profiles was the discovery of ancestral grape varieties. We could highlight the significantly high acidity of all ancestral grape varieties we selected, apart from very interesting and sometimes surprising aroma combinations in the nose and on the palate.

**How do you make a financial return on the investments required for such major changes? Have you had to increase wine prices?**

Our experience with sustainability related investments is that you often don't know whether you will recuperate your investment. But the family considers that a decision for a sustainability program should primarily be based on climate change related criteria such as the CO<sub>2</sub> footprint and not (purely) on a financial/payback criterion. Unfortunately, a lot of wineries

THE VINEYARD WHERE THE MAS LA PANA IS MADE FROM  
(photo credits TGalitó)

base their decision to invest or not in sustainability-programs on economic/financial criteria. Our experience is that if you take that as a starting point - which is often a short-term perspective - it is not going to happen. To think and act with a long-term perspective and that certainly involves a change of paradigm for many. However, sometimes it can also be that a sustainability project like for example PV's (Photovoltaic panels) initially is very expensive and from a pure financial standpoint uninteresting as it could easily have a payback time of 12-15 years; for us our payback was actually about 10 years back in 2007 thanks to subsidies; today the payback time is about 7,5 years. But also due to technology improvements and / or market developments, the financial aspect can change.

**Is your commitment to sustainability communicated to consumers, and/or made recognisable in some way on the label?**

This is actually not so easy as it seems. Because sustainability is a wide and complex topic, and

you often only have a few centimetres (for example on a wine label) to explain everything you do. Meaning you must summarise very much but at the same time still be clear and precise, a combination which is not so easy to achieve. Fortunately, today modern communication techniques like e.g., QR codes can help to bring our sustainability policy and message across with all the nuances and details it needs. But apart from that, independent certifications are very important, as they confirm and certify in an objective way how sustainable a winery really is: what kind of sustainability philosophy/program has been implemented; how serious is the approach, is the winery covering all scopes (so from the vineyard to the final consumer) etc. We for example have ISO 14064 and 14067 on verification of greenhouse gas emissions (organisation and product); ISO 50001 on energy management; ISO 14046 on water footprint; ISO 14001 on environmental management. And the overall carbon-footprint reduction of our Torres & Earth program is cer-

tified by LRQA (formerly known as Lloyd's Register). The latter is one of the leading global audit firms with a strong expertise in sustainability ISO standards.

**Speaking of standards and certifications, what recommendations have you followed, and which of them would you recommend to other wineries that decide to commit themselves to sustainability?**

A good example of a certification that will transmit and guarantee the highest standard of climate activism in the global wine sector, is the new IWCA certification that was announced during the Wine Talks of VinExpo Paris in February 2022. The newly created IWCA certificate will be an additional asset for every member winery, as it evaluates the consistency of a winery's carbon footprint, its performance related to GHG (GreenHouseGas) emissions reduction efforts in line with the science-based medium and long-term targets (becoming Net Zero by no later than 2050), and its commitment to implementing renewable energy at the winery. With this certification on a wine label, a final consumer will have the guarantee that a certified winery is committed to decarbonize and moving towards Net Zero by 2050 by effectively monitoring its progress. This IWCA certification scheme has been developed in collaboration with the above-mentioned global audit firm LRQA. But allow me to also mention the importance of awards, as behind an award there is a serious jury of specialists. For example, in 2010 and 2021 the British magazine *The Drinks Business* awarded us with their distinction "Green Company of the Year", which is of course an honour and helps to make our sustainability efforts "visible" to the final consumer.

**According to Wine Intelligence's latest reports, there is some confusion in the market between definitions such as "organic", "sustainable", "green", "bio" etc., which are considerable. Have you also encountered similar problems in the countries where you operate?**

Yes, we also regularly encounter this confusion about the definition of sustainable and organic wines in our contacts with final consumers, in for example presentations or wine-tastings at our visiting centre or in the different 150 markets we export to. Therefore, as mentioned earlier, it is very important to explain these differences but also to work towards improvements and or changes. For example, although we apply organic viticulture in all our vineyards, we see that organic viticulture does not sufficiently take climate change into consideration; as you know, in general organic vineyards need more treatments with sulphur or Bouillie Bordelaise which means more CO<sub>2</sub> emissions; hopefully we can soon reduce the CO<sub>2</sub> footprint of our tractors, when our first electric tractor will be delivered this year. We are working on projects of variable application of the phytosanitary products in the vineyard in order to be more efficient and reduce

the quantity of them. The other important point is that the copper from the Bouillie Bordelaise is not good for the biodiversity of the soils. But please do not misunderstand me: our experience with organic viticulture is very positive. We changed to organic viticulture in the eighties, because we realised that in the long term this was the only direction that made sense. The formal certification we got 2006 for California, 2008 for Spain and 2012 for Chile. In Spain we have now reached 800ha (out of 1.300) of organic certified vineyards, while in Chile and California all our vineyards are already certified. The rest in Spain we are certifying bit by bit, but in reality we are already working them organically, completely avoiding the use of synthetic chemical treatments and replacing them with biological alternatives. Therefore, we are in favour of a new 'Ecological Sustainable' wine category that would incorporate new environmental aspects that go beyond the strictly regulated ones. In this sense, also the new initiative of the Spanish Regenerative Viticulture Association (of which Torres and Jean Leon are co-founders) will be interesting, who announced during its 2<sup>nd</sup> conference (in May this year) a new regenerative viticulture certification with a global scope that will be important in the following years. This is a first step that will lay the foundations to obtain this certification and also give recommendations for practices in the field, as well as support for self-analysis and external audits of the levels of organic matter, carbon fixation, and the presence of biodiversity.

**Which markets are most receptive to these issues, and do you think it possible to sell sustainable wines with higher margins in these markets?**

The sustainability issue is especially high on the consumer's mindset in countries like Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Germany, UK and Canada. But I would say that the number of sustainable conscious consumers is really growing everywhere in the world. I think for the first time in history we have consumers that not only care about the quality, but also want to know how a wine is made and what is the sustainability program put in place that contributes to fighting climate change. And regarding the last part of your question "Is it possible to sell with higher margins in these markets": in the first place, our aim of our sustainability program and activities has never been a commercial motive and/or a financial opportunity to increase our margins. As mentioned earlier, ecology/sustainability has always been part of our winery's philosophy: we live from the earth and we are also a family-owned company, so this combination always leads us - and still does - to care for our land and resources - not just for this generation, but also for future generations. Moreover, numerous studies with consumers reveal that, although there is an increasing sensitivity and interest towards sustainability, the willingness to pay a higher price for sustainable products is not equally high. In fact, today most consumers think that a sustainable brand is not "a nice to have" but actually "a must have".



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**A NEW PROCEDURE OFFERS A MUCH LARGER AND DIRECT ROLE TO FOREIGN PRODUCERS**

# Changes in the USA for 2023 IMPORT, TAX AND MODERNIZATION ACT

**The President of the National Association of Beverage Importers shares some thoughts on the risks and advantages of the new taxation system**

**M**any foreign producers of wine are acquainted with the Federal tax benefits given to wine imported into the United States under the Craft Beverage Modernization Act (CBMA) since 2018. But now, the “times are a-changin’” for both foreign producers and importers. While this article may be dry, technical, and boring (being written by a lawyer), it cannot be overstated how enormous of a change is coming in January 2023. Understanding the details explained in this article is essential for foreign producers who export wines to the United States.

Congress enacted several revisions to the CBMA when it was made a permanent law and one of those revisions changed the procedure for claiming the CBMA tax benefit. Importantly, the dollar amount of the tax benefit remains the same. But the procedure for claiming the tax benefit on and after January 1, 2023, changed significantly. The change applies to wine, beer, distilled spirits, and hard cider but this article only looks at the tax credit for imported wines. Moreover, this article focuses on the new responsibilities of the foreign producer and does not include details on the detailed steps imposed by the temporary regulations on the importer filing the refund claim. Importers may file refund claims quarterly under the temporary regulations.

Here is the new world. Effective January 1, 2023, importers must pay the full excise taxes to Customs and Border Protection (CBP) at the time of the import entry of the wine for consumption in the United States and then file a refund claim with Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB), Department of the Treasury, in a dollar amount reflecting the CBMA tax benefit, that is, the tax credit for wine and a lower tax rate for beer and distilled spirits, subject to quantity limitation.

The CBMA tax credit for wine is: \$1 per gallon for the first 30,000 gallons imported from the specific foreign producer, then 90 cents per gallon for the next 100,000 gallons, and finally 53.5 cents for

By **ROBERT M. TOBIASSEN**  
President of NABI

the next 620,000 gallons. The excise tax rate for still wine not exceeding 16 percent alcohol by volume (ABV) is \$1.09 per gallon, for still wine between 16 and not over 21 percent ABV the tax is \$1.57 per gallon, for still wine between 21 and not over 24 percent ABV the tax is \$3.15 per gallon, for champagne and naturally sparkling wine the tax rate is \$3.40 per gallon, and for artificially carbonated wine the tax rate is \$3.30 per gallon. As you can see, the CBMA wine tax credit is a valuable savings.

#### A Brief History of Reduced Tax Rates and Tax Credits

In 1990, Congress enacted a tax credit for small domestic wine producers that produced not more than 250,000 gallons of wine per calendar year. Previously, in 1976, Congress enacted a reduced rate of tax for small brewers that did not brew more than 6,000,000 barrels of beer in the calendar year. No small distiller credit for distilled spirits ever existed. And the wine tax credit and beer reduced tax rates did not cover imported wines and beers.

As the craft distilling industry grew, the pressure for a reduced rate of tax for small domestic distillers also grew. This was the origin of the Craft Beverage Modernization Act. However, as the proposal moved through Congress to its enactment, it was greatly expanded to cover all domestic and foreign wineries, breweries, and distilleries regardless of size. We call this “Christmas Tree” legislation because everybody gets a present under the tree.

Under the original law, importers claimed the tax credit or reduced rate at the time of importation and entry of the imported product into the United States for consumption. This was administered by CBP, Department of Homeland Security.

As mentioned earlier, Congress made several revisions to the CBMA when enacting it into permanent law; three of these revisions are important here.

- CBMA authority over imports was transferred to TTB from CBP. However, TTB and CBP must act in “coordination” under the CBMA.
- The importer must pay the full tax amount and then file a claim for refund with TTB in the dollar amount of the CBMA tax benefit.
- A foreign producer is now required to respond to information requests from TTB. No such requirement was in place when CBP administered the CBMA provisions on imported wine, beer, and distilled spirits.

TTB published a temporary regulation/rule that is effective on October 24, 2022, in order to provide lead time for the importer industry and foreign producers to start making adjustments that must be followed on and after January 1, 2023. Concurrently, TTB published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that solicits public comments on the temporary regulation. The public comment period closes on November 22, 2022.

(TTB Temporary Rule on CBMA (T.D. TTB-186, 87 Federal Register 58021 (September 23, 2022).) NABI believes that the final regulations will closely resemble the Temporary Regulations.

#### New Focus by TTB on the Foreign Producer as to Compared to CBP

TTB is building a regulated industry regime to administer the new CBMA refund claim process where both the foreign supplier and the importer are required to file information online directly with TTB. By comparison, CBP imposed all of the regulatory requirements on the U.S. importer who had to work

with its foreign producers to comply with those requirements such as the Assignment Certification Letter and the Controlled Group Spreadsheet in paper form.

The foreign producer is now directly involved with registering online with TTB, submitting information to TTB about its controlled group status, and filing all of the details about its assignment of wine, beer, and distilled spirits to the U.S. importer. Under the Temporary Regulations, the U.S. importer has no direct involvement here and only becomes involved when filing the claim with TTB for the refund of the CBMA benefits. Nothing prevents the U.S. importer from helping the foreign supplier with these steps but TTB will only accept these online filings from the foreign supplier itself. TTB is placing significant responsibilities on the foreign producer for all aspects of the assignment most likely to stress the seriousness of the submissions to TTB and the accuracy of the same.

TTB is building on the foundation set up by CBP, but adding many new regulatory enhancements. This is not surprising because the Treasury Department, Office of Tax Policy, consistently raised concerns with the professional staff of the House Ways and Means Committee drafting the final bill, that the former believed the existing system was rampant with potential for tax fraud because it lacked checks and balances.

#### Policy Objectives of TTB Under the New Procedure. It Helps to Know Why

In order to understand the temporary regulatory framework, it is essential to understand TTB’s objectives here, as laid out below, to protect the excise tax revenue collections and refund the CBMA tax benefits to importers the dollar amounts rightly due them.

- Establish a line of online communications with foreign suppliers to: (1) confirm their existence, (2) obtain information about ownership and a Point of Contract, and (3) collect information about any owner holding a 10 percent or greater interest in the foreign supplier and who holds any interest in another winery, distillery, or brewery in the United States or in a foreign supplier that is also making or will be making CBMA assignments during the same calendar year.
- Use a TTB-assigned unique foreign producer ID in order to associate shipments with each foreign producer.
- Use ownership information to determine the existence of a controlled group or the absence of one. The 10 percent or more is a “red flag” for TTB to investigate and does not itself create a controlled group.
- Rely on ability and capacity of IT online data inputs via “my TTB” by foreign suppliers and U.S. importers and shared data from the CBP Automated Commercial Environment (ACE) to cross check all of the data needed to approve the CBMA refund claims.
- Set up a transparent system and afford due process of law.

Below is a checklist of the steps that the foreign producer must undertake online to (1) register with TTB and receive a Foreign Producer ID and (2) to make the assignments to the U.S. importer. Each foreign producer will create an online account through the “my TTB” tool or function on the TTB webpage ([www.ttb.gov](http://www.ttb.gov)). This online went “live” on October 25, 2022, so foreign producers may file their registration applications today and start making assignments once that registration is approved. As discussed below, the foreign producer may designate a third-party or agent on its behalf to perform this work. The agent may be the U.S. importer, among others. The “my TTB” system is user friendly with windows explain what to do and error notices. But it is not as user friendly to remove details that need to be corrected because of a mistake.



Robert M. Tobiasse





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TTB issued a comprehensive User Guide for the foreign producer registration and the assignments in “my TTB.” Note that opening the foreign producer’s account in “my TTB” is a two-step process, as explained in the User Guide. First, sign into “Login.gov” and open an account there. Then you go to the TTB website and open your “my TTB” account with a reference to your “Login.gov” account. See, “Foreign Producer Registration and CBMA Tax Benefit Assignment ‘myTTB’ System User Guide” at [https://www.ttb.gov/images/pdfs/cbma/Foreign\\_Producer\\_System\\_External\\_User\\_Guide\\_2022-10-25.pdf](https://www.ttb.gov/images/pdfs/cbma/Foreign_Producer_System_External_User_Guide_2022-10-25.pdf)

**Overview of the Specific TTB Requirements for Foreign Producers**

All information must be filed in English, except for the name of a person, company, or street.

**STEP 1: REGISTRATION DETAILS**

- File initial registration online with TTB. The foreign producer, an employee, or authorized agent may do this filing.
- Registration is permanent unless revoked by TTB and does not need to be renewed each year.
- Name of business, address, and country of residence.
- Name, title, country of residence, email address and telephone number of employee or individual owner who has authority to act for the business.
- More than one person may be authorized to act for the foreign supplier.
- Each person authorized to act for the foreign supplier must possess proof of that authority to display to TTB if requested.
- FDA Food Facility Registration Number.
- List any Individuals who own 10 percent or more of the foreign producer who also hold any ownership interest in (1) a U.S. winery, distillery, or brewery or (2) a foreign winery, brewery, or distillery that assigns CBMA tax benefits.
- List any Entities that own 10 percent or more of the foreign supplier and their Employer Identification Number (EIN) for a U.S. company or the Dun & Bradstreet Universal Numbering System number for a foreign company.
- New or revised registration information must be updated within 60 days and failure to update timely results in invalidation of registration.
- Once the registration is complete, then TTB will issue a “Foreign Producer ID” number.

**REVOCAION OF ELIGIBILITY REGISTRATION**

This is a new enforcement tool available to TTB and could have a serious impact on foreign producers.

- TTB may revoke a Foreign Producer Registration where it has filed or submitted erroneous or fraudulent information that TTB determines to be a material fact.

- The first revocation period cannot exceed three years; any subsequent revocation may be permanent.
- The regulations have due process procedures in regulations for the foreign supplier to present its position and a route for an administrative appeal within TTB before having a right to take the matter to a Federal District Court.

**STEP 2: ASSIGNMENT BY FOREIGN PRODUCER OF CBMA TAX BENEFITS DETAILS**

A foreign producer (or its authorized agent) may make assignment(s) once it is registered and obtained its Foreign Producer ID number from TTB.

For an assignment to a U.S. importer, the following details are required via an online filing in “my TTB” by the Foreign Supplier:

- Calendar year for which the assignment is made.
- The U.S. importer’s basic permit number or TTB-assigned number.
- Internal Revenue Code classification of product as wine, beer, or distilled spirits.
- The reduced tax rate for distilled spirit and beer or the tax credit for wine being assigned. Report by tier, if appropriate. For example, distilled spirits have two tiers: \$2.70 per proof gallon for the first 100,000 proof gallons and \$13.34 per proof gallon for the next 22,130,000 proof gallons.
- The quantity by distilled spirits proof gallons, wine gallons, or beer barrels being assigned.
- Certification by the foreign producer submitter that he/she acknowledges the statutory quantity limits for assignments during the calendar year.
- The foreign producer submitter is expected to know the controlled group rules and not make any excessive quantity assignments.
- Any other information requested by the “appropriate TTB officer” on a case-by-case determination. NOTE: TTB regulations do not identify by title the employee who is given authority under the regulation; rather, TTB publishes a delegation order on the TTB website that specifically identifies by title and position, the “appropriate TTB official” under each regulation.
- Assignments cannot be made earlier than October 1, of the year prior to the calendar year covered and no later than December 31, of the calendar.
- “Once made, a foreign producer may not revoke or reduce an assignment of CBMA benefits unless the assignee importer has rejected the assignment.” NOTE: Once the assignee-importer has accepted the assignment, it cannot be revoked or reduce during the



calendar year. Any increase in volume would be a new assignment and not an amendment of the original assignment.

The importer receiving an assignment from the foreign producer is “presumed” to have elected to receive such assignment, unless the importer files a rejection online through the importer’s account in “my TTB.”

Currently, the online ability of the importer to reject an assignment is limited because the second portal of “my TTB” designed for importers to use and to file refund claims will not be “live” until early in 2023. So, be careful as you input the assignment information.

**U.S. CUSTOMS BROKERS**

Automated Broker Interface (ABI) system is used by the customs broker to enter data into the CBP Automated Commercial Environment (ACE) about the import shipment and entry data when the imported wine arrives at the port of entry in the United States. Customs brokers currently perform this function. Foreign producers and importers do not have input access to enter data into ACE.

**A Bright Future Depends on Knowing the New Procedures**

In developing the temporary regulations, TTB reached out to a number of foreign suppliers in order to gain an understanding of the foreign supplier industry. TTB did not have prior experience with this industry. The new procedure will take time and patience by foreign suppliers, importers, and the regulators to reach an efficient and smooth process. Everyone involved in this new world has a strong interest in making this new procedure work well. Yes, “the times they are a-changin,” but you can be ready for it.



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# MONOPOLIES BELIEVE IN SUSTAINABILITY

Certifications are mandatory, but sometimes they are not enough. In this double report, we looked at the different ways undertaken by two countries that import and sell wines. In Sweden, we discussed the “home-made” label that has raised a lot of eyebrows: in Canada, the attention dedicated in Québec and Ontario to the “light” glass and bottling on the spot

JOINING THE NEW SYSTEM IS EASY FOR LARGE GROUPS, MUCH LESS SO FOR SMALL PRODUCERS

## New Labelling at Sweden's SYSTEMBOLAGET

by ASA JOHANSSON

*The Swedish monopoly has created a new “sustainable choice” label that includes climate, environmental and social perspectives. Will it help customers to make a more ethical choice, or is it a way to find easy answers to complicated questions? Norway and Finland went a different way*

**A**n March 2022, the Swedish monopoly, Systembolaget, launched a new label called sustainable choice. The products that respect the various criteria, including climate, environment, and social aspects, get a green label where it says “sustainable choice” on the shelves in the monopoly stores and on the monopoly’s website. Will it help the customers make a more ethical choice, or is it a way to find easy answers to complicated questions?

Systembolaget argued that, since they started to work with organic products (today, organic products account for 24% of the volume in the fixed assortment) at the beginning of 2000, the perception of sustainability has broadened. Customers ask for more than just an organic certification and are looking for products that include other aspects like social and economic issues. In the past, the monopoly used three in-house labels for its products. One was organic, and will continue to exist, the second were wines labelled as ethic, based on fair trade or fair for life certifications. The third label used in stores and online indicated climate-smart packaging. Just be mindful that the 448 monopoly stores are the only retailers allowed to sell alcoholic beverages in Sweden.

“At a certain point, we felt that we wanted to create something more complete that includes all the three above criteria,” said **Marcus Irhe**, sustainability manager at Systembolaget. “In the last four years, we have studied different sustainable certifications worldwide, but no one was complete. It would have been wonderful to have a global certification including all the three different aspects, but that does not yet exist, so we decided to create our standards.”

There are four criteria that Systembolaget uses for a product to receive the sustainable choice label: certification with environmental requirements (for example, the EU-green leaf for organic wine, but Systembolaget will accept several sustainability certifications with relevant ecological requirements for cultivation and production), climate-smarter packaging (bag-in-box, can, PET, glass bottles weighing less than 420 grams), traceability (the origin of 2/3 of the grapes in the wine must be known), and social responsibility in the supply chain (based on risk data from 17 indicators from Verisk Maplecroft. These country-specific indicators are linked to different areas where there is a risk of a negative impact on humans and the environment).

Today, there are 262 products labelled as a sustainable choice,

which is around 18% of the volume in the fixed assortment. Marcus Irhe expects the sales of products tagged with the new label to grow in the future.

“The data we use to confirm if a product can receive the sustainable choice label is based on certifications from third parties in different countries,” he said. “What we have done is composing a standard we would like to exist as a global certification.”

Systembolaget has created a database where they have mapped 5,000 producers (both grape growers and wine producers).

“Through this platform, the producers send us their information and certifications, and we verify that this is true,” Mr. Irhe said. “When we set up a tender, we often include a request for certifications that include social and economic aspects, like Viva or Equalitas in Italy. If you have one of these and a climate-smart packaging, you automatically qualify for the sustainable choice label.”

**Martin Wall** from the small Swedish wine importer Vinonista is very critical of the new sustainable choice labelling. He doesn’t un-

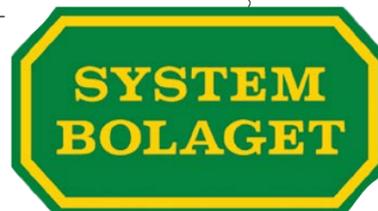
derstand why the Swedish monopoly has chosen to create a new standard when there are already so many certifications available worldwide.

“The monopolies in Norway and Finland have not adopted this new label,” he said. “Instead, they have indicated the different certifications for organic and sustainable practices on their website.” He then rhetorically asked, “Why can’t Sweden do the same?”

In the Scandinavian countries, especially younger consumers are exceptionally aware and concerned about the environment, creating a growing demand for sustainable and ethical wines. Consumers care about the origin of imported wine and production methods, distribution, and certifications. In Sweden, sales of organic wine increased by 3,3 % during 2021 and 25% of all wines sold in the approximately 400 Systembolaget monopoly stores during 2021 were certified organic. In Norway, the sales of organic products have doubled in the last ten years. In Finland, the state monopoly Alko has created a green choice, a label indicating the producer’s commitment to environmental efforts and sustainable development. Green Choice symbols include carbon neutral, certification

of sustainable development, organic, biodynamic, and environmentally responsible packaging. The label is based on European and International certifications. Alko, in Finland has also a well-functioning recycle system of plastic bottles with 90% of sold bottles returned in 2021 according to Alko’s annual report for 2021. Systembolaget in Sweden means that they have created their own labelling to make it easier for customers when they shop in stores and online.

“Of our customers, 8 out of 10 say they want to shop more sustainably,” Mr. Irhe of Systembolaget said. “At the same



Marcus Irhe



Martin Wall



time, they find it difficult and want clear and simple guidance. The ethic label was not completely understood, nor the different sustainable certifications.”

Martin Wall from Vinonista has, among some of his winegrowers, sent a complaint to the EU commission from both Sweden and Italy, claiming the new sustainable label is breaking the European law about the free market.

“The sustainable choice label is only valid for the fixed assortment at the monopoly and does not include the order or the temporary assortment,” Mr. Wall explained. “It means that only products that win a tender from the monopoly can get the tag, which is very difficult for smaller wineries and favouring the bigger producers.”

#### The Different Assortments at the Swedish Monopoly

Wines can be sold through different assortments at the Swedish monopoly, Systembolaget. The main one is the fixed assortment with wines that have gone through the tender process and won a listing in all or parts of the retail stores. These wines will stay in the assortment as long as they sell enough volume compared to its competitors in the same price and product segment. The temporary assortment volume means that the wines go through a tender process but the difference from the fixed assortment is smaller volumes and only one purchase. If the product sells well, it gets a re-purchase of the following vintage. Another possibility is the temporary exclusive assortment. These wines are more exclusive and have a higher price point. They are purchased directly by the buyers at Systembolaget and don't need to go through the tender process. It's a one-time purchase of a fixed volume. The last is the order assortment. These are wines registered by importers on Systembolaget's website. They are listed without any tasting notes and can be ordered and picked up in the consumer's closest retail store.

Marcus Ihre responds that Systembolaget is working to include the other assortments.

“According to our experts, there is no issue with unfair competition,” he said. “But again, we have the ambition to change this as soon as possible. For the moment, the sustainable choice is based on the data from our platform that, for now, only includes products from the fixed assortment. We will try to change this as soon as possible.”

Another issue is that smaller producers worldwide have difficulties affording and having enough time to take care of the paperwork involved in sustainable certifications.

“This is something we understand, but we had to draw the line somewhere, and we do not have an alternative,” he said. “We could not control smaller producers by ourselves, we do not have the knowledge or means to do this, and we would not be seen as reliable if we did it ourselves.”

#### Climate Smart Packaging

Many of the sustainable certifications do not consider the packaging, so this is controlled separately by the Swedish monopoly. The main issue for Systembolaget is to avoid heavy glass bottles, and the limit has been set to 420 g maximum for a bottle of still wine in a 750 ml bottle. Critical voices have been raised about this, because the standard for Systembolaget regards the production of the packaging and not the CO2 footprint from transporting the wine to Sweden.

“If my wine is bottled in a bottle weighing more than 420 g, but it is made in Sweden and transported by train,” said Martin Wall, who runs the small wine importer Vinonista in Sweden. “The impact on the environment is less than a bag-in-box from Argentina transported by plane.”

Marcus Ihre from Systembolaget argues that transportation is too complicated to control due to the many variables, therefore, they have not included it in their standards.

Another issue with the limit for the lightweight bottle is that many high-end wines for long ageing come in more heavy bottles. “Our specialists here at the monopoly have concluded that a 420 g bottle resists in time and works even for wines made for a long ageing,” Mr. Ihre said.

He states that this new label at Systembolaget has gained interest among customers and the different certification organs that now work to improve their standards.

The new project initiated by Systembolaget indeed has good intentions but gives a simple answer to a difficult question. The sustainable certifications are very different from each other and often vague compared to, for example, the EU certification for organic wine. Also, only allowing the sustainable choice label for wines that win a tender makes it very hard for smaller importers and producers - already struggling to reach the final customers in Sweden. It could also be discussed if the criteria for climate-smart packaging should only include the latter's production and not the CO2 footprint from transportation. Most tenders for the fixed assortment involve large volumes to low prices, and therefore regard wine made by large industrial producers. These big producers can easily adapt to the criteria that Systembolaget requests for the new sustainable choice label. It is much more difficult for small artisanal producers that are so important for the wine world from many points of view. Regarding the climate smart packaging, these are normally chosen for simple and cheap wines. For many high-end wines, a packaging different from glass bottles is not even permitted, like for example for a Barolo or Brunello di Montalcino. Is it socially responsible to direct customers to industrial, cheap, and simple wines?

As we have seen above, sustainability is complicated, and the question is if it is correct to simplify it in the way the Swedish monopoly has done.



## CANADIAN ALCOHOL MONOPOLIES

# Beyond ORGANIC WINES

*SAQ and LCBO, two of the largest Canadian monopolies, have long been working on policies to reduce the environmental impact of their products. On practical terms, they are pushing for recyclable packaging, light bottles and – with all the hurdles this entails –, bottling some foreign wines directly in the Country. As per labels, organic and sustainable wines are quite similar, but it is a monopoly's crucial advantage to have wines with their recognized label (SAQ has a total of 35)*

By GABRIEL RIEL-SALVATORE



While marketplaces have finally begun experiencing a gradual normalization with the post-vaccine period, the global pandemic has put to the forefront more than ever the volatility of the cost and availability of dry goods and the importance for better environmental practices and supply chain management for big wine retailers such as the Société des alcools du Québec (SAQ) and the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO), two of Canada's biggest provincial alcohol monopolies. Pushed by changing customers' expectations and shopping behaviour, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become a pillar of these organizations in recent years, and the reflection process is accelerating with a slew of measures including recognition of ecological labels (organic, fair trade, sustainable), lighter bottles, alternative formats, local bottling, as well as directives to prohibit over-packaging, that go well beyond strict cost efficiency.

Responsibility has become a leitmotif for the SAQ and the LCBO, which are both looking to improve their business model while applying social and environmental measures to provide an added customer experience.

“We talk about social responsibility, which translates into adopting measures that minimize our environmental impact in order to reduce the footprint of our activities on the

environment,” Christian Marier-Pilon, SAQ's director of social responsibility, explained. “We are particularly committed to the reduction and recovery of glass, the sustainable layout of our stores, the efficiency of our transport, the reduction of residual materials and responsible procurement. Thus, the SAQ wishes to contribute to the achievement of the Quebec government's objectives in terms of GHG reduction. We will also take advantage of our enviable position in the alcohol market to instill lasting and structuring changes among our suppliers.”

The same holds true at the LCBO, which enacted its Spirit of Sustainability program a few years ago to support the province's social and environmental needs and strive to create a more sustainable Ontario. “I believe we have a responsibility to use our influence to do good and give back to our province,” said George Soleas, LCBO's President and Chief Executive Officer on the company's web site. “Which is why I am so proud of our Spirit of Sustainability platform, and our ongoing commitments to support the well-being of our communities, minimize our environmental impacts, and lead positive change in the beverage alcohol industry.”

Creating responsible supply chains has also become a major preoccupation for Ontario's alcohol monopoly.

An LCBO spokesperson explained that setting environmentally conscious standards across their supply chains aimed at boosting efficien-

## ARE LEADING THE WAY TO SUSTAINABILITY

cies. For example, their Lightweight Glass Policy plays a key role in cutting our carbon emissions and waste. This policy has caught on around the world, with liquor control boards and wineries around the globe following our lead, they said.

**The Big Weight of Lightweight Glass**

To achieve their objectives, the SAQ and the LCBO essentially rely on eco-design containers and packaging that fit the local circular economy (i.e. recyclability) model.

"In fact, we believe that it is essential that the products we market be recyclable here in Canada," Mr. Marier-Pilon said. "We work with an exhaustive product selection grid that includes different analysis criteria which allow us to clearly outline discussions with suppliers while guiding us in the selection of products."

With more than 15,700 products on offer in a given year and 2.6 million cases shipped to points of sale in 2021, it is not surprising that the SAQ has initiated in 2012 a responsible procurement policy for its entire supply chain. This includes the requirement for lighter glass bottles when it comes to its regular and specialty products in continuous purchases of less than 20 CAD. Today 74% of their regular portfolio uses light glass bottles and this number is expected to grow as they aim to reach 100% by the end of 2023 by including sparkling wines and spirits. In the case of the LCBO, which shares a similar volume of business and products on offer, 91.4% of glass bottles sold in 2020-21 were compliant with its Lightweight Glass Policy, reducing waste and carbon emissions and supporting the well-being of its employees through the ergonomic benefits associated with reduced case weight handling, as stated in its 2020-21 Impact Report.

Since the past ten years, the LCBO has become a world leader in reducing beverage alcohol container waste. Their Lightweight Glass Bottle Program was launched in 2010 and focused initially on 750ml volume products. Building on the success of their program with traditional wine bottles, they expanded their efforts to include 1L and 1.5L glass bottles as well. In this way, lightweight glass clearly helped provide environmental benefits by reducing carbon emissions through more sustainable distribution and in turn managed to reduce the LCBO's annual waste by more than six million kilograms. While no product is disqualified for not following "good practices," several selection criteria of the SAQ's product evaluation grid are linked to sustainable development. The SAQ hence invites its suppliers to convert to lightweight glass in order to significantly reduce the environmental footprint of their bottles. This practice is now also applied to wines that are already marketed at the SAQ and not only to new releases. The adoption of more eco-responsible containers is also encouraged, including rPET and PET plastic containers, cans and aseptic containers (multi-layer containers such as Tetra Pak). The SAQ also asks that all superfluous elements be removed from the bottle in order to reduce packaging at source. Products with environmental value such as organic and biodynamic wines are identified by icons or other displays used as marketing tools to better guide the customers in their selection process.

**Organic or Eco-responsible?**

How to cope with so many existing certifications when one imports wines from all corners of the world?

"Our criteria for analyzing sustainable development certifications are based on the definition of 'sustainable vitiviculture', adopted by the International Organization of Vine and Wine (OIV) (2016)," said **Ines Castillo**, SAQ's Assistant Director, Marketing Strategy. "For organic, we accept the standards or agreements recognized by the Government of Canada under the Canada Organic Regime (there are 10 of them). Biodynamic certifications must also at least comply with it (we recognize 3 biodynamic certifications). Then, we



Christian Marier-Pilon



George Soleas



Ines Castillo

recognize around 35 sustainable development certifications (including SQNPI, VIVA, Equalitas and SOSTain Sicilia which are Italian) and 15 carbon neutral certifications. We do not favor any specific certifications and eco-responsible and organic certifications both get the same score in our product selection grid. We know that our customers are looking for organic or biodynamic wines and their requirements are what determine our needs."

At the LCBO, organic products are subject to the same Canadian Organic Standards certifications established by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). The liquor control board even benefits from a Quality Assurance team that verifies the label accuracy and validity of organic claims for the products they sourced.

No specific "eco-responsible" section has yet been planned by the SAQ, which counts over 400 stores across the province. On the other hand, products from organic or biodynamic agriculture are clearly identified in its shops and online platform. The SAQ hence encourages customers to discover these products within their own category or country in order for them to make more informed choices. An LCBO spokesperson revealed that the LCBO is actively improving its process to identify organic/sustainable products and is committed to amplifying the work of its partners through in-store and online promotions as well.

"For the moment, depending on the interest of our customers, only certified organic and biodynamic products are promoted in the network of branches of the SAQ," Ms. Castillo said. "These are also the ones that are found in greater numbers. Products that are certified "fair trade" are also identified on our transactional site SAQ.com. The certifications sought at the moment are those that are most recognized by our customers, namely organic and biodynamic."

The close to 3,000 eco-responsible products currently available at the SAQ, which account for about 20% of the total portfolio of the company, confirm there is indeed a demand for eco-responsible wines among its customers. Among those, close to 2100 fall in the category of organic products.

"Sales of organic and biodynamic wines have been growing steadily for several years now," Ms. Castillo explained. "Customers recognize and appreciate these certifications, which certainly influences product selection. As for the other certifications, they are less evocative for the customers, and don't seem to be generating such a strong interest."

An LCBO spokesperson confirmed organic products are becoming more popular in Ontario as well, with organic wines outpacing non-organic wines on a percentage growth basis in the past five years. When it comes to new potential suppliers or introducing new products in the listing, the SAQ always clearly communicates its needs to its partners. If an eco-certification is essential, this characteristic is clearly identified in the calls for tenders. Moreover, "even if it is not stated in the tender, an eco-certification can always prove helpful in the final decision-making between two competing products," Ms. Castillo admitted.

**Think Globally, Act Locally**

Local bottling is yet another option the LCBO and the SAQ have developed to curb their environmental footprint, notwithstanding the limits these wines entail in terms of origin and production specifications.

"If we are talking about local bottling, and not bulk wine offered in outlets, we believe that this is a category that could grow in the coming years for reasons of eco-responsibility," Ms. Castillo said. "Currently, we market approximately 80 wines bottled in Quebec."

Big producers such as Miguel Torres are already contemplating the idea of expanding their portfolio in Canada through this model, which paired with efforts to boost the sales of local wines, remains a helpful asset in the two state monopolies' sustainable toolkit.

"While each market responds to the needs of its customers, sometimes the products sought are the same for us and for the other provinces," she said. "But it also happens that our needs differ from other jurisdictions."

Both the SAQ and the LCBO continuously discuss best practices as they strive to generate more discussions and exchanges between monopolies. By aligning their strategies the two alcohol monopolies are both working to have the maximum impact on reducing the environmental footprint of their industry in their respective provinces. These coordinated efforts necessarily go through the adoption of better production practices and the use of eco-responsible containers and packaging. They also entail working closely together to ensure better consistency for suppliers, emphasizing mainly on the recyclable aspect of containers and the recovery of materials, particularly glass.



A store with the Canadian monopoly SAQ

# M-Rootstocks: a winning solution!

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Maurizio Bogoni (Tenute Ruffino)



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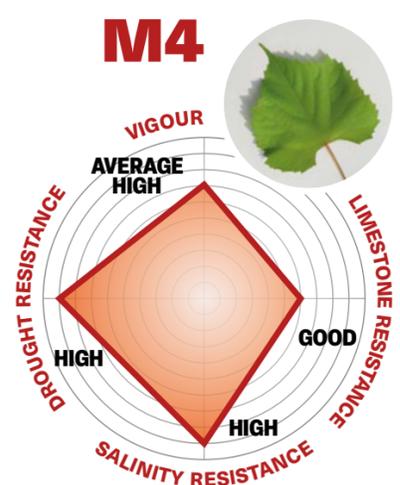
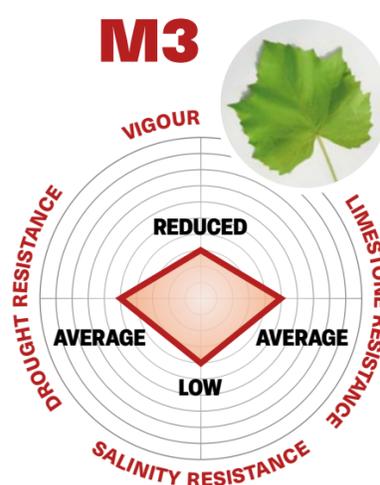
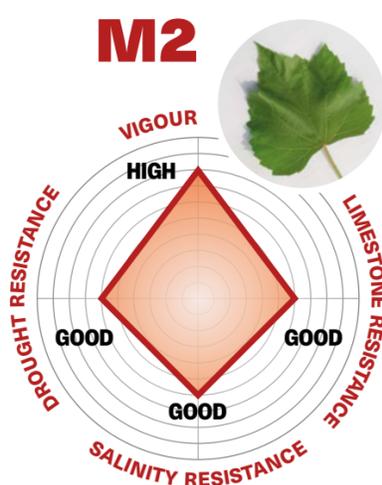
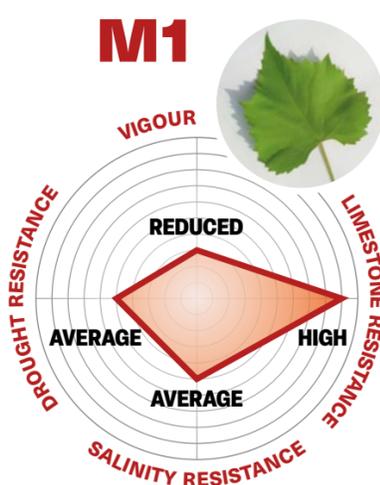
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AN OVERVIEW OF THE COUNTRY'S WINE MARKET



# The Beer Kingdom Is Longing For Wine

*With its 11.5 million inhabitants, Belgium seems from afar like a small wine market. Surely if you think that beer should be king in its kingdom. But nothing could be further from the truth. It ranks every year among the 10 most consuming countries per capita in the world and among the 10 biggest wine importers in value as in volume. Welcome to one of the most mature wine markets in the world*

By XAVIER BEGHIN

“**T**he Belgian wine market is mature, oversaturated and highly competitive. Wherever you are in the country, you have close to 100 % chances to find the wine you are looking for in a very short amount of time.”

Those words belong to **Christophe Heynen**, Master of Wine and owner of Gustoworld, a company specialized in the import of non-French wines and nestled near Liège. They reflect the reality of a very busy market but also a highly divided one. Yes, Belgium is a small country but with huge regional differences in terms of drinking trends and wine preferences. On that field, Flanders is closer to the Netherlands, Wallonia to France and Brussels, and its international institutions, a world melting pot. And even inside a region, you see a lot of differences.

“Before the differences of tastes, you do have the question of purchasing power, who sells only to specialty stores, Michelin star restaurants and regional wholesalers,” Mr. Heynen explained. “At this point, it’s higher in Flanders. For instance, in the northern part of the country, my ratio of sales/number of bottles is 15 to 20% higher than in Wallonia. And then, you should know that people don’t drink the same thing in Limburg than in the province of West-Flanders. And inside that same province, the

market will also differ from cities to cities. If you want to succeed in selling wines in Belgium, you have first to do a huge amount of analysis and prospective.”

**So Many Buyers**

Before going further, let’s put things in perspective first. At the last available census, Belgium counted 11.5 million inhabitants: 58% are located in Flanders (north), 10.5% in Brussels (center) and 31.5% in Wallonia (south). Following recent numbers released by GfK, 75% of the population buys wine (versus 55% in Germany, for example) at the middle rate of 13 times a year. In terms of consumption, the International Organization of Vine and Wine (OIV) ranked Belgium at the 19th place with a bit more than 250 million liters in 2021. More interesting is the same consumption per capita: Belgium then enters the world Top 10 with 26 liters, very close to the Netherlands (26.1) or Spain (26.2). Even if the production of wine in Belgium is rapidly rising - mostly bubbles and white wines - it’s still irrelevant in the market with a share just under 1%. In consequence, the country remains a heavy importer and ranked n°8 in the world in volume (almost 390 million liters) and in value (almost 1.3 billion euros) in 2021. In both cases, the OIV noted a heavy 30% increase from 2020. Well over the world market of +4% in volume and +16 % in value. Just a few examples of



Christophe Heynen



François Lambert

the importance of that export: n°5 for Champagne, n°2 for Cava, n°1 for Rhone wines, n°3 for Bordeaux wines, etc.

**Wine, Not Beer**

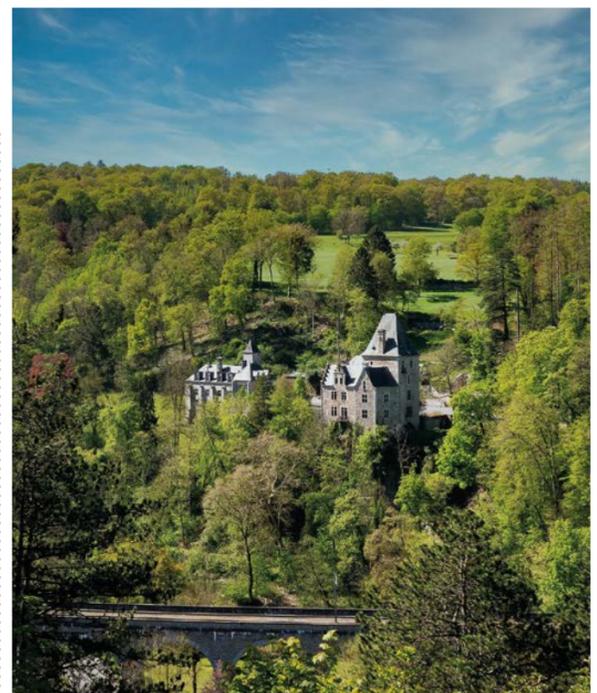
In the course of the last 20 years, the annual consumption of wine per capita rose sharply from 18 liters to 26 liters. At the same time, the same number for the beer drops even more sharply: 121 to 72 liters. A huge surprise considering Belgium’s rich brewing heritage and the overall presence of AB InBev, world beer leader and a Belgian company, in the country.

“In fact, it’s not surprising,” said **François Lambert**, consultant shopper by GfK Belgium. “At 20 years old, you decide lots of things. Among others, what you are going to eat or drink. And you will carry it all your life with nuance of course. Typically, at that age a new product attracts. That’s what happened with Cava



some 20 years ago. The Flemish youth got attracted and it started an extraordinary journey for the Spanish sparkling. To the point where Belgium became n°1 world importer. And it’s now passed to the next generation. This pattern explains why a brand must never stop to innovate and attract young people to stay relevant. The beer sector made that big mistake and recorded an entire generation loss. When you look at the beer market, there is a hole in the 35-55 demographic category. A hard lesson. To come back to the Cava, it’s interesting to note that there is very little transfer with Champagne. When the first one exploded, the market for the second did not fall at all. It’s just not the same demographics. In Belgium, the Champagne segment is still overly supported by the over 55 years old. Even if it’s growing in the under 30 segment.”

Like in many European countries, the wine market is dominated by the off-trade segment. In 2021, GfK published a very precise ventilation: 51.7 % for supermarkets, 6% for the hypermarkets, 9% for the proximity brands and 25.7% for the hard discounters. That left only a small 7.6% for the rest. This small percentage is more or less evenly divided between



the specialty stores (2.4), the online trade (2.3) and the shopping abroad (2.9).

**Border Shopping**

Why is shopping abroad so important in the Belgian market? First, you should know that 40% of the population live less than 30 minutes from the border. The Netherlands, Luxembourg and France have always been a shopping magnet due to different tax patterns and employer costs. For instance, a recent study in the Belgian quality pa-

per *Le Soir* showed that a caddie full of the same products cost 22% less in Carrefour France than in Carrefour Belgium. In these inflationist times, this is a huge difference that renders the Belgian off-trade sector very nervous. Second, in 2015, in order to finance other projects and under a health alibi, the Belgian government decided a strong increase of the excise duties: 30% for the wines and 40% for the alcohols. For example, those duties are now 0.75 euro for a liter of wine, just





Jean-Christophe Verschelde



Patricia Pereira Marques



Benoit Couderé



François Fasseaux



Stéphane Dardenne

under three for a liter of Champagne and around 30 euros for a liter of pure alcohol! Between 2015 and 2019, the 100% Belgian wine market has slowly declined in value and volume while the abroad part of the market was slowly rising and was way over 5%. The Belgians were not drinking less, they were just buying their wine and alcohol elsewhere. With Covid-19, the border restrictions and the closing of restaurants and bars, the Belgian market had an extraordinary surge in value and volume. From 143 million bottles of wine (sparkling not included) in 2019 to 171 million in 2020 and 168 million in 2021 according to GfK. In addition to border shopping, Belgians have a strong habit to come back from holidays and weekends with their trunk full of wines. In Champagne, a three hour-drive from Belgium at the most, that highly appreciated week-end shopping habit renders the export numbers to Belgium very sketchy and surely well under the real consumption. Same goes for Alsace.

"It's a habit very difficult to analyze," Mr. Lambert said. "But it is surely an interesting part of the wine trade that goes away. We think that between 7 and 10% of the in-house consumed wine and alcohol is bought abroad. For soft drinks, it's around 5%. It's a very substantial group of shoppers because one can imagine that you don't drive 30 minutes or more just to buy wine. I don't think one product has that power of persuasion. Except maybe the wine fairs in September in the French supermarkets when you can have tremendous deals. In the northern part of the country, the exercise can be less interesting than before. With the arrival of AH and Jumbo, no need to go to the Netherlands anymore to have the Dutch prices."

#### A Focused Leader

Colruyt has been dominating the distribution market for ages. As a consequence, the brand is Belgium's n°1 wine seller with a share around 30%. Colruyt sells around 70 million bottles. Addicted to data, it's also a good source to apprehend the different drinking habits. "Our sales distribution reflects perfectly the demographics," said Jean-Christophe Verschelde, consultant and wine instructor for Colruyt. "With a share of 60% for the north of the country. Overall, the wine sales follow the same pattern but they are exceptions. Cava and new world wines (South America, South-Africa, Aus-

tralia, etc.) are overly sold in Flanders (78-80% share). Bordeaux stays a favorite in the south and Brussels with a 51-49% split that goes well beyond the pure demographics. We sell around 7 million bottles of Cava. The Spanish sparkling, an extraordinary value for money, accounts for half of all our sparkling sales."

Colruyt has also a dedicated internet site called Grands Vins where the distributor sells premium wines and high-quality discoveries not available in its shops. It's also a source for Bordeaux Primeurs. Its share in Colruyt wine revenues is anecdotal (1%) but it's mainly a way to affirm the brand's wine expertise and attract clients that rarely go in its supermarkets. Few people know it but Colruyt has Europe's best sales revenues per m<sup>2</sup>. Since it operates relatively small supermarkets, their efficiency has to be very high.

"We are proud of that European leadership," Mr. Verschelde said. "We have developed digital tools internally that analyze precisely the shopping habits in every supermarket. We know exactly what sells where. The wine selection is adapted in consequence and follows precisely the clients tastes. Going back 20 years, it did not change much from what I was saying earlier. Bordeaux suffers a bit but mainly those around 7 or 8 euros per bottle and with a boring etiquette. We have a Bordeaux expertise going back to the grand-father of the current owner and it's still going strong. Right now, Italian wines are having a blast. Demand is high and the segment is always better than the overall sales: +16% in 2021, +20% in 2020 or +4% in 2019. The Belgian is a faithful customer but that Italian story proves that he's also a curious customer. Contrary to what I hear here and there, red wines are still attractive. That Italian push is 100% red."

#### France Above All

An Italian push? Let's have a look at Belgium's Top 10 suppliers in 2021: France (671 million euros), Italy (192), Spain (103), Netherlands (96), Germany (54), Portugal (45), USA (25), South-Africa (24), Chile (16) and Australia (14). Between July 1st 2021 and June 30th 2022, according to Nielsen, Belgians have bought 48.2% red wines, 34% white wines and 17.7% rosé wines. In each colour is France, the overwhelming leader with a 60% share for the reds, 50% for the white and 70% for the rosé. Overall, the still wines segment counts 144 million bottles for a value of nearly 900 million eu-

ros. In the sparkling segment, things are a bit different with a 34% share for Champagne, 33% for Cava and 15% for the Italian sparklings. Overall, that segment is good for 31 million bottles and a value of 323 million euros. It also means that Colruyt is selling more than 70% of all Cava bottles in Belgium. Going back five years, behind France, the Italian push is a reality: from a 7,1% share (in volume!) in 2017 to 13.7% in 2021. Spain is slowing down: from 18.9% to 15.4%. Portugal is also following a growing trend.

"When I started working in wine trade at the Portugal Embassy in Brussels in 2000, the market share was 0,2%," said Patricia Pereira Marques, owner of So Ar Wines, a wine importing business created in 2007. "Now that share is around 3%. What's also interesting is the middle export price. It's around 3.50 euros, higher than France, Spain or Italy. When I started exporting, the customer was more attracted to the white wines because he thought that all our reds were strong and with a high level of alcohol. Now it's clearly a red wine trade. The price range changed also over the years. In the beginning, they tried the wines because they were cheap. Now that they are aware of the quality of our wines, they clearly buy wines between 7 and 10 euros. The Portuguese wines have now found an interesting place in the biggest supermarket brands. And I assure you it's complicated to work with only one origin."

"That's very true," Mr. Heynen agreed. "I see that pattern also

with Licata Wines or The Buena Vida, the two excellent Italian and Spanish Wines Specialists. It's difficult to innovate with only one origin. In Belgium, if you want to succeed or stay relevant, you have to constantly reinvent your portfolio and propose new products. And also anticipate the market. For instance, this year, with the inflation crisis, I ordered more cheaper wines than usual. I also launched an offensive with German Sylvaners. Quality has gone up and it's an appellation that is mostly absent from specialty stores. It's also a way to meet the demand for cool climate wines and whites on the acidity and vivacity."

#### A Market for the Elderly?

When you look at the demographics, you see that the Belgian wine market is driven by those over 50 years old. They have a market share of 54% against 31% for the 35-49 and 15% for the under 30. That last segment tends to shrink a bit over the years. Does that mean that young people are less attracted to wine than their parents? Benoit Couderé, owner of Sante Wines, Belgian Best Sommelier in 2015 and former wine buyer for Carrefour Belgium, does not think so.

"Young people drink less but they drink better and more expensive wines," he said. "They are open to new things and are really focused on durability, bio and biodynamic wines. In that age span, I have the impression that the north and south of the country tends to have the same taste. Which was never the case before. In my tasting events, I often see kids challenging their parents to try new things. It's a really interesting pattern."

"I agree with Benoit," Mr. Heynen said. "You see that the interest of young people grows. Look at the huge success of wine bars in Brussels or Antwerp. They are overcrowded with young people. Maybe they are less attached to the food pairing but they are curious."

François Fasseaux runs a family business in Mons in Wallonia. La Maison des Vins Fins sells wine to bars and restaurants and to small specialty stores. Since 2011, he also runs a

boutique. That part of the business never stopped growing and is now good for 30% of its revenues.

"I see a lot of young people in my store," he said. "They ask a lot of questions and want to know everything about the winemaker, the domain, the way the wine is done, etc. Frankly, you have to stay alert on your knowledge to keep their business. The 20-30 crowd is passionate and sharp. They are less faithful than their parents because they tend to go to three or more stores to find new stuff. But they are prescribed for a lot of people. In my store, the middle price tag runs between 10 and 15 euros a bottle. I do see some preference changes. People now like acidity and suppleness in the reds. Freshness and digestibility also. For instance, Beaujolais has become a real favourite in my store."

Next to the in-house consumption, Belgians love to drink wine in restaurants. You rarely see a table without a bottle of wine. That trend has amplified with the end of the Covid restrictions.

"In Belgium, all social classes go to starred restaurants," said Stéphane Dardenne, sommelier à L'Air du Temps, a two Michelin Star restaurant near Namur. "It's really atypical in Europe. And yes, they do drink wine and don't really care about the price. They want an experience. In my restaurant, I see that the classics still work. Like a good white from Burgundy. But before, people asked for a buttery chardonnay, now they want one on the vivacity."

"I was a sommelier for eight years in De Karmeliet, a three-star restaurant in Bruges," said Mr. Couderé. "But also in Le Bistrot d'Eygalières in the south of France. I see a real difference between the behaviour of the French and the Belgians. We do love to spoil ourselves in restaurants. That's the way we were educated. And we don't mind ordering more expensive wines. When I was working for Carrefour between 2016 and 2021, I had access to Belgian and French Data. Middle price in Belgium was around 6 euros a bottle. It's 6,20 today. In France, it was 4,5. That says it all."



AN ANALYSIS OF THE BELGIAN MARKET: PRODUCTION, MINIMAL AND IMPORTS

# 2021, A Record Year For Consumption

Source: Wine Observatory of the Unione Italiana Vini

## Wine and Sparkling Wines, Imports in Belgium

Mln litres	2016-20 Avg.	2020	2021	21/20 Var.	Var. 21/5Y Avg.
Sparkling wines	40.6	39.3	71.6	82.1%	76.3%
Bottled wines	178.3	180.5	226.3	25.3%	27.0%
Bulk wines	69.6	60.9	57.1	-6.2%	-18.0%
Wines in 2-10 l. packaging	14.3	16.0	32.4	102.2%	127.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>299.9</b>	<b>296.8</b>	<b>387.4</b>	<b>30.5%</b>	<b>29.2%</b>

Mln euro	2016-20 Avg.	2020	2021	21/20 Var.	Var. 21/5Y Avg.
Sparkling wines	247.0	248.3	359.4	44.7%	45.5%
Bottled wines	616.7	656.7	829.3	26.3%	34.5%
Bulk wines	71.7	58.2	55.8	-4.2%	-22.2%
Wines in 2-10 l. packaging	22.9	25	37.9	51.5%	65.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>953.6</b>	<b>988.2</b>	<b>1,282.3</b>	<b>29.8%</b>	<b>34.5%</b>

Euro/litre	2016-20 Avg.	2020	2021	21/20 Var.	Var. 21/5Y Avg.
Sparkling wines	6.08	6.31	5.02	-20.5%	-17.4%
Bottled wines	3.46	3.64	3.66	0.7%	5.9%
Bulk wines	1.03	0.96	0.98	2.2%	-5.1%
Wines in 2-10 l. packaging	1.6	1.56	1.17	-25.1%	-27.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.18</b>	<b>3.33</b>	<b>3.31</b>	<b>-0.6%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>

## Bottled Wines, Supplier Countries (Mln Euros)

Country	2016-20 Avg.	2020	2021	21/20 Var.	Var. 21/5Y Avg.
France	334.1	338	440.7	30.4%	31.9%
Italy	63.1	84.2	114.5	36.0%	81.5%
Netherlands	41.1	69.9	83.4	19.4%	102.7%
Portugal	39.6	41.0	44.5	8.5%	12.3%
Spain	34.5	34.4	39.4	14.6%	14.3%
Germany	26.2	24.5	26.9	9.9%	2.6%
Sudafrica	13.9	12.6	13.7	8.6%	-1.2%
Cile	20.1	13.5	12.6	-6.6%	-37.4%
Usa	9.0	8.3	10.4	25.8%	16.0%
Australia	5.0	4.3	7.4	72.9%	50.1%
Argentina	6.9	5.3	6.4	20.7%	-7.6%
Luxemburg	4.5	4.7	4.7	-0.6%	3.6%
UK	6.6	4.4	0.7	-83.1%	-88.8%
Others	12.2	11.8	24.0	103.8%	96.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>616.7</b>	<b>656.7</b>	<b>829.3</b>	<b>26.3%</b>	<b>34.5%</b>

## Sparkling Wines, Supplier Countries (Mln €)

Country	2016-20 Avg.	2020	2021	Var. 21/20	Var. 21/5Y Avg.
France	147.5	153	200.4	30.9%	35.9%
Italy	24.7	29.8	76.2	156.2%	208.2%
Spain	57.1	48.4	58.3	20.4%	2.1%
Germany	4.7	5.0	7.8	55.1%	67.1%
Others	13.0	12.1	16.6	37.9%	27.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>247.0</b>	<b>248.3</b>	<b>359.4</b>	<b>44.7%</b>	<b>45.5%</b>

## Bulk Wines, Supplier Countries (Mln €)

Country	2016-20 Avg.	2020	2021	21/20 Avg.	Var. 21/5Y Avg.
USA	8.8	12.1	14.1	16.1%	59.2%
France	23	11.1	12.7	14.2%	-44.8%
South Africa	6.4	8.1	7.4	-7.9%	16.0%
Australia	4.5	5.7	6.0	5.5%	32.5%
Spain	5.9	3.9	4.0	4.0%	-31.9%
Germany	10.1	7.7	3.5	-54.9%	-65.6%
Chile	3.9	4.3	3.1	-27.8%	-20.7%
Italy	1.4	1.0	1.4	37.5%	-2.5%
Portugal	0.8	0.9	0.7	-23.6%	-8.8%
Netherlands	2.4	0.5	0.6	21.7%	-72.8%
Others	4.3	2.8	2.2	-22.0%	-48.7%
<b>Totale</b>	<b>71.7</b>	<b>58.2</b>	<b>55.8</b>	<b>-4.2%</b>	<b>-22.2%</b>

## Export of Italian Wines in Belgium (,000 hectolitre)

	2020	2021	21/20 Var.
Total Amount, including:	505	630	24.8%
Sparkling wines, including:	141.0	239.6	70.0%
Prosecco	98.2	196.3	99.9%
Still vottled wines, including:	328	347.7	6.0%
Dop	160.5	170.3	6.1%
Igp	151.8	162.4	7.0%
Wines in 2-10 litre packaging	4.4	5.0	15.3%
Bulk wines	23.0	16.9	-26.7%

Overall consumption went up 29% over the previous five years' average. French production is still rewarded, followed at a great distance by Italy and Spain. Sparkling wines are growing well, still wines are stable while bulk wines are declining, completely minoritarian the large formats (bag-in-box)

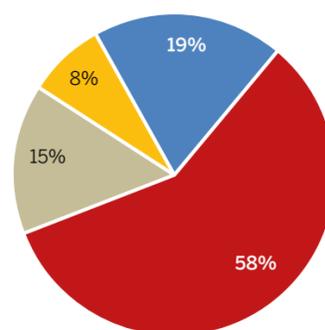
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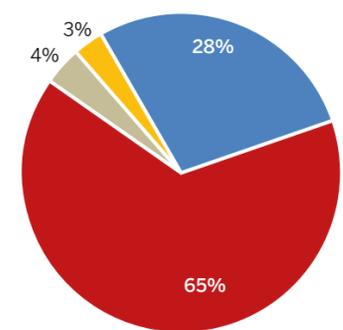
With rising temperatures and a greater sun exposure than in the past, two phenomena related to climate change, Belgium has significantly improved the quality of its wines in recent years, while also strengthening its production capacity, still very modest. In 2012 wine production in the country, whose image is traditionally linked to beer, stood at just under 230,000 litres. In 2020, it reached 1.85 million, according to data processed by ICE, coming from a vineyard area of just under 600 hectares, which has increased almost five times in just a decade. A production mainly consisting of white wines, which although in strong expansion remains limited if compared to the size of the Belgian market, almost totally dependent on imports and being able to cover just 5% of domestic consumption. In 2021, official statistics certify a flow of purchases from abroad, of wines and sparkling wines, of more than 387 million litres, 29% higher than the average of the five-year period 2016-2020, but also growing strongly compared to 2020 (+30%). By analysing the historical series from the beginning of the millennium, that of 2021 is in absolute the highest volume, 70 million litres higher than the previous record of 2003. Monetary figures also contribute to make the 12 months the highest ever, with the value of the country's wine imports at almost 1.3 billion of Euros, corresponding to an increase of 35% over the five-year average and about 30% year-on-year. Considering the different categories, the statistical evidence shows a picture of strong growth for almost all types of wine, with the exception of bulk wines. Changes in the composition of imported products over the last ten years have strengthened the incidence of sparkling wines, now standing at 28%, but still far away from the peaks of 37% reached in 2007-2008. There has been a marginal growth of the market share of bottled wines, which accounts for just under 65% of the value of Belgian wine imports, while the incidence of bulk wines has fallen significantly, now ac-

counting for just over 4% of imports, compared to 11% in 2015-2016. It should be noted that wines in packages between two and ten litres, which include the bag-in-box category, still represent modest values, but have more significant numbers in terms of volume. Both variables, monetary and quantitative, show strong growth compared to the five-year average, with even triple-digit increases for real flows and over 65% in currency. In relation to provenance, geographical proximity favours French wineries, which account for more than half of Belgian imports of bottled wines and 55% when considering the sparkling wine category. Italy is second, but quite at a distance, with a deal flow equal to about a quarter of that the French for bottled wines and about a third for sparkling wines, while Spain is third with Cava, but only fifth in the bottled segment, also preceded by the Netherlands, the third supplier (these are essentially triangulation operations), and Portugal. On the bulk circuit, a greater participation of the New World producers is recorded, with US wines in the lead, again in terms of value, and the French only second, although at a short distance. The gap with wines coming from South Africa, Australia and Spain is more significant. Italy is only eighth in the list of suppliers, also preceded by Germany and Chile. The most expensive foreign products remain sparkling wines, due to the incidence of Champagne, with an average import price in 2021 of more than five euro per litre, but in any case with a decrease of 17% when compared to the five-year historical average and at more than 20% if compared to 2020 numbers. On the other hand, the 3.66 euros/litre paid for imported bottled wines give back only a fractional increase on an annual basis (+0.7%), but an increase of about 6% on the period 2016-2020. For bulk wines, purchased at an average of 0.98 euros/litre, prices lost more than 5% compared to the five-year average, while wines in containers over two litres suffered a double-digit depreciation, of almost 30%, dropping to 1.17 euros.

Volume Quotas by Type 2021



Value Quotas per Type in 2021



● Sparkling Wines ● Bottled Wines ● Bulk Wines ● Wines in 2-10 litre packaging



Corkers for natural, agglomerated and synthetic corks.  
From 1.000 bph up to 40.000 bph



Crowners for steel and aluminium crown corks.  
From 1.000 bph up to 60.000 bph



T-corks, Bidoule Ring Pull Corks  
ROPP, aluminium caps  
Pressure plastic caps  
Glass closures



Cappers for ROPP aluminium caps.  
From 1.000 bph up to 72.000 bph



For 40 years, the widest range of capping machines for natural, agglomerated and synthetic corks, ROPP aluminium caps and crown corks for wine, spirits, beer and edible oil.  
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# All The Winners Of The Innovation Challenge “Lucio Mastroberardino” 2022 Edition



## GREEN TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION AWARD



### ENOFLEX R-derma - ®PET+

The new PET material contains a higher percentage (from 20 to 35 %) of recycled plastic. This is a praiseworthy opportunity contributing to reduction of waste, with the view of a circular economy and reduced impact on the environment.

### TMCI PADOVAN BioM COORe

The proposed technology for recovering the CO<sub>2</sub> produced by alcoholic fermentation, by feeding it into a photosynthetic process with the production of algal biomass, represents an important contribution to the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions into the atmosphere, by allocating it to a circular economy process, with productions destined to support other food chains.



*A total of 13 awards have been assigned in the 2022 edition of the “Lucio Mastroberardino” Innovation Challenge, the traditional competition, organised by Unione Italiana Vini, which enhances and rewards the best product or process innovations presented by exhibiting companies during the Sime.*

*Here, in detail, are the top prizes, two “Green Innovation Awards,” four “Technology Innovation Awards” and followed by seven “New Technology Awards.” The Green Awards are new for this edition and identify the most effective and promising solutions in the fields of climate mitigation, circular economy or water and energy consumption*



## TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION AWARD

### AMORIM CORK ITALIA NATURITY® TECHNOLOGY FOR SINGLE PIECE NATURAL CORK STOPPERS

The ‘Naturity’ technology, based on vacuum sealed technical desorption, actually represents substantial progress and innovation in the decontamination of cork stoppers. Applied to large quantities of a product, it can guarantee the user high safety standards.

### DELLA TOFFOLA SAFI

The new series of cross-flow filters, equipped with silicon carbide ceramic membranes and combined with a management system based on artificial intelligence, represents a technological innovation since it allows significant savings in energy, water and washing chemicals.

### DIEMME ENOLOGIA DIGITAL JUICE SYSTEM

A pressing control system that can also be applied to existing machines, and allows the pressing cycles to be adjusted according to the chemical and physical characteristics of the musts, detected by a series of sensors.

This is a real innovation because it provides information on the composition of the must in real time, helping the selection and destination of the product.

### GAI MACCHINE IMBOTTIGLIATRICI ELECTROPNEUMATIC HYBRID FILLING VALVE

The valve proposed by GAI is the result of a new project that allows the operator flexibility, enabling the use of just one type of equipment, even for fillings that currently require different machines.



## NEW TECHNOLOGY AWARD

### GRUPPO BERTOLASO S.C.S. - THE SMART CORKING SYSTEM

Bertolaso proposes a new technology for the control of corking based on measurements of stress and temperature at the level of the clamps. The application is of considerable interest both for monitoring the quality of corking and in terms of evaluating the shelf life of wine after corking.

### BUCHER VASLIN FLAVY FGC: NEW LOW CARBON CROSSFLOW HIGH CAPACITY FILTER

The Flavy FGC crossflow filtration technique presents two new interesting technological aspects: the concrete possibility of reducing energy consumption and a concentration module of lees that contributes to recovering high percentages of wine and allows to separate lees without discharging them into the wastewater.

### BUCHER VASLIN BUCHER XPRT IT PROCESS EXTRAFLOW

The X Pert IT pressing system incorporates design modifications in the load of crushed grapes and in the drainage channels that represent a new technology, since they allow an improvement in the must flow and a significant reduction in pressing time.

DIEMME ENOLOGIA  
**LESSLEES FILTER CHANNELS**  
This is a new technology comprising different materials in the construction of the internal drains of horizontal presses. The design is advanced and represents a significant improvement in pressing, allowing cleaner musts that require less subsequent processing.

### PARSEC QUADR@ OENOLOGICAL SOFTWARE

Parsec presents advanced software for the traceability and management of winemaking processes. The project is an alternative proposal to existing cellar management software and represents a new advanced computer technology.

PARSEC  
**SMARTTRACE SYSTEM**  
Advanced equipment for monitoring the handling of liquids and the simultaneous monitoring of analytical parameters. It facilitates cellar work and contributes to cellar management traceability, thus representing a promising new technology.

### SIPREM INTERNATIONAL EXPLOITATION OF FERMENTATION GAS IN PRESSING

This proposes a simple technology for recovering the carbonic gas produced by alcoholic fermentation, which is subsequently used to insert the presses for exhausting the marc. By taking advantage of the vessels already available in the winery for gas storage, it is quite simple to install and can also be exploited for other filling uses.

## Zenith EVO



Feeding, dispensing and application of sparkling wines capsules with double centring system: orientation of the bottle (embossed logo on glass, screen print, sleeve and glass mould seaming) and capsule, both with cameras managed by SNIPER vision system.

## Poker EVO



Feeding, dispensing and application of tin and poly laminate capsules (spinning heads) and PVC/PET ones (thermo-shrinking heads).



## Record EVO PLUS



Feeding, dispensing and application of wirehoods.



Wirehooder featuring bottle orientation (embossed logo on glass or glass mould seaming) prior the application of wirehoods achieving the desired position of the opening eyelet (via SNIPER vision system).

## EVO Series

- AISI 304 stainless steel frame with operation panels in transparent polycarbonate and internal lightning managed by door opening.
- Roof design frame with sloped working surface and controlled drainages (wirehooders).
- Bottle and capsule vision and centring via SNIPER platform.
- Vision peripheral devices: cameras, photocells (colour and UV spots), optical fibres and lasers.
- Electronical axes - brushless motorization.
- 2 high-performance HMI touch screen control panels on movable support.
- Automated, tool-free changeovers with stored settings accessible via the memorized working recipes.
- AISI 304 stainless steel guarding with mirror polished surface and full-height tempered glass doors.



Based on the most advanced electronical and digital componentry, the **SNIPER** platform developed by **R&G** gathers the vision systems performing the detections and recognitions essential to implement orientation, alignment and centring. The system features a dedicated easy and flexible interface to create and maintain the working recipes, being designed to manage all the available peripheral devices necessary to achieve the targeted functions.



# AN EXTRAORDINARY 2021 That Wiped Out The Consequences of Covid

*If during the pandemic global trade lost 10% of its value, last year bubbles got it all back with interest, reaching a record of USD 8.6 billion. Champagne and Prosecco were the stars that have sent the desire for revenge spending soaring around the world*

By **CARLO FLAMINI**  
Wine Observatory - Unione Italiana Vini

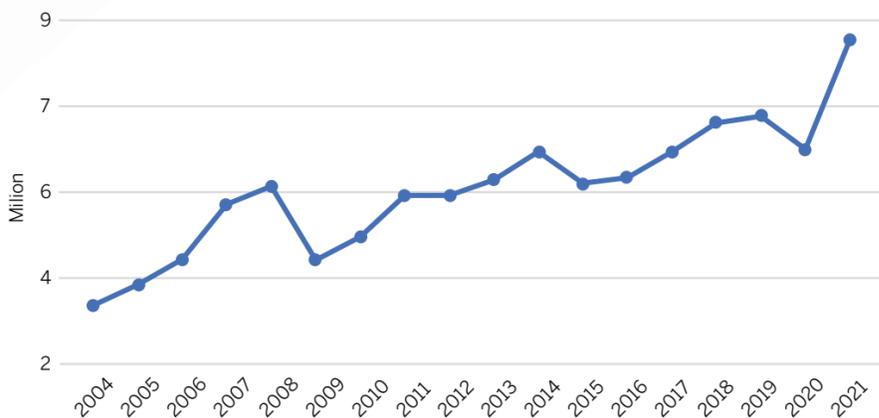
After the year 2020 ravaged by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, which saw the value of world imports collapsing by 10%, 2021 took it all back with interest, setting an all-time record, which translated into dollars means 8.6 billion, with a positive variation on 2020 (+35%) and 2019 (-22%). 2021 was the year of revenge spending, and sparkling wines - Champagne in the first place, but also Prosecco as we shall see in detail - perfectly embodied people's desire for a return to normality. In the long term, the positive balance of five years led to a growth in 2016/21 doubled if compared to the previous five years, those that had seen the explosion in consumption of this type of product. The growth obviously involved all countries, from the big importers to the small and very small ones, with very few negative signs. The first three by value - USA, UK and Japan, 41% share of the total - grew

together by 36%, while the second ten (which include among others Germany, Belgium, Singapore, Russia, accounted for another 41%) led to an increase of 34%, up to US\$ 3.5 billion. Similar growth was recorded by the other countries, 90 all together, which accounted for the remaining 18% (1.6 billion). Worth noticing is the role of re-exporter chosen over the last year by Belgium, which after Brexit is acting as a logistical base especially for Prosecco, but also for Champagne, redirected to London after customs clearance. In terms of volume, a growth of more than 25% for the top ten importers was registered, with the world total at +24%, and a total of 10.5 million hectoliters being circulated. The volume obviously contains 'duplicates', i.e. goods - as in the case of Belgium - that have been shipped from one country and re-exported, so in fact can be accounted for twice. It was precisely Belgium, thanks to Prosecco's triangulations, that saw a leap in imported volumes of 82%, bringing it close to Ger-

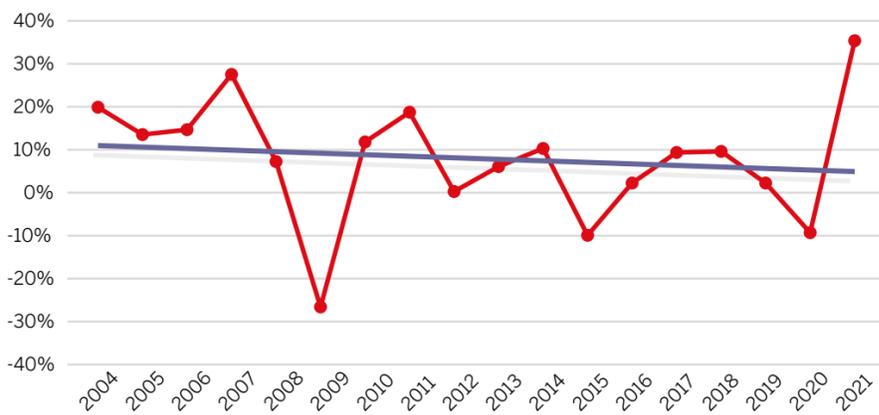
many, over 700,000 hectoliters in volume, of which 150,000 re-exported to London (see the article on exports on page 35). Leading in terms of volumes absorbed is the USA (19%), followed by the UK (16%) and Germany (+7%). The only country among the big ones to register volume declines was Sweden (-6%).

**Performance By Type**  
As for the details of types of sparkling wine (graph 7), in 2021 Prosecco, with 3.6 million hectoliters of product transported around the world, totalized more than a third of the global volume, followed by Cava (13%) and Champagne (12%). Another 9% share was accounted for by Italian sparkling wine, to which a 4% share of Asti Spumante must be added, giving an Italian total of just under 50%. The impact of Prosecco (graph 8) is obviously overwhelming in the UK (two thirds of imports, including in the calculation the share carried by Belgium) and predominant in the USA (47% of the total, two points more than in 2020), while the

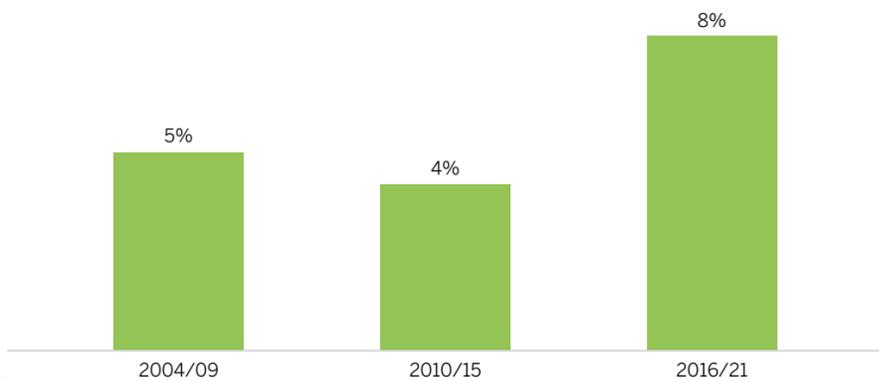
1. Global Imports of Sparkling Wines (bln US\$)



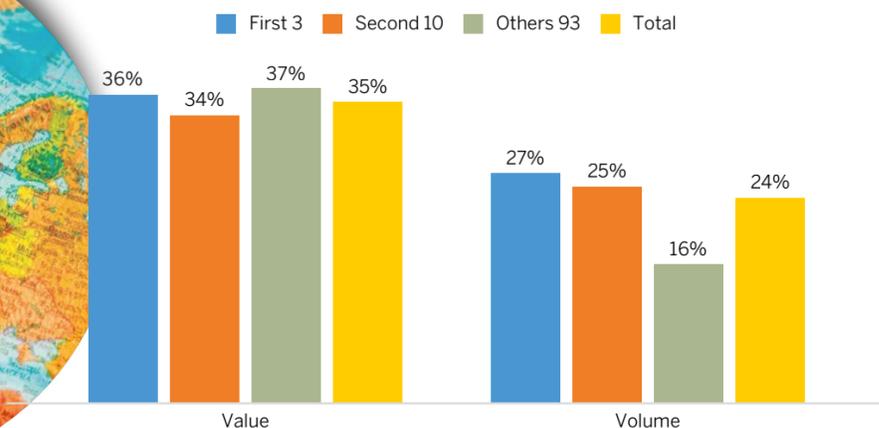
2. Yearly Value Variations



3. 5-year CAGR



4. Global Imports, 2021 on 2020

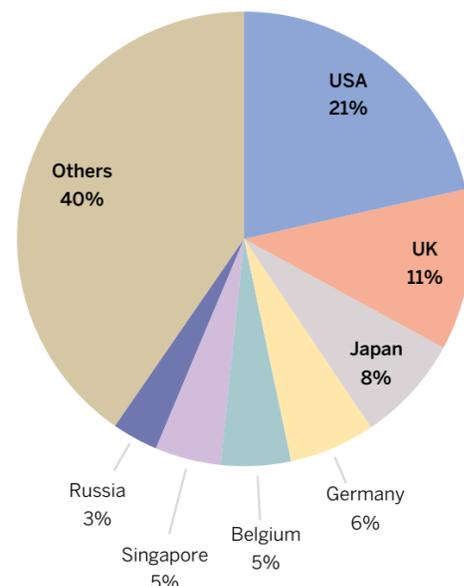


In these pages are some of the data for the main sparkling wine import and export countries, analysed and commented by the Wine Observatory of the Unione Italiana Vini. The full data, including all the details on the wine types, are available on [www.wine-observatory.com](http://www.wine-observatory.com)

VALUE: Sparkling wine imports by country

Importers	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	% Chg.	% Share
World	6,298,401	6,887,759	7,024,263	6,352,529	8,583,837	35%	100%
USA	1,210,145	1,306,185	1,379,944	1,257,363	1,842,959	47%	21%
UK	805,963	842,560	848,715	759,276	985,216	30%	11%
Japan	541,842	614,557	693,269	542,661	652,496	20%	8%
Germany	473,712	472,876	441,515	428,711	526,029	23%	6%
Belgium	264,914	308,142	298,369	282,760	426,699	51%	5%
Singapore	346,738	363,299	342,537	262,222	403,019	54%	5%
Russia	160,562	188,459	215,705	220,554	281,180	27%	3%
Australia	213,076	221,547	205,964	189,409	262,579	39%	3%
Italy	189,372	217,125	217,646	192,503	261,780	36%	3%
Switzerland	197,881	210,542	207,866	201,336	255,167	27%	3%
Canada	157,724	171,815	171,695	162,594	231,371	42%	3%
Netherlands	107,959	128,753	141,173	151,496	218,958	45%	3%
Sweden	134,122	166,151	162,790	173,558	190,109	10%	2%
Spain	110,713	127,365	123,839	79,958	139,511	74%	2%
Others	1,383,678	1,548,383	1,573,236	1,448,128	1,906,764	32%	22%

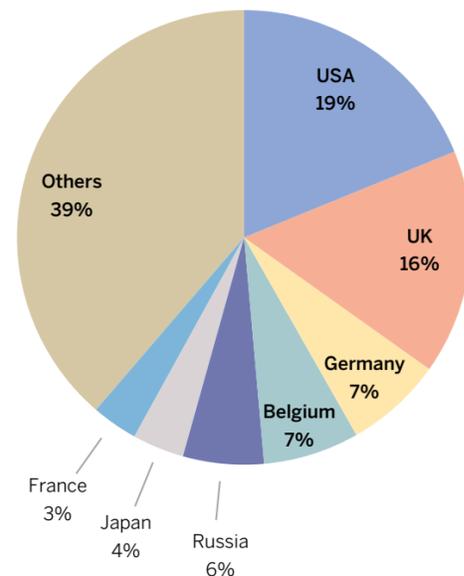
5. Global Imports - value % quota



VOLUME: Sparkling wine imports by country

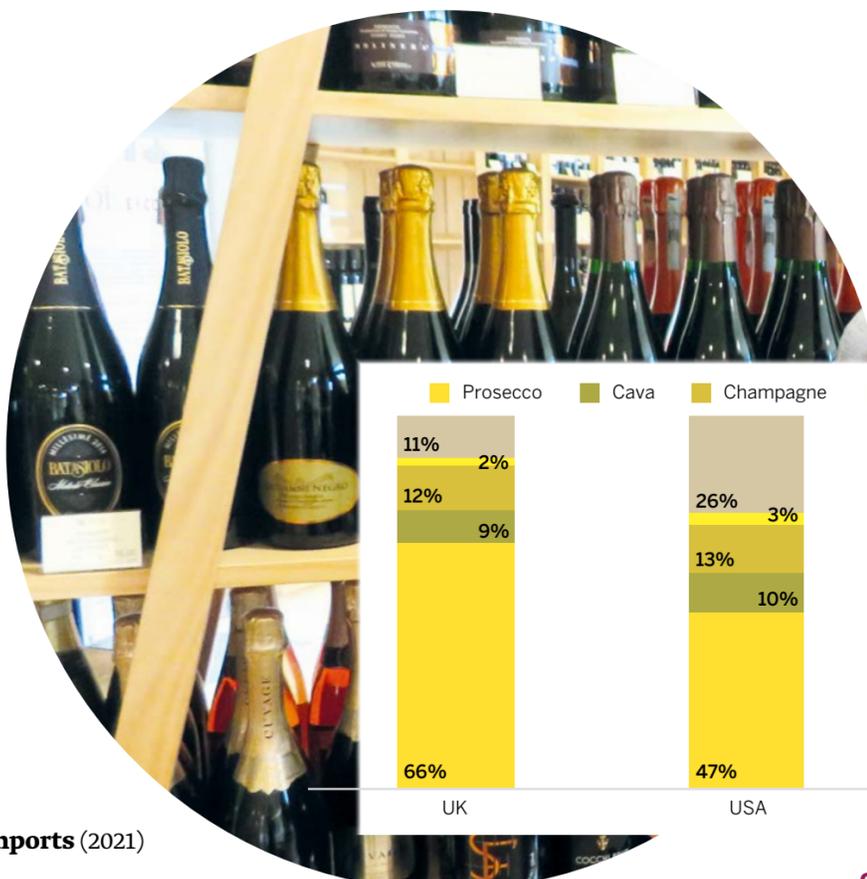
Importers	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	% Chg.	% Share
World	809,907	832,172	885,961	845,819	1,048,580	24%	100%
USA	126,239	136,213	153,776	143,434	197,486	38%	19%
UK	142,151	141,410	143,272	140,097	167,735	20%	16%
Germany	71,627	65,780	62,449	61,736	72,693	18%	7%
Belgium	39,273	41,164	46,000	39,333	71,625	82%	7%
Russia	33,268	37,436	44,959	46,870	60,276	29%	6%
Japan	36,371	36,120	43,817	35,436	38,601	9%	4%
France	27,537	26,208	28,888	27,916	34,337	23%	3%
Sweden	20,090	23,824	25,571	27,876	26,261	-6%	3%
Netherlands	11,858	14,531	19,917	18,626	25,421	36%	2%
Latvia	11,736	9,341	10,284	22,297	25,208	13%	2%
Switzerland	19,399	19,650	20,385	20,852	23,552	13%	2%
Canada	16,638	17,862	18,309	17,647	21,175	20%	2%
Australia	16,585	18,190	18,205	16,856	19,868	18%	2%
Austria	16,264	16,209	17,222	16,799	19,392	15%	2%
Lithuania	10,492	13,364	14,233	14,847	18,739	26%	2%
Poland	7,110	8,168	11,546	12,930	16,498	28%	2%
Others	203,269	206,702	207,128	182,267	209,713	15%	20%

6. Global Imports - volume % quota

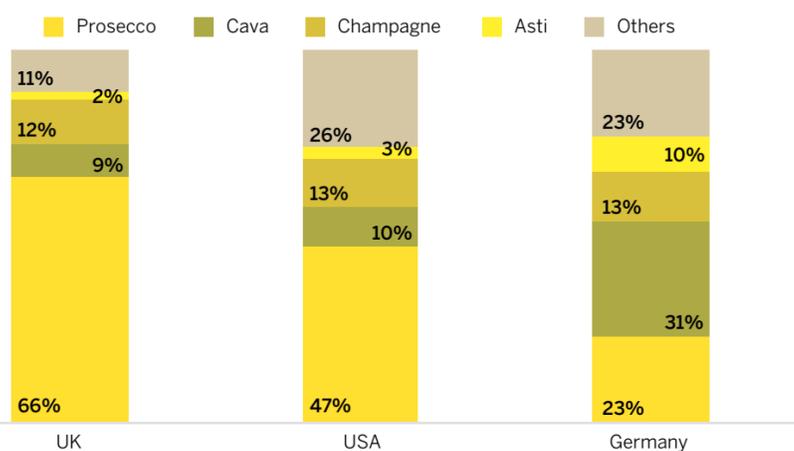


◆ shares in Germany, where Cava wins, are slimmer (31% vs. 23%, although the weight of Prosecco would rise if we were to include the fizzy type). In the second category markets (graph 9), Belgium is obviously a special case: compared to last year, when Cava was predominant (43%), due to the three corner approach seen above, the import accounts are unbalanced in favour of Prosecco, rising to 27%, decreasing the Spanish share to 29%. Assuming that Italian sparkling wines are mostly only in transit, real consumption continues to see a prevalence of the Spanish product. In Japan there is a net predominance of Cava and Champagne (24% and 13%, against a poor 4% for Prosecco), while in Russia, the bubbles from Veneto-Friuli

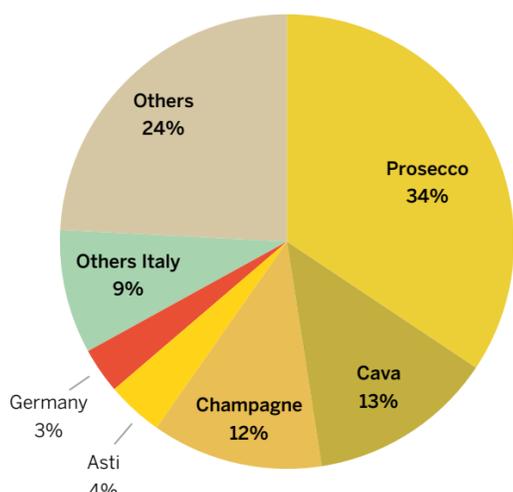
have overtaken Asti by a considerable margin (18% against 11% share), at least considering direct export and the fact that lots of Asti is triangulated by the Baltic countries. On the French, Swedish and Swiss markets (graph 10), the growth of Prosecco-branded bubbles has allowed Prosecco to gain significant shares, with France in particular becoming a true leader of the sector for Prosecco (63% share of total imports). A significant growth took place also in remote Australia, where Champagne was overtaken in volume terms (33% vs. 27%), and in Canada, with a 38% share of the total, 3 points up in 2021. The situation is less brilliant in Holland, where the predominance of Cava is still far from being questioned (graph 11).



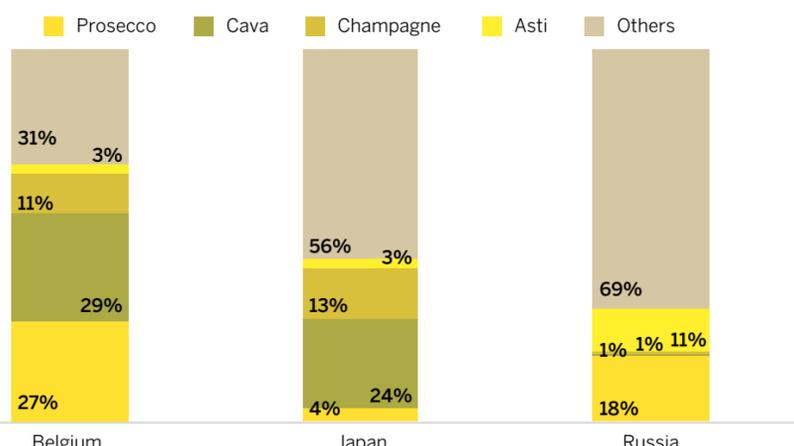
8. UK - USA - Germany



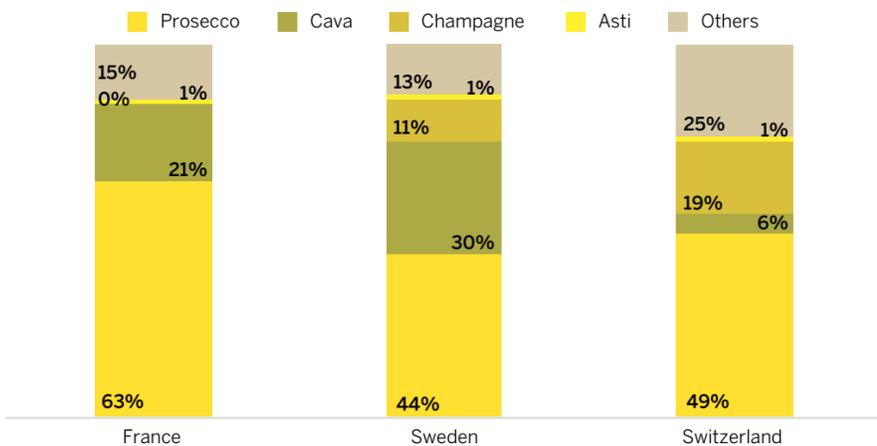
7. Volume Share on Global, Total Imports (2021)



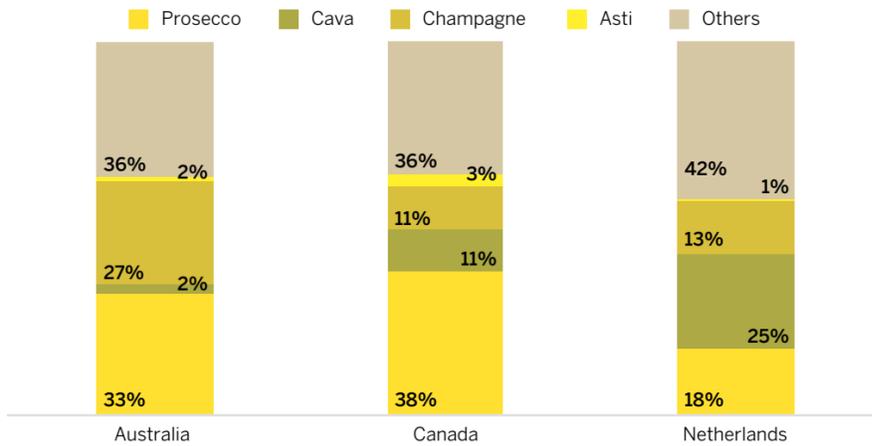
9. Belgium - Japan - Russia



10. France - Sweden - Switzerland



11. Australia - Canada - Netherlands



# The Triangulators' Weight Is Growing

## EXPORT



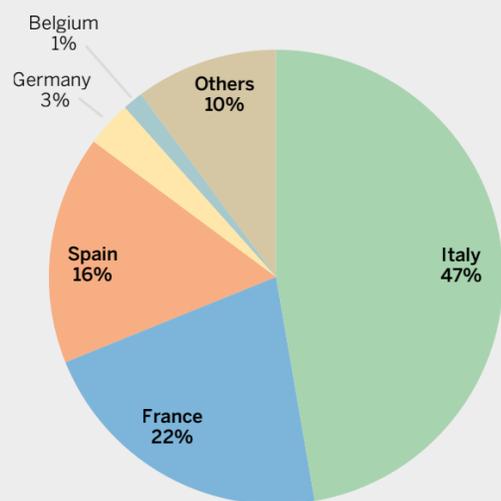
**A**round sixty countries are exporting sparkling wine, with a volume gone up to 19% in 2021, to 10.5 million hectolitres and an equivalent of USD 8.7 billion, 38% better than 2020. If considering volume, Italy's weight is overwhelming - almost half of the total, just below 5 million hectolitres - on the side of value, it is France that holds the scepter, with USD 4.6 billion and 53% of the global sales volume, with Italy dropping to 25%, followed by Spain at 6%. If these numbers are well known to those who produce and sell bubbles, perhaps not many know that about 7% of the volume of sparkling wine is to be re-export-

ed, which means 690,000 hectolitres of product, for a counter-value of 861 million of dollars, equivalent to 10% of the total exported in 2021. Singapore is leading, in terms of value (USD 421 million, 5% of total world exports). In terms of volume, it has an 84% ratio between exports and imports, made mainly from reselling Champagne in half of Asia. The Netherlands is following (USD 132 million and a 33% ratio between export and import) and then Belgium, which in 2021 saw the greatest increase in both imports (+82%) and especially re-exports, which more than doubled, with still a small ratio (21%), but a value of re-exported goods

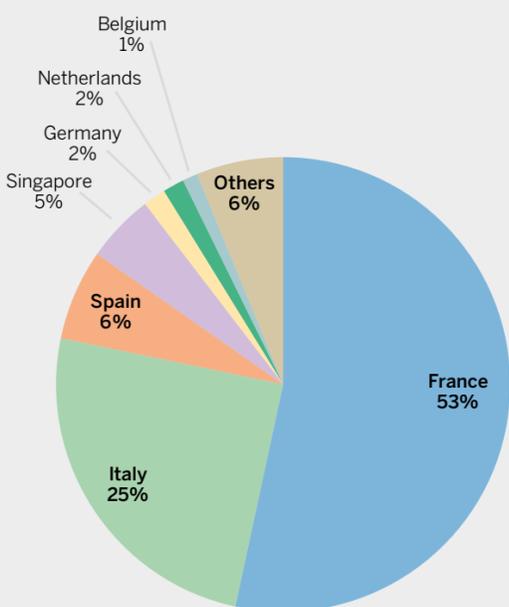
(mainly Prosecco to the UK) of USD 95 million, 1% of total re-exports. In the ranking, in addition to Denmark, which triangulates with the Scandinavian neighbours, we find the countries that are at the border with the Russian market, such as the Baltics, in particular Lithuania, with an export/import ratio of 81%, but also Belarus and Poland, another country that - especially after the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian war - is seeing a sharp increase in both import and export traffic. The total imported from the 11 countries examined is worth just under two million hectolitres, with a re-export volume of around 36%.

*The Netherlands, Singapore and the Baltic States are followed by Belgium and Poland: the Belgians re-exports Prosecco to London, the Polish exports to Moscow- and the war has not stopped trade*

Global Exports - volume % quota



Global Exports - value % quota



VALUE: Sparkling wine exports by country

Exporters	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	% Chg.	% Share
World	6,636,300	7,311,835	7,240,310	6,287,307	8,661,666	38%	100%
France	3,541,013	3,766,025	3,834,516	3,205,525	4,623,299	44%	53%
Italy	1,538,401	1,780,915	1,759,025	1,682,123	2,155,245	28%	25%
Spain	518,025	595,073	510,006	462,742	559,194	21%	6%
Singapore	370,004	388,001	403,369	272,185	421,903	55%	5%
Germany	133,716	150,512	133,370	99,778	139,533	40%	2%
Netherlands	65,424	103,042	92,595	91,555	132,199	44%	2%
Belgium	34,524	45,653	49,853	47,629	94,378	98%	1%
Australia	43,731	43,189	43,726	38,804	63,539	64%	1%
Others	391,462	439,425	413,850	386,966	472,376	22%	5%

VOLUME: Sparkling wine exports by country

Exporters	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	% Chg.	% Share
World	865,989	900,179	927,223	876,538	1,046,916	19%	100%
Italy	366,187	385,535	417,479	408,070	494,899	21%	47%
France	183,680	187,771	195,255	170,632	226,190	33%	22%
Spain	181,908	185,614	182,304	174,786	170,423	-2%	16%
Germany	31,037	31,854	30,934	27,369	34,024	24%	3%
Belgium	2,565	3,759	4,904	5,744	15,256	166%	1%
Lithuania	8,465	11,273	11,434	11,802	15,196	29%	1%
Australia	10,263	9,976	10,242	8,464	12,966	53%	1%
Singapore	10,046	10,097	7,239	6,841	9,801	43%	1%
Latvia	9,388	10,884	6,736	6,801	8,651	27%	1%
Netherlands	5,248	6,992	6,464	6,490	8,499	31%	1%
South Africa	10,022	9,850	4,279	4,675	6,190	32%	1%
Moldova	2,185	2,212	2,211	2,864	5,736	100%	1%
Russia	2,175	1,935	3,263	3,768	4,486	19%	0%
Others	42,820	42,427	44,479	38,232	34,599	-10%	3%

# PROSECCO, CAVA AND CHAMPAGNE

## A FULL RECOVERED, ALMOST

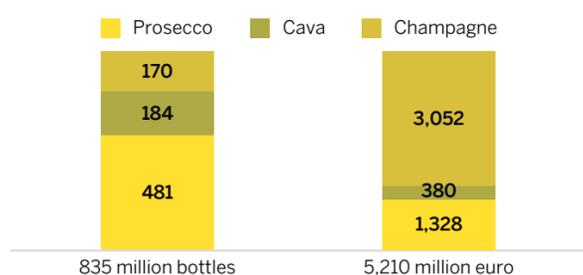
By CARLO FLAMINI  
Wine Observatory - Unione Italiana Vini

One could say from hell to heaven. If 2020 was a dramatic year for the sparkling wine industry, especially the upper end one, afflicted by the closures of the Horeca channel, 2021 proved to be a real panacea for the budgets of the sparkling wine firms that produce Champagne, Prosecco and Cava. The three great world-class sparkling wines exported amounted to 835 million bottles, for a value of 5.2 billion euros, a growth of respectively +27% and +36%: we are talking of 60% of the volume of total world exports and over 70% if we consider the value.

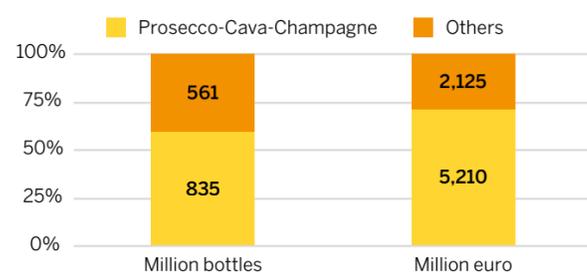
*In 2021, the three main producers exported 835 million bottles, an increase of +27% compared with the terrible year of Covid, for a value of €5.2 billion euros, 71% of the world total. But Champagne proved to be one ahead of the others*

While Prosecco remains the top player as regards volume (481 million bottles, accounting for 58% of the trio's total), in terms of value, the numbers are in favour of Champagne, which, with 3.5 billion Euros sold, account for more than two third of the total. Cava ob-

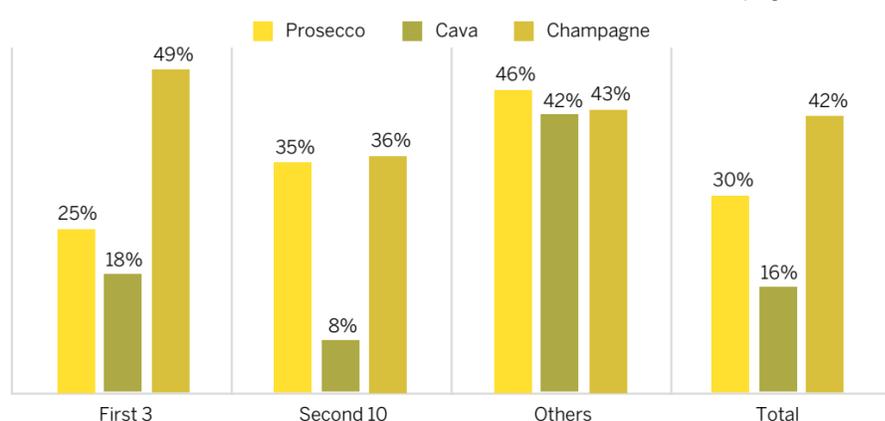
1. The three majors' impact in 2021



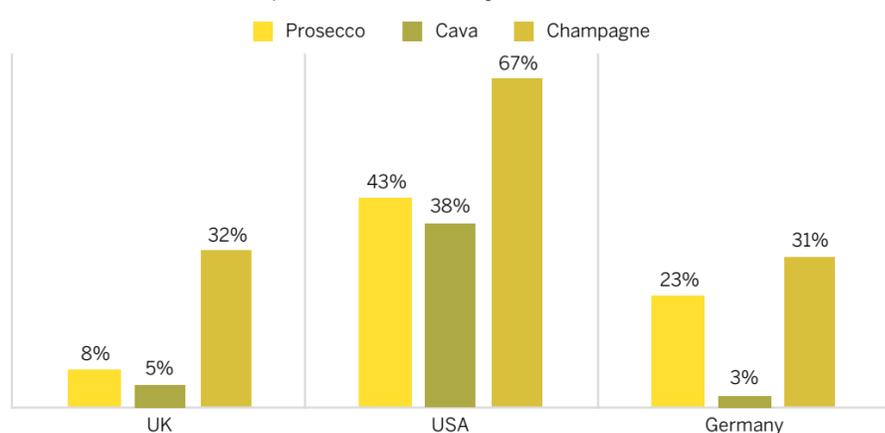
2. The three majors' impact on global export



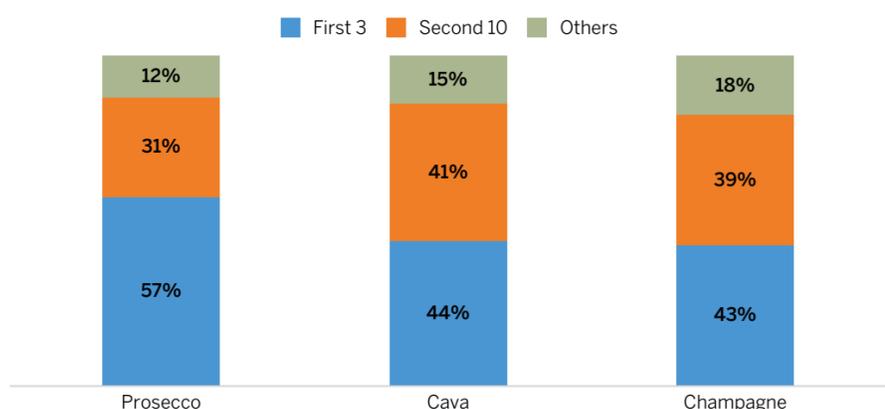
3. % Variations 2021 on 2020, by markets



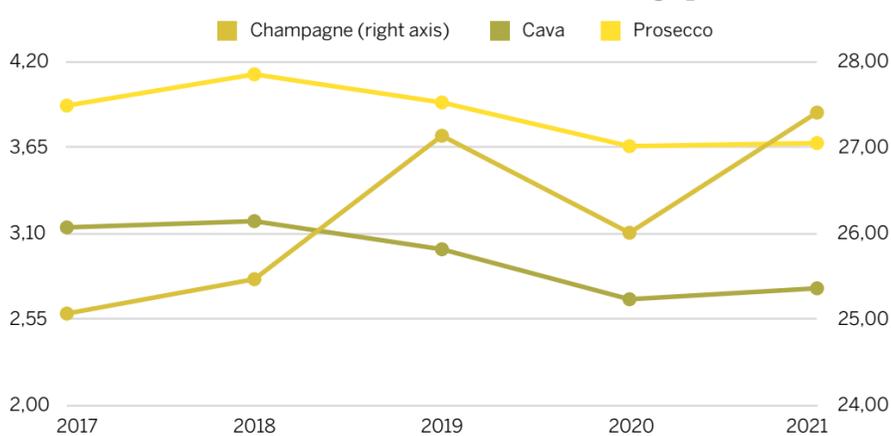
5. UK, Usa and Germany: value % variations 2021 on 2020



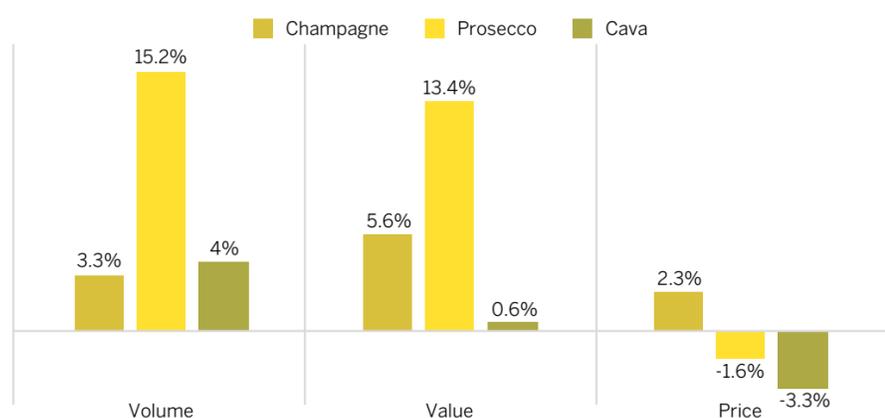
4. Value % quota by markets



6. Average prices (euro/litre)



7. Long-term evolution: CAGR 2017 on 2021



three markets the winner is obviously Champagne, which had been the most penalised in 2020: overall growth is at +50%, against +25% for Prosecco and +18% for Cava. The weights of the first three markets are unbalanced only as regards Prosecco, which in the USA, UK and France makes almost 60% of sales, with smaller shares (43-44%) for the other two. Champagne, in particular, has made an extraordinary recovery, especially in the USA, where it has gained two thirds of the lost value, alongside a growth of over 30% in the UK and Singapore, now the third market (graphs 3-4).

On the second ten markets, Champagne and Prosecco both showed an increase of +36%, while Cava made a slim +8%. The incidences of these markets are around 40% for the French and Spanish and lighter of course for Prosecco, at 31%. The remaining markets weigh more heavily on the side of Champagne (18%), demonstrating a greater capacity to irradiate than Cava (15% share) and especially Prosecco, which is stationary at 12%. The greatest growth is still favourable to the French, which shows +42% against +30% for Prosecco and

+16% for Cava. Looking at the individual performances of the three major import markets - USA, UK and Germany, these do not necessarily coincide with the first three destinations (graph 5) - the USA has given the biggest impetus to recovery: +67% for Champagne, +40% for the other two. Performance in the UK was less as regards Prosecco and Cava, outclassed by the French performance (+32%), while in Germany Prosecco largely recovered the ground lost in 2020, regaining 23% growth, against a slim +3% for Cava.

### The Price Factor

If 2021, as has been illustrated so far, was the year of the complete recovery of the values lost during the pandemic, the method of this recovery was different for the three players. Champagne came from years of growth in average price, momentarily interrupted by the impact of the 2020 crisis. As shown in Graph 6, the recovery to €27.40 per litre marks the highest average price reached since 2017, with a progression measured in Cagr (compound annual growth rate) of 2.3%. Prosecco and Cava, on the other hand, show similar price

dynamics, with a depreciation trend up to 2020 and only a partial recovery in 2021: +0.5% for Italian bubbles and +2.6% for Spanish ones, with negative Cagr for both: -1.6% for Prosecco, and -3% for Cava. Prosecco's expansive phase was certainly more in terms of volume than in terms of value, and the two point differential in Cagr demonstrates this plastically. The differential with Cava is almost four points, with a value boost of practically zero. So: in a year of recovery, the real champion was Champagne, which despite having immeasurably higher values and prices than its competitors, managed to widen the gap even further. While the other two - which we would define as daily sparkling - continue to measure growth on the volume side, with a greater momentum for Prosecco, which has a less recent history of growth in average price. The question of how to remain at these levels in an economic situation that promises to be depressive, in terms of value but - from what we are beginning to see - also in terms of volume, must worry those who have based their success on a mass-market strategy rather than the pursuit of vertical growth.

# IN THE VINEYARD AND IN THE CELLAR

A selection of machinery, equipment, services and products available on the market, curated by the manufacturers

## AROL

### The Capper For Ropp Aluminum Caps

**W**hite wine, red wine, sparkling wine, semi-sparkling wine, spirits: Arol (Canelli - Asti) provides capping machines for the widest range of container sizes, shapes, and types as well as various type of caps, ensuring quality and integrity of the final product. Within its wide range of products, we find the solution that responds exactly to the needs of those wine makers who use aluminum Ropp aluminum caps:

Euro VA. Its design facilitates instant liquids drainage: a solution that avoids the accumulation of material and the consequent hygiene problems. In its washable version it is completely washable. It can integrate an inert gas injection device, positioned at the end of the descent channel, avoiding any negative action of oxygen that could cause problems of oxidation of wine. Euro VA has excellent characteristics of flexibility thanks to its predisposition for

the rapid format change of both the caps and the bottle (which can normally vary from 0.375 to 1.5 liters). It allows to offer each winery a solution designed to meet its specific installation needs, adapting to the most different production contexts from 1,000 to 72,000 bph. The Arol technical support is available for the whole life cycle of the machine and counts on a highly skilled team of specialist operating from each of our 11 worldwide offices. *Info: www.arol.com*



## CAMPAGNOLA

### Pneumatic And Electric Pruning: The Proposals For Your Vineyard

**F**or the winegrowers engaged in intensive pruning operations, Campagnola, the historic Bolognese brand, offers various pneumatic tools, to satisfy the highest demands for power and autonomy. For example, Victory, a sturdy pneumatic shear, has been designed to make pruning efficient and quick. This goal has also been achieved thanks to its lightweight body made of technopolymer with carbon fibers. Another very interesting pneumatic shear is Star 30, made in two versions. The one is fitted with specific blades for vineyard pruning, the other one for orchard pruning. The vineyard range is then completed by Laser, a pneumatic chain pruner. Its dimensions guarantee an excellent maneuverability among the plants. This tool can cut branches up to a diameter of 20 cm. On the other hand, the Green

Line by Campagnola consists of tools powered by interchangeable plug-in lithium-ion batteries. Among the shears of this range, Stark M is ideal for pruning branches up to a diameter of 32 mm. Starting from this year, it is also offered with the new Vineyard Blade made of forged steel, which carries out precise cuts of the vine branches without creating any burrs. These blades, supplied in a special pack, have been designed with a thin shape to guarantee maximum performance even in the case of the cuts which challenge the thickness of the traditional blades. The same 14.4 V battery can be plugged into Stark M, Nexi electric tying tool, or T-CAT M electric chain pruner. This tool is fitted with a 500 W brushless motor and can cut branches up to 8 cm in diameter.

**WORLD TRADE**  
Compare of the import/export of different countries and types of product (sparkling, fizzy, still, colour, packaged, bulk, Bag in Box)

**POTENTIAL**  
The section dedicated to the Potential is structured on three levels: Surfaces and production, Stocks and Bottling of all the Italian Do and Ig

**BULK MARKET & GRAPES**  
The database - unique in Italy - contains the surveys of over 460 types of wine listed weekly from 2010 to today. In addition, during the harvest period the prices of the grapes are listed on a daily basis

## WINE OBSERVATORY

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# IN THE VINEYARD AND IN THE CELLAR

## CELLI

### Combined And Shiftable Solutions Among The Celli News At EIMA

Celli took part at EIMA with its continuous evolving range, which today includes over 100 models of different types: from rotary tillers to power harrows, from spaders to mulchers, from stone buriers and bed formers to subsoilers, but also combined and modular solutions, capable to carry out different types of soil preparation. Just one of these, a power harrow developed to work combined with a pneumatic seeder, represented one of the main

innovations on display at the stand of the Italian company, which for almost 70 years has been developing, manufacturing and distributing equipment and technologies for soil preparation. Celli also brought to the fair a shiftable mulcher that extends the range of larger models to meet the needs of the Australian market. There has been no lack of rotary tillers, for which the company is renowned throughout the world: from EV, a side-shifting machine developed for

inter-row soil preparation with tractors of increasingly higher power (up to 100 HP), to Super Tiger 450 P, one of the most important models (reaches a working width of 6.41 meters). Finally, there were also solutions that are already enjoying great success on the market such as stone buriers combined with a bed former module and "bio" rotary tillers, developed to work according to the dictates of organic farming, carrying out a particular shallow soil preparation.



## CMP

### Plastic Sheet For The Storage Of Bottled Wine

Vinplast is a recycled plastic sheet-shaped for the storage of bottled wine. It is available in 12 sizes according to standard bottles, from Bordeaux to champagne. Vinplast is an alternative to metal cages and wooden boxes. Bottles don't rub each other, glass is safe and protected against any scratch or

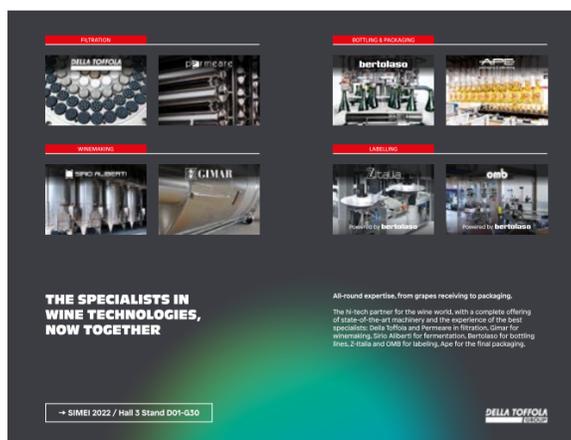
break, bottles are protected against light and the refinement process of wine is not compromised. Vinplast ensures space optimization in your cellars both in height and width. Vinplast, undoubtedly the best solution for aging wine in the bottle. More space, more security, cleaner, cheaper... and more. "In Vinplast Veritas."

## DELLA TOFFOLA GROUP

### Technology And Automation In Wine Making

A leading industrial manufacturing platform for the wine and beverage sector, providing turnkey solutions and automation for the wine-makers. This is the Della Toffola Group, owned by the leading Private Equity Investindustrial which has put together the team of the best specialists, from processing to packaging. The group has a specific focus on filtration including the Della Toffola well established ceramic cross-flow solutions and the top specialist Permeare

for high-end inorganic filtration systems. It fully covers also pressing and fermentation including the top quality tailor-made autoclaves of Sirio Aliberti and the fermenters of Gimar. Bottling is covered by the worldwide leading brand Bertolaso, with roughly 150 years of experience in corking and filling, the solid expertise of Ape for packaging and the advanced technological footprint of Z-Italia. Additionally, Bertolaso is going to launch the new smart filling blocs system, and by cooperating with Z-italia



has furthermore boosted the expansion of OMB, the smart labelling solution for small medium wine makers. The next edition of Simeis, 15 - 18 November in Milan, will be the opportunity to show altogether the new portfolio of our sustainable and automated solutions designed and manufactured by the incredible team of 150 engineers and R&D people. Della Toffola and Bertolaso, together with the other specialists of the team, will be pleased to welcome you in our booth - Hall 3, Stand D01-G30.

## ENOMECCANICA BOSIO

### FTC 31/F Ceramic Membrane Crossflow Filter Born Eco-Friendly

As long ago as Simeis 2013, Enomeccanica Bosio srl managed to confirm its innovative nature once again by winning the "Lucio Mastroberardino" Innovation Challenge for its FTC 31-F crossflow Filter for lees and wine. Though little more than a prototype at the time, its revolutionary tilted housing containing the ceramic filtration modules was already making an impression. The innovative idea lay in managing to feed the membranes optimally upwards, while at the same time removing any CO<sub>2</sub> from the fining lees. It was immediately clear that the FTC 31-F filter offered considerable versatility, combined with enormous technological potential. Huge

strides have been made since then in terms of automation and hydrodynamics. The new filters are all Industry 4.0 compliant, and in addition to the patented Back Pulse self-cleaning system they also feature a further automatic anti-membrane fouling system for use on harvest deposits (Back-Purge). The degree of automation achieved allows the FTC 31-F filter to work 24/7 and ensure operational efficiency and safety by guaranteeing connection aimed at remote control and support. On top of all that, Enomeccanica Bosio never forgets its mission and that of its references, namely an obsessive focus on end product quality.



## ENOVENETA

### Automatic Plants And Industry 4.0 For Winemaking Sector



During the last years the requests about "Industry 4.0" production plants are increased. For that reason we've adapted our machineries to Industry 4.0 requirements. But we not only provide Industry 4.0 ready machineries, we can realize complete production plants with these requirements. Designing the entire plant, every technology will be integrated as its best. But it's

not just about Industry 4.0. Now medium and big wine producers look for the total automation of the working process, in order to simplify the employees working load and also to have a more efficient management of the entire production process. We can find the maximum expression of this in the "FAP" (Full Automatic Process), a pressing system composed by three or more pneumatic presses that allows to manage

all the grape pressing process automatically, from the grape loading to the washing of the presses. The "FAP" system is managed by a software that can handle autonomously all the working phases. The software, together with appropriate accessories like automatic valves, level probes, weighing cells and flow meters, allows to realize a fully automatic pressing centre. Info: [www.enoveneta.it](http://www.enoveneta.it)

# IN THE VINEYARD AND IN THE CELLAR



## IDEAL Ideal Solutions For Your Vineyards

For almost one century, Ideal company has been designing and producing sprayers of all kind to find the best care for crops, focusing on both product customization and innovation and keeping high its commitment in improving its offer, to meet both laws and markets requirements. Models for vineyard protection are many and with different features. The most technological and environment-friendly remains Drop Save, allowing an automatic low volume spray per hectare as well as a 50% recovery on average thanks to its special computer and anti-drift panels. Other solutions for vineyard are Ideal low volume sprayers with multi-row boom like Supra or Diva, permitting to spray up to 3 rows contemporarily on vineyards with a very low liquid

supply per hectare, for focused treatments. Also, Bora model deserves to be mentioned: its special configuration with fan group hanging on tractor and tank trailed by a tracker drawbar makes it perfect to work on more rows of espaliers vineyards on hilly grounds. In addition to low volume models, Ideal provides anyway various sprayers with axial fan, for those farms having smaller extensions or special grounds. Among all, we would remind Loire and Alsazia Top sprayer, both with tower and reverse suction but differently configured to allow proper treatments according to vineyards features. These are only a few solutions among the wide range of products offered by Ideal for vineyard protection.  
Info: [www.idealitalia.it](http://www.idealitalia.it)

## METALUX

Metalux Capsule was established in 1964 by Dino Illario Dal Ri in Italy. Being a pioneer in global capsules' production and with over 55 years of experience and know-how, Metalux supplies high quality capsules to over 40 countries worldwide which makes Metalux one of the main well-known manufacturers of bottle capsules in the global packaging market. Available products are PVC capsules, aluminum wine capsules, capsules for sparkling wines and PET capsules. The main activity of the company is the production of PVC, PET and aluminum bottle capsules, according to the latest technologies in production processes. Recent addition to



## Capsules Of All Kinds, Including Pvc-Free Ones

our variety of products is the PVC-Free heat shrinking capsules, PVC-Free poly laminate capsules and PVC-Free champagne capsules. Metalux is always valid in order to satisfy any new requirement of each client and ensure for the best result. Most customers of Metalux are active in the production of wine, champagne, sparkling wine, olive oil, alcohol beverages and beer. The history of Metalux is based on investment in technology and equipment and its philosophy is that "a quality product has no boundaries".

Info: +39.0421.331266 / +30.22410.81767  
[info@metaluxcapsule.it](mailto:info@metaluxcapsule.it) / [manager@metaluxsa.com](mailto:manager@metaluxsa.com)  
[www.metaluxsa.com](http://www.metaluxsa.com) / [www.metaluxcapsule.it](http://www.metaluxcapsule.it)

## NORTAN

### New Syncrocap Capsule Distributor

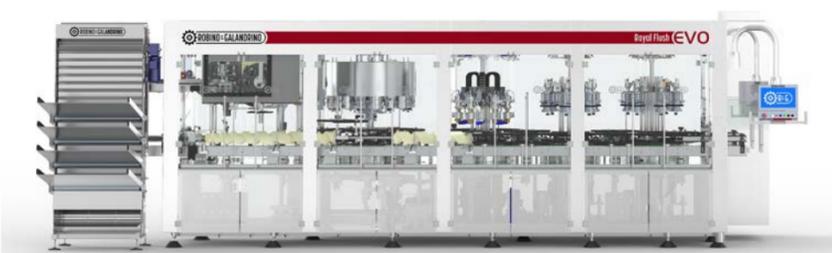
Thanks to an innovative mechatronic project (Feds Technology), the new Syncrocap distributor can automatically adapt to the different capsules to be processed, thus reducing the format change times up to 80% and the imperfections due to human intervention. Compared to standard capsule distributors, the new Syncrocap represents a significant step forward for the whole sector. Each component has been completely rethought and redesigned around the following objectives: pro-

cessing optimization, increase in reliability, reduction and simplification of maintenance, minimization of the format change times for operators. The main heart of the innovation is the fully electronic separation and distribution group, where a new proprietary mechatronic technology (Patent Pending) called F.e.d.s. Technology (Fully electronic distribution system) has been implemented. This leads to a reduction in setting and format change times by the operator of about 80% and to the complete elimination of errors and prob-

lems that may arise due to rough adjustments. Furthermore, thanks to a series of algorithms that encompass all Nortan experience, all mechanical devices have been eliminated and the concept of "Electronic Cam" has been introduced, which allows to automatically adapt the timing and parameters of the various components based on the type of capsule in work. The 40% reduction in details and the optimization of production processes has led to a significant increase in reliability.



## Royal Flush EVO



## ROBINO & GALANDRINO

### Perfecting universal capsuling systems with the Royal Flush EVO range

Robino & Galandrino perfects universal capsuling systems with the Royal Flush EVO range. Designed to capsule both still and sparkling wine, the system drastically reduces format changeover times: automated capsule dispenser (settings Ø and H recalled from the recipe); star wheels with pincers or with motorized variable geometry and stored according to recipe. In the still wine section, Carousel with alternated heads: pneumatic spinning (working pressures adjustable according to recipes for each capsule format) and thermal shrinking. In the sparkling wine section, the first carousel is dedicated to vision systems for bottle and capsule alignment. Pleating and smoothing are entrusted to the two following turrets which, according

to R&G tradition, are dedicated. Royal Flush can be configured by positioning the sparkling wine section before the still wine allowing the use of the carousel dedicated to scans and alignments also when capsuling still wine. The machine integrates the Sniper platform which brings together the R&G vision systems for the electronic scans necessary for alignment and centering. The vision devices are cameras, photocells (colour-UV) and optical fibers. The recipe management interface is simple and intuitive. The EVO range includes as standard: frame in Aisi 304 stainless steel and transparent access panels with internal lighting; electronic axes; high performance touch screen HMI on mobile arm; guarding: mirror polished Aisi 304 stainless steel and full height tempered glass doors.

## VCR - VIVAI COOPERATIVI RAUSCEDO

### The Resistant Generation

Vivai Cooperativi Rauscedo, in the belief that Research and Experimentation are the only weapon to face the challenges of the future, are investing in a far-sighted genetic improvement program based on crossing and breeding techniques, involving more than 70 table- and wine-grape varieties, with particular attention to autochthonous varieties and their clones, aiming at representing the national as well as the international ampelographic assets. In recent years,

hundreds of different crossbreeds have been obtained, giving birth to hundreds of thousands of resistant genotypes. The new genotypes undergo a thorough health selection for secondary diseases, preferring those less susceptible to Black Rot and / or Phomopsis cane and leaf spot. The agronomic behaviour and the organoleptic assessment of microvinifications are investigated as well. The selection of new disease-resistant varieties alongside the selection of new rootstocks and innovative agronomic

practices will be fundamental to offer new viticultural models, which can lead to a significant reduction in inputs in the vineyard: significantly shrinking plant-defense treatments, less irrigation and fertilization and consequent cut of production costs, with no impairment of the quality of grapes and wines. Only Research and Innovation will allow us to overcome the challenges of climate change and energy crisis, and to help the Italian wine industry in maintaining its valuable and prestigious position globally!



*Molte volte le idee nascono dai sogni,  
e a volte i sogni diventano realtà.*

**Noi ci siamo riusciti.**

# **SYNCROCAP™** **SERIES**

## **DISTRIBUTORE CAPSULE A GESTIONE COMPLETAMENTE ELETTRONICA**

Grazie ad un innovativo progetto mecatronico (FEDS Technology), il nuovo distributore SYNCROCAP riesce ad adattarsi automaticamente alle diverse capsule da lavorare riducendo così i tempi di cambio formato fino all'80% e le imperfezioni dovute all'intervento umano.

Il nuovo sistema di distribuzione prevede un funzionamento mecatronico perfetto, dove meccanica ed elettronica sono progettate e fuse per creare una simbiosi unica: gestione, movimentazione e settaggio vengono gestiti e controllati da servo azionamenti in grado di autoregolarsi in funzione del tipo di capsula da lavorare.

Inoltre il nuovo sistema è assolutamente orientato al futuro poiché rappresenta un ulteriore passo in avanti nell'era della digitalizzazione industriale e un reale dispositivo utilizzabile in un sistema di lavoro con standard Industria 4.0.



**CHANGE THE RULES**

**NOI SIAMO GIÀ NEL FUTURO... E TU?**

 **nortan**  
Passione, tecnologia, innovazione

Via dell'Industria, 11  
37040 Veronella (VR) - Italy  
Tel. +39 0442 47884  
info@nortan.it - www.nortan.it

seguici su:

