

Along with Romeo and Juliet the Arena di Verona is one of the most significant symbols of this Venetian city and for the first time it hosted a Gala Dinner, the one for i Grandi Cru d'Italia. The elite of the Italian wine celebrated with a traditional gala dinner the best reporters and Italian magazines dedicated to wine.

Vittorio Frescobaldi (Marchesi de' Frescobaldi): "The location here at the Arena di Verona is beautiful and it's really significant and it shows how the Grandi Cru d'Italia has really worked hard and how the Made in Italy is continuing to have success, wine in particular".

Paolo Panerai (Vice Pres. Comitato Grandi Cru): "The Arena di Verona is always an incredible environment. It really reminds us of a lot in history. And with an evening like this where we have so many foreign operators of the wine market along with the press is just a perfect place and way to express Italian in wine and to say that it's not just what is inside the bottle but also what's all around it".

Many delegates from China were at the Gala as they personally want to come to Verona to learn more about the best Italian wine.

Wang Chun Sui (Vice President U-TRANS): "We are looking for wine makers that can give us a good quality-price level. We have a partnership already with Tuscany and Piedmont but we really want to find other distributors in order to increment sales in China".

Gong Dan (Senior Editor Tencent Group Shanghai): "In Italy there are many regions, many different wines, so it's a very rich place to pick wines".

Alvin Huang (Fondatore e CEO, Vinehoo): "I feel that Italy in terms of art and wine will never be second to anyone. And in China people are aware of this; so it's easy to buy high quality wines at good prices and so it will have success".

Paolo Panerai (Vice Pres. Comitato Grandi Cru): "China has been following us very carefully in the last years and it's interesting because there's a huge gap between the sales of Italian and French wines. Italy has a market share of 6.5 while France has a 62 per cent share in China which is quite unusual because in the US we are the biggest producers and have the biggest market share. They have obviously ties of the past with Hong Kong, France and Bordeaux so we need to do everything that we can in order to help the Chinese to better understand Italian wine and realize that we can compete with French wines".

Vittorio Frescobaldi (Marchesi de Frescobaldi): "This world is really opening up. Let's hope that for Italian wines it will be a good future. In fact we are sure that we'll have a high respect and be highly appreciated all over the world".

Among the guest speakers a wine magnate. His seller in Shanghai counts 2.500 wines for a total of 25.000 bottles from all over the world. The most prestigious are protected by guards in a real safe.

TIM T L TSE (President The House of Roosevelt): "I think Chinese consumers are really becoming passionate about Italian wines. They are elegant and sophisticated so now it's time to learn more about Chianti and Prosecco and I think that there's a lot of potential for Italian wines in China".

Building a potential that is also confirmed by the well known American critic Antonio Galloni, who was called by Parker in 2006 to review Italian wines for The Wine Advocate and since February of this year is engaged in a new solo adventure on the internet.

Antonio Galloni (www.antoniogallone.com): "The producers that have a presence on the market seems to have success in China. This is really important because there's no substitute for actually being present on the market. So if I have to pick something I have to say that you need to be more present on the market if you're not there your competitor is. So that's the prime importance in China".

Of course the producers cannot be present on the market it's the intermediary that goes towards the producers.

Gong Dan (Senior Editor Tencent Group Shanghai) "With our social media and our web site and our influence that we have on the market, we try to convince the Chinese to increment their purchasing of Italian wine."

Alvin Huang (Fondatore e CEO, Vinehoo): "We are both a media platform and a sales platform. We are a sort of a Chinese version of Wine Spectator or Decanter. We have a lot of influence and we are very much appreciated. We give a lot of news and suggestions and we give good wines at low prices".

Terry Xu (Wine Educator):" We are a very young company, we've been there for five years and we are the largest online importer Chinese market we sell 15.000 bottles a day, we have high values of sale and we are the third largest retailer after Metro and Carrefour".

The dinner was an occasion to discuss not only the state of the wine market but the future of the Great Italian Wines as well as the announcement of the winner of the awards.

Lucio Tasca d'Almerita (Tasca d'Almerita) : " Well this is certainly a very special evening; the wine producers give awards to the media".

Raoul Salama (La Revue du Vin): "All the other magazines that were nominated Decanter, Wine Spectator, Falstaff are also very prestigious. So, we are very honoured to be among these names. We have a Chinese edition that we produce in Beijing, very important for the market in China".

ISAO MIYAJIMA (The Wine Kingdom, Wand e Winart): "It has given us a lot of satisfaction to work with Italian wine and to win this award is really, really an honour. With the pen, with image, with words I try to transmit not so much the details but the joy of drinking Italian wines".

Corriere della Sera won several awards. Both for best Italian Media and with Luciano Ferraro in the category of Best Italian Journalist.

Luciano Ferraro (Corriere DiVini, Blog and Twitter): "We began with Corriere della Sera to talk about wines slowly more and more. This happened about an year and a half or two years ago. We really didn't hope to have a significant and fast result. What we decided to do was not to dedicate a page to describe all the technicalities of the wine but rather to talk more about the stories that are behind the producers, to talk about the brands, the companies and their tie with the territory of Italy and to put this together with literature and art and tradition".

Ferruccio De Bortoli (Corriere della Sera): "An important person that is here tonight when I gave him my card tonight he asked me 'Is Corriere della Sera a wine company?' I said 'well, not quite yet!'"

There is barely more work to do to promote Italian wine abroad and in particular in China. There are many channels that must be exploited among them is Internet, an important instrument for Chinese promoters and distributors.

Terry Xu (Wine Educator): “In many cities there aren’t any stores to buy wine, you can only buy online. So, you know why it’s difficult to find Chinese consumers? Because we don’t have a culture of drinking wine, so we don’t understand wine easily. The Italian wines have really exploded recently so as a potential leader on the market we, as ‘YesMyWine’ we are also leaders on the market so we are interested in finding Italian wines to bring to China. We learn very quickly but of course we do still need a lot of information and help and that’s why we need to get in touch with people. What we really need is to have more Italian wines and easy wines to drink like Pinot Grigio and Prosecco”.

Matteo Lunelli (Pres. Ferrari Spumante): “We have to look beyond our borders, we need to try and accept all the challenges that are out there and that, you know, teach our potential consumers even on the Internet. But respecting our values and the traditions”.

Gianni Zonin (Casa Vinicola Zonin) “The world is changing everyday and so at one point new opportunities open up, new horizons and new ways of thinking and acting so we really have to get room to this”.

The evening also was important for a partnership for Comitato Grandi Cru d’Italia.

Paolo Panerai (Vice Pres. Comitato Grandi Cru): “It was inevitable that with an Expo dedicated to food, to nutrition, of the planet that wines would have an important role so we opened the talks with Grandi Cru since they express excellence with Expo”.

Giuseppe Sala (AD Expo 2015): “We are lucky enough to organise this event in Milan and it will certainly bring many people up to 20 million visitors and since the main theme is food and nutriment then wine has its very important tradition in Italy so certainly this will be an important occasion that we must not lose in order for Grandi Cru to play their card. So, what we imagine is it that there will be an important space dedicated to wines”.

Guglielmo Miani (Pres. Ass. Via MonteNapoleone): “Montenapoleone wants to create a unique experience for tourists and tourists are staying in very important hotels in the area, so what we wanted to do was give them an experience that was richer, so to speak, and with Grandi Cru d’Italia very high quality respecting also tradition”.

Paolo Panerai: “In October there will be a cooperation very strong with the presence of Grandi Cru and with the presence of French producers and with them we’ll have a sort of a contest”.

For the evening the prestigious three star Michelin Da Vittorio, the luxury Chinese restaurant Bon Wei and Guido Guidi prepared a mix of eastern and western cuisine to accompany the Grandi Cru. A union, that of Italian and Chinese cuisine, that is now more than ever popular underlined by the Hong Kong Chef Alvin Leung. Born in London, raised in Canada, his extreme menu is a huge hit in his Restaurant in Hong Kong. A real star in the kitchen but whose teachers have been big names like Adria Ferrà and Robuchon.

Chef Alvin Leung: “Italian wine goes very well with Italian kitchen but also since Chinese food is based on principles which is the product then I can’t see why this wine can’t be the perfect one for Cantonese food. I would like to explain what I mean by extreme: I mean ex as an experience, ex as an excitement ex as an extravagance. What I want to do is bring you to an extreme, I want to take you out of your comfort zone, on the brink, so to speak. I want to somehow excite your taste: that is what I mean by extreme Chinese”.

And according to the Book Grandi Cru d’Italia – best Chinese Chefs, Leung is considered one of the ten best Chefs on Grandi Cru mixed with Chinese recipes.

Mr. Terry Xu (Wine Educator): "Italian cuisine is very well know in China and we have very Italian restaurants and why not, we should mix Italian wines with Chinese food".

Mr. Bai (Vice Pres. Beijing Wine & Tobacco): "Italian wine is a very high quality. All consumers in China are aware of this now. What we need is cooperation between Italy and China in order to develop more and to get this brand get be more well know. Is not the producers that decides what the market likes it's the consumer, so it's important to choose the right wine and the consumer is the one that makes its decisions so the quality is important but must be developed to the consumers".

Mr. Jin Wei: "Italy, like France, has many areas of productions and many varieties so recently we organized a sort of competition between Italian wine and the French wines. My company also develops communication of the culture of wine in China and it's important to this across".

Vittorio Moretti (Bellavista): "We are here because it's useful and it has to be. Grandi Cru is an extraordinary organisation that is helping us to bring our product all around the world so we must be here even if it is cold".